

# Hist 310G: **DRAFT** medieval supernatural

SPRING 2019

Mon-Wed

2:45 – 4:00

CC 140

Dr. Gross-Diaz

## Syllabus: Part I (Essential information and FAQs)



**Office:** Crown Center 545

508-2225 ... better: [tgross@luc.edu](mailto:tgross@luc.edu)

**Drop-in** hours:

Mon and Weds 11:00-1:00

Otherwise available **by appointment**.

*Please make all appointments by e-mail*

### **REQUIRED READING:**

All readings will be available on Sakai “Resources”, online, at Cudahy Reserve, or handed out.

Reading assignments will be posted on Sakai by Friday night, the week before they are due.

When readings are on Sakai or online, please **PRINT THEM OUT AND BRING TO CLASS**.

**Werewolves and unicorns. Sorcerers and saints. Celestial omens and terrestrial Hell-mouths. Icelandic zombies and Saxon vampires.**

The medieval supernatural was a complex and sophisticated world. Understanding it better can lead us to a fuller appreciation of the richness of medieval society and intellectual culture, and perhaps even nudge us out of complacent assumptions of superiority about our own modern, scientific, secular, ‘Western’ culture.

**This is a course in cultural and intellectual history**. Some of the questions that we will be asking include: How were “natural” and “supernatural” defined, and how constant were those definitions across time and space, across popular and elite cultures? Did magic and miracles differ? Were dragons and monsters “natural” or “supernatural”? How did pagan, Jewish and Islamic cultural influences significantly affect medieval Christian ideas about the supernatural? How were different manifestations of the supernatural reflected in, and shaped by, daily life, theology, and art?

In this course, we will take a look at the history of “the supernatural” in Medieval Europe. We will do this through close readings of literary and archaeological primary source evidence, along with recent scholarly explorations (secondary sources) of the medieval supernatural.

## Course goals

- \* Think historically about the social and intellectual approaches to the supernatural formulated by medieval Europeans
- \* Improve your skill in analyzing and assessing scholarly arguments
- \* Cultivate your skill at interpreting and contextualizing primary sources
- \* Develop your research skills and ability to formulate useful questions
- \* Enhance your ability to integrate disparate materials and to formulate original and cogent arguments

## Modus agendi - Participation

In general, Tuesdays will be devoted to discussion of secondary sources (articles and chapters by modern scholars) while Thursdays will usually be given over to discussion of the primary sources. Despite the size of this class, **your participation** in discussion will be very important. Do not expect to be able to sit back and be entertained by lectures about arcane and bizarre stuff: no passive learning here! You will sometimes be discussing in small groups, sometimes leading the class in discussion, sometimes called upon to summarize the day's reading or your group's evaluation... the hefty percentage of your participation grade reflects this importance. Therefore, always **be prepared to discuss** the day's readings, and always **BRING** each day's reading materials to class.

## Written Assignments: Tracks

Because this is a 300-level History course, some of you will want to be guided through a major **research project** which will result in a paper that will foreground your serious research skills and ability to work with primary sources. However, because of the unusual topic of the course, a number of you are **not** History (or Medieval) majors or minors, and you will likely have little need or desire for such a challenge. Happily we can accommodate both groups. By week two of the course, you will inform me whether you are on the “**Research**” track or the “I’m Taking It As An **Elective**” track.



***The intellectual challenges, amount of writing, and high grading standards will apply equally to both tracks; only the nature of the assignments and the expectations regarding your level of historical sophistication will be different.***

Everyone, regardless of track, will complete the Web Assessment assignment.

## Evaluation

### Research track:

Participation	20%
Web Assessment	10%
1 short paper	20%
Abstract	5%
Bibliography	0%
Term paper	45%

### Elective track:

Participation	20%
Web Assessment	10%
3 short papers @ 20%	60%
Articles synopsis and review	10%
<u>OR 2 short papers</u>	40%
<u>and Research Dabble</u>	30%

A very brief description of the assignments (page limits are firm):

**Participation:** An “A” grade assumes consistent, active involvement in class. This means willingness to ask and answer questions, volunteer observations, and generally interact with both the source materials and your colleagues in the class. It also assumes attendance at all three MSC events and response papers (see below).

**Web assessment:** You will choose two websites on relevant topics of your choice, and critically assess their reliability and scholarly worth according to criteria that I will provide: 3 pages.

**Short papers:** You will respond to question prompts on materials we are reading in class. Four will be assigned: **RTs** will select any *one*, **ETs** will select any *three*. They will be due on different dates (see schedule), so try to select ones that will fit well with other demands on your schedule. You will have one week to write them: 3-4 pages each.

**Article synopsis and review:** Using the IMB, **ETs** will find two articles on a single topic of your choice and provide an integrated synopsis of their content, argument and approach. Due any time BEFORE April 13: 4-5 pages.

**Variation:** instead of three short essays plus the articles review (total 70%), **ETs** can substitute two short articles and a Research Dabble (total 70%).

**Research Dabble:** **ETs** may choose to write a mini-research paper on a limited topic of their choosing, with a bibliography of 8 items (minimum) and length of 8-9 pages (including footnotes). Due any time BEFORE April XX: 8-9 pages.

Ideally this would be due the week we are discussing a related topic, so you can really contribute brilliantly to the discussion, but otherwise please plan to turn it in by April XX.

**Bibliography:** **RTs** will hand in properly formatted bibliographies consisting of 10-12 items that you will be using in your papers. These will receive a ‘grade’ assessing your research; this grade is FYI and will not be included in the final reckoning. **Failure** to turn in a bibliography will however detract .66 from your finished paper grade (e.g. from a B+ to a B-).

