

Academic year 2022-23 (תשפ"ג)

Course title (English): *Imagining the Middle Ages: From The Hunchback of Notre Dame to A Game of Thrones*

Course title (Hebrew): לדמיין את ימי הביניים: מהגיבן מנוטר דאם עד משחקי הכס

Course number: **132.1.0293**

Course slot (semester/s, weekday/s, hours): 12-14, שנת, יום ה', 12-14

Lecturer: Dr. Olga Kuminova

Lecturer's conference hour and contact details:

Monday 14:00 – 16:00, Room 501 or online

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Course description & objectives:

The adjective “medieval” is commonly used as an emphatic synonym of backward, uncivilized and even “inhuman.” This seminar will inquire into the phenomenon that seems to flatly contradict this usage – the immense popularity of fiction, art, music and film that imaginatively reconstruct the medieval as a cultural site of fascination for successive generations of audiences until today. We will proceed in reverse chronological order, from the latest literary works and media franchises – *A Game of Thrones*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (musical) – to earlier works, Victor Hugo’s *Notre Dame de Paris*, Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*, and Mark Twain’s *Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur’s Court* that takes a step back from the popular enchantment with the medieval to reflect on it humoristically. Our seminar work will engage diverse critical and theoretical perspectives on the Middle Ages as a historical reality and a powerful imaginary cultural construct in the last two centuries. The main objectives are acquiring a complex, nuanced and systematic perspective on this strain in literature and other artistic media, and building skills towards writing a longer research paper (15-18 pages) that makes appropriate use of secondary sources while centering on the student’s own reading of the primary text.

Course requirements:

Attendance required	yes, at least 80% of the classes
Shorter written work:	30%
Presentations:	10%
Seminar research paper	60%

Topics & bibliography

John R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (we will focus on the last volume of *The Lord of the Rings*, but knowledge of the entire trilogy is highly desirable)

George R.R. Martin, *A Game of Thrones* (optionally – the rest of the volumes of *A Song of Ice and Fire*)

Mark Twain, *The Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur’s Court*

Victor Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris* (excerpts in English translation)

Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*