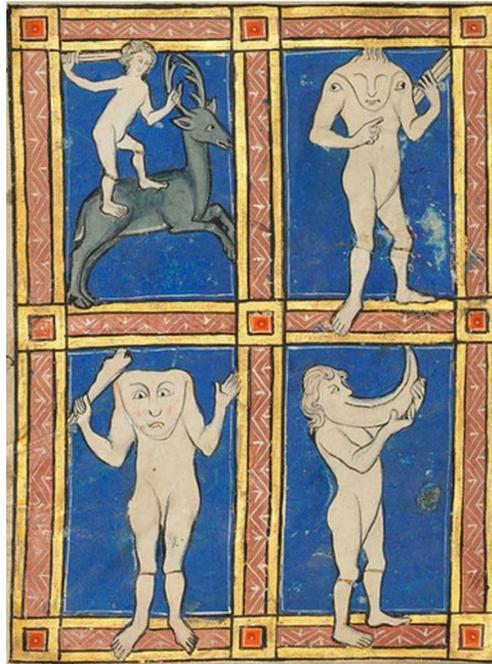


EN 61300
Spring 2018
[meeting time, place]

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A few examples of the "monstrous races," from Getty Ms. Ludwig XV 4, fol. 117v, after 1277 .

Thinking with Race in Medieval England

The medieval period is often thought of as the era just *before* the idea of race emerged – before the Atlantic slave trade, before European colonialism, before scientific racism. At the same time, the Middle Ages have been crucial to modern phenomena of racialized nationalism and ideologies of whiteness. In recent years, medievalists have studied and debated race's significance. Acknowledging the complex and urgent status of medieval race today, this course examines some of the stories, images, ideas, and institutions of medieval England. We will test how race helps us think about the articulation and operationalization of human difference between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, especially with respect to Jews, Saracens (a term coined by Christians to refer to Arabs and Muslims of varying ethnicities), and the so-called "monstrous races" thought to populate the far reaches of the world. We'll ask – How did geography, religion, and history come to be corporealized, or understood as legible on the body? How did the essentialization of differences between groups act to satisfy desires, or seemingly to solve intellectual and ideological difficulties? How does "thinking with race" in medieval England throw new light on race and racism today? Some readings will be in Middle English; others will be modern English translation. No previous experience with medieval literature is expected.

Content note: Throughout the course, we will closely examine instances of racism and racist violence. The aims of the course itself are antiracist.

Nota bene: Syllabus is subject to change!

Texts

Iain Macleod Higgins, ed. and trans. *The Book of John Mandeville, with Related Texts*. Hackett. ISBN: 9780872209350

John H. Chandler, ed. *The King of Tars*. TEAMS Middle English Texts. ISBN: 9781580442046

Adrienne Williams Boyarin, ed. and trans. *The Siege of Jerusalem*. Broadview. ISBN: 9781554811588

Katherine H. Terrell, ed. and trans. *Richard Coeur de Lyon*. Broadview. ISBN: 9781554812783

All other readings will be accessible as a course packet.

Evaluation

25% Attendance, participation, quizzes, & weekly informal writing assignments

25% Midterm exam

25% Final exam

25% Annotated bibliography and review essay

Extra credit: Middle English recitation (+8 points on midterm exam)

Class policies

Attendance is required. Attendance is expected, and will be recorded, at every class. You are allowed a maximum of three absences over the entire term (including sections). After that, your grade will be affected.

You must bring a printed copy of the reading for the day. Failure to bring a printed version will result in your being counted absent. Being “present” entails being prompt and prepared.

Informal vs. formal writing assignments: Your TAs will assign a number of short, INFORMAL writing assignments over the quarter. The purpose of these assignments is for you to communicate observations and generate ideas. Informal assignments will be graded on a simple scale : “check” for solid work (5 out of 5); “minus” for deficient work (2 out of 5); zero for missing work (no informal assignments will be accepted late). Your one FORMAL writing assignment, the annotated bibliography and review essay, is expected to be carefully planned and polished. It will receive a letter grade. If late, it will be marked down 1/3 of a letter-grade per day; for instance, a “B+” paper would drop to a “B” if one day late, to a “B-” if two days late, and so forth.

