

MEDIEVAL STUDIES PROGRAM

St. Olaf College



Abbey at Monte Cassino
(Classical Studies in Italy, 2026)

MEDIEVAL STUDIES PROGRAM 2026-2027

Founded in 1971, Medieval Studies is one of the oldest interdisciplinary programs at St. Olaf College. Most courses focus on Europe and the British Isles, a few on medieval China or Japan. Students are encouraged to examine the Middle Ages from a variety of perspectives, including comparative and cross-cultural ones.

It is common for students to combine a Medieval Studies major with another major such as English, philosophy, religion, women's and gender studies, history, art history, or a modern language. Even students majoring in math, natural science, or fine arts may opt to use Medieval Studies as half of a double major.

Every Medieval Studies major must complete Latin 235 (Medieval Latin). If that course is unavailable, any other Latin course above 231 may be used as a substitute.

Also required are a medieval literature course, a medieval history course, four electives selected from Art History, Asian Studies, Enduring Questions, English, History, Music, Norwegian, Philosophy, Political Science, Religion, Russian, and Theater, and an Independent Research on a topic of the student's choice (e.g., Justinian's law code, Beguine mystics, Viking England, Old Norse myth, Chaucer and courtly love, Malory's King Arthur, Hunyadi Hungary, medieval ritual processions). Independent studies in medieval languages may be used as electives. A paper written for a Level III course may replace the IR. Study abroad and courses at Carleton College extend the range of possibilities.

If you are interested in a Medieval Studies major, please contact the program director, Prof. Anne Groton, Dept. of Classics (Tomson Hall 367, groton@stolaf.edu), for more information.

Italicized courses are offered in 2026-2027.

REQUIRED COURSES

Latin 235 (Medieval Latin)

Latin 252, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, or 377 may be substituted for Latin 235.

***1 med. lit. course, 1 med. history course,
4 electives, 1 IR in medieval studies***

ELECTIVE COURSES

Art History

*161 (History of World Architecture—
if student focuses on Middle Ages)*
255 (Italian Art in Context) [abroad]
264 (Race & Difference in Med. Art)
268 (*Early Med. Art & Identity*)
275 (Topics in Art Hist.—if medieval)
278 (Topics in Art Hist.—if medieval)
282 (*Topics in Museum Studies—if student
focuses on medieval art*)
350 (*Methods of Art History—if student
focuses on medieval art*)

Asian Studies

236 (Traditional Chinese Literature)
333 (What is a Hero?—if student focuses
on the medieval hero)

Enduring Questions

116 (Warriors, Mystics, Reformers)

English

143 (Arthurian Legend & Literature)
220 (Topics in Lit. Hist.—if medieval)
223 (*Old & Middle English Literature*)
262 (Topics: Lit. & Hist.—if medieval)
330 (Adv. Studies in Lit. Eras: British—
if course focuses on Middle Ages)
395 (Chaucer from an Ethical Perspective)

History

166 (Mongols: Global History of Eurasia)
188 or 189 (Topical Seminar—if medieval)
190 (Middle East & Europe to 1500)
210 (Methods Sem.—if medieval focus)
211 (Vikings: Past & Present)

250 (China: Past & Present)
299 (Topics in History—if medieval)
*396 (Archaeological Research—if
student focuses on medieval period)*

Music

*141 (Intro. to Musicology—if student
focuses on medieval music)*
*241 (Hist. & Lit. of Music I—if student
focuses on medieval music)*
345 (Adv. Study in Music History—if
course has medieval focus)

Norwegian

205 (Nature in Nordic Lit. & Cult.—if
student focuses on Middle Ages)
280 (Nordic Myth & Christianization)
373 (Topics in Norwegian Literature/
Culture—if topic is medieval)

Philosophy

*118 (Making of Modern Mind—if
student focuses on medieval phil.)*
374 (Seminar: Hist. of Philos.—if
course has medieval focus)

Political Science

240 (Machiavelli's Shadow) [abroad]

Religion

212 (Christ. Theol. in Hist. Context—
if student focuses on Mid. Ages)
*238 (Tolkien & Theology—if
student focuses on Mid. Ages)*
246 (Islam—Religion & Community)
302 (Hist. Christ. Thought I)
303 (Hist. Christ. Thought II)
390 (Hist. of Rel. Sem.—if medieval)
392 (Stud. in Rel. Sem.—if medieval)
399 (Thematic Sem.—if medieval)

Russian

180 (The Cultures of Medieval Rus')

Theater

*180 (Text & Performance—if student
focuses on medieval theater)*
270 (History of Theater)