**Abstract:** **RTs** will provide a 2-page abstract of their topic, sources and argument by noon on the Monday after Break. Everyone in class will read those abstracts, and their questions, comments and suggestions will inspire and encourage you to refine your ideas.

**Term paper:** **RTs** will write a formal research paper asking a question, assessing the evidence of primary sources, evaluating and considering recent scholarship, and providing a hypothesis. This paper will be 10-12 pages, plus footnotes and an impeccably formatted bibliography.

All papers will be uploaded to Sakai “Assignments” unless otherwise indicated.

Submissions MUST be in Word format. *Papers that are not uploaded as a Word doc or docx, that do not have complete and correctly formatted footnotes, or that exceed the assigned page limit, WILL NOT BE READ OR GRADED.*

Commented and graded papers will be *returned* via your DropBox on Sakai.

More details on all assignments will be posted under “Assignments” on Sakai.

Guidelines describing what constitutes A, B, C and other grades, as well as a Style Guide and other helpful information, will be posted under Resources. Email alerts will inform you of new postings.

Medieval Studies Center Lecture Series: *Medieval Environments*

**[[See opportunities for extra credit]]**

## Expectations and policies:

Late policies: Coming late to class and leaving early are distracting and disruptive. A few instances are to be expected, but habitual abusers will find their participation grade lowered.

Late assignments: I tend to be merciful regarding late papers, so if you have a serious excuse (illness, major scheduling conflict, family emergency) please notify me and I will do my best to accommodate your needs. Abuses of my indulgence however will win you no points. Serial procrastinators will find one grade increment reduced from their assignments per 24 hours late.

### **As a STUDENT in this class, you are RESPONSIBLE:**

for keeping originals and back-ups of all your assignments, just in case;

for keeping up with the syllabus, schedule, and announcements made through Sakai;

for striving to ditch preconceptions, to proscribe fuzzy logic, and to demand accountability;

for maintaining an atmosphere of respect and decorum befitting a place of higher learning.

### **Cellphone and laptop policy:**

Once you enter this classroom, please silence your phone, put it away, and do not look at it until you leave the classroom. You are here to engage with fellow scholars and help each other explore some challenging material. Get your tuition’s worth: direct your efforts and your attention to the matter at hand. **Each** violation of this policy will result in one-third reduction of your final participation grade. *If you must have access to your phone for a serious, specific reason, clear it with me ahead of time.*

Laptop: I realize many of you prefer to take notes on your laptop. I will allow this, but any use of the device for checking e-mail, surfing or any other purpose will result in the same penalty as cellphone abuse. I recommend, however, that you consider taking notes by hand using a pen and actual notebook. Repeated studies have strongly suggested a positive correlation between hand-writing your notes and better retention and comprehension of data. Plus, it is easier to doodle monsters and magic spells in the margins of an actual notebook.

### **Respect and decorum:**

We will cover materials this semester which, despite originating in distant times and places, may yet evoke strong personal emotions or challenge cherished beliefs. In all cases we will endeavor to address these materials in a scholarly, objective way. We will take care to avoid egregious insults to each other's belief systems, while at the same time adhering to a rigorous demand for logic, clarity and facts.

More generally, we will come to class on time and not leave until class is over; we will enjoy beverages but not bring food to class (unless enough for everyone to enjoy!); we will bring enough tissues to deal with our winter sniffles, and we will always treat each other as we would like to be treated.

### **DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM**

As you well know (by this time in your college career, you had better know!) plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if your own, through missing, incomplete, or misleading documentation. **Make no mistake: plagiarism** will result in a grade of **F for the course** (you will be blocked from dropping the course) and possible disciplinary action in accord with university policy. Please read:

[http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml)

See also: <http://www.luc.edu/english/aboutthewritingprogram/theuseandmisuseofsourcematerials/>



Don't let  
←this happen  
to you!

### **Medieval Studies:**

Did you know you could minor in Medieval Studies? This course counts towards the 18 credit hours of the minor, some of which may overlap with other major or minors you may be undertaking (History, English, Fine Arts...) For more information on the Medieval Studies nor, just ask! Or check out our website...

# Syllabus: Part II (topics schedule) [DRAFT ONLY!!!]

Readings (and sometimes prep questions) will be listed and made available on Sakai under Assignments, at the latest by Friday night the week before those readings will be discussed in class.

Readings will be listed by week, date and topic.

*Disclaimer: schedule of topics may be slightly shifted as we go along: your flexibility will be appreciated!*

Always bring printouts of the readings to class (in the event that a reading is only on Reserve in Cudahy, bring a printout of your notes).

## Topics schedule

### **Week 1**

Tu Jan 17 Intro to course: nuts and bolts  
Th Jan 19 St. Augustine on nature and the miraculous

### **Week 2 “Elite” vs “popular” culture**

Tu Jan 24  
Th Jan 26

### **Week 3 Angels, devils and daemones**

Tu Jan 31  
**Th Feb 2** *Short Assignment #1 – upload by midnight*

### **Week 4 Revenants and ghosts**

Tu Feb 7  
Th Feb 9

### **Week 5 The army of the dead: Hellequin**

Tu Feb 14  
**Th Feb 16** *Web Assessment assignment due –hard copy – in class today*

### **Week 6 Fairies, elves and werewolves**

Mo Feb 20 MSC lecture: \  
Tu Feb 21  
Th Feb 23 *MSC synopsis -- upload to Sakai Assignments by midnight*

### **Week 7 Bestiaries and monsters: natural or supernatural?**

Tu Feb 28  
**Th Mar 2** *Short assignment #2 – upload by midnight*



Tu Mar 7 BREAK  
Th Mar 9

### Week 8

**Mo Mar 13** RTs, please **e-mail me** your abstract by NOON today!  
**Tu Mar 14** *