

Carleton University

Siobhain Bly Calkin

Medieval Studies at Carleton University are in a state of change right now. Recent retirements in some departments have meant that some offerings have disappeared, while recent hirings in other departments have led to an increase in the number and variety of courses offered there. A self-directed interdisciplinary B.A. in Medieval Studies is currently on the books, but has not often been taken up in recent years. Students usually study the Middle Ages as part of a more traditional disciplinary degree program (B.A. in History, B.A. in English). In the History department right now, one course on the Middle Ages is offered, a survey of the history of medieval England, and medieval history is listed as one of the supervised fields for the M.A.. In the College of the Humanities, students have the opportunity to take a more general introduction to the history of the Middle Ages, or a survey of medieval philosophy. Offerings in history and philosophy thus consist mainly of survey courses at the undergraduate level. Survey courses of medieval and Renaissance literature are offered by the French and English departments. Students in French may also take a course in History of the French Language and occasionally a fourth-year seminar in medieval French literature. In the English department, undergraduate students may pursue medieval studies beyond the survey level in a 300-level Chaucer course or in a 400-level seminar in medieval literature whose specific topic varies each year. Graduate courses in medieval literature are also offered each year in the English department's M.A. program. Independent reading courses, too, are offered, while courses such as History of the English Language (which has not been offered in recent years) are being revived. Thus, in some disciplines at Carleton the opportunity to study the Middle Ages has declined, but in others that opportunity has increased and will continue to do so.

One sign of growth in Carleton's medieval presence is the revival in 2002 of the Carleton-University of Ottawa Medieval and Renaissance Studies Society. Events in the past year have included a one-day colloquium consisting of papers by scholars from Carleton, University of Ottawa, and McGill (30 November 2002), a one-day graduate student conference (26 April 2003), and end-of-term/start-of term get-togethers for faculty and graduate students of both the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

The medieval faculty at Carleton has changed somewhat over the past few years. John Bellamy has retired from the History department and Douglas Wurtele has retired from the English department. The English department has hired two new medievalists: Siobhain Bly Calkin (who specialises in medieval romances, crusading literature and Chaucer) and Leanne Groeneveld (who specialises in early English drama). Other medievalists continuing their work at Carleton include: Charles Doutrelepon (in French, who studies medieval rhetoric and poetry), Bryan Gillingham (in the School for Studies in Art and Culture, who studies medieval music), Francisco Hernandez (in Humanities, who studies medieval Spain), Roy Laird (in History, who studies medieval and Renaissance science), and D. Gregory MacIsaac (in Humanities, whose specialty is Neoplatonic philosophy).