Quizzes: I occasionally give in-class quizzes. These are designed to test whether or not you have read carefully; they do not demand that you already understand everything before you come to class.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Make sure to cite your sources, and do come talk to me if you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism.

Disabilities: I am happy to accommodate disabilities in the classroom; just come talk to me about it.

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SCHEDULE (the readings listed are what you need to have COMPLETED for class)
(readings marked with an asterisk* can be found in the course packet)

week 1:

- A: Intro: What was race? (& an introduction to Middle English)
- B: Jeffrey Cohen, "Race," in *A Handbook of Middle English Studies* (2013)*
Geraldine Heng, "The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages II: Locations of Medieval Race," *Literature Compass* 8 (2011)*
Josephine Livingstone, "Racism, Medievalism, and the White Supremacists of Charlottesville," *New Republic* (2017)
<https://newrepublic.com/article/144320/racism-medievalism-white-supremacists-charlottesville>
Carol Symes, "Medievalism, White Supremacy, and the Historian's Craft," *AHA Today* (blog of the American Historical Society) (2017)
<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/november-2017/medievalism-white-supremacy-and-the-historians-craft>

SECTION

week 2:

- A: *The Book of John Mandeville*, first selection
selected *mappae mundi* ("maps of the world"), on Canvas site
first half, Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Chapter 1, in *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (2009)*
- B: *The Book of John Mandeville*, second selection
second half, selection from Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Chapter 1, in *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (2009)*

SECTION

week 3:

- A: *The Book of John Mandeville*, third selection
Letter of Prester John*
Asa S. Mittman, "Are the Monstrous 'Races' Races?" *postmedieval* 6.1 (2015)*
- B: *Richard Coeur de Lyon*, first selection

SECTION

week 4:

- A: *Richard Coeur de Lyon*, second selection
Geraldine Heng, "The Romance of England: *Richard Coer de Lyon*, Saracens, Jews, and the Politics of Race and Nation," in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* (2000)*
- B: *Richard Coeur de Lyon*, third selection
selected Muslim accounts of the Crusades*

Nota bene: Syllabus is subject to change!

SECTION

week 5:

- A: Chaucer, "Man of Law's Tale," lines 134-469*
- B: Chaucer, "Man of Law's Tale," lines 470-875*
Carolyn Dinshaw, "Pale Faces: Race, Religion, and Affect in Chaucer's Texts and Their Readers," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 23 (2001)

SECTION

week 6:

- A: Chaucer, "Man of Law's Tale," lines 876-1162*
- B: MID-TERM REVIEW

SECTION - **Midterm exam in section**

week 7:

- A: *King of Tars*, Introduction and lines 1-561
- B: *King of Tars*, lines 562-1241
Siobhain Bly Calkin "Marking Religion on the Body: Saracens, Categorization, and 'The King of Tars,'" *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 104.2 (2005)*

SECTION

week 8:

- A: Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Prioress's Prologue and Tale," first selection
selected Marian miracle stories: "The Child Slain by Jews," "The Jewish Boy,"
"Theophilus"
and "The Merchant's Surety"*
- B: Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Prioress's Prologue and Tale," second selection
Michael Calabrese, "Performing the Prioress: 'Conscience' and Responsibility in Studies of Chaucer's Prioress's Tale." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 44.1 (2002)*

SECTION

week 9:

- A: *The Siege of Jerusalem*, first selection
- B: *The Siege of Jerusalem*, second selection
selection from Anthony Bale, *Feeling Persecuted: Christians, Jews, and Images of Violence in the Middle Ages* (2011)*

SECTION

Nota bene: Syllabus is subject to change!

week 10:

A: *The Siege of Jerusalem*, third selection
selected medieval Jewish poetry*

B: Ania Loomba, "Race and the Possibility of Comparative Critique," *New Literary History*
40 (2009)*

NO SECTION (reading period)

FINAL EXAM