THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

VISUAL ARTS HISTORY 4451F, FALL 2016
SEMINAR IN MEDIEVAL ART

ARTS OF PILGRIMAGE: FROM SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA AND CANTERBURY
TO SAINTE-ANNE-DE-BEAUPRÉ

Thursdays, 11:30 to 2:20 p.m., John Labatt Visual Arts Centre, Rm. 247
Professor Kathryn Brush
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Office Hours: Mondays, 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., or by appointment

Prerequisites:
For undergraduate students: VAH 2251E/251E (Early Medieval Art) or VAH 2253E/253E (Romanesque and Gothic Art); priority will be given to fourth-year students.
For graduate students: previous course work in medieval art and visual culture is desirable. Reading knowledge of a language other than English would be useful for all seminar participants.

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Enrolment in this course without the normal prerequisite may not be used as the basis of an appeal. If you are not eligible for this course, you will be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

Course Description
This seminar explores the itineraries, rituals, and material culture of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages and the practices of pilgrimage at large. Topics to be examined include the cult of relics, the physical, spiritual and/or mental journeys of medieval pilgrims, and the architecture and objects (e.g., reliquary arts, sculpture, texts, and images) inspired by devotion at individual sites. The cult of pilgrimage crosses cultures, beliefs, and historical eras, and this seminar aims to position medieval pilgrimage within a complex network of ideas, artistic productions, actions, and associations. Particular emphasis will be placed on medieval-inspired pilgrimage to major shrines in North America, among them Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré (Quebec).

Our seminar coincides with the opening of a thematically related exhibition, Small Wonders: Gothic Boxwood Miniatures, at the Art Gallery of Ontario in early November. This major exhibition, which focuses on the AGO’s unrivalled collection of late medieval boxwood prayer beads, rosaries, and miniature altarpieces, will travel on to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam). Scholars involved in the research for the exhibition will come to our class to present cutting-edge research about the production of these late medieval devotional objects, which were
used to enable mental and spiritual pilgrimage. Discussion of the Toronto exhibition will also provide seminar participants with valuable insights into the contemporary display and representation of medieval art and visual culture at a leading North American art institution.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will gain new knowledge of the visual culture of medieval Europe and of medieval and medieval-inspired religious pilgrimage, and of key critical and theoretical frameworks employed in art historical research. They will gain familiarity with the discursive vocabularies that are utilized in debates within the field of art history, and will employ their knowledge of appropriate methods/vocabularies to formulate sound arguments about particular historical developments and to defend their judgments. Students will have abundant opportunities to participate in class discussions and to present findings that demonstrate an advanced level of visual literacy; they will also apply and refine their research skills by engaging with relevant library/art collections in the London region. Moreover, students will greatly enrich their understanding of twenty-first century art and society through engagement with cultural forms and practices of the past.

Evaluation

Class Participation 20%
Short Presentations (2, with written components) 20%
Seminar Presentation (with annotated bibliography and abstract) 25%
Research Paper 35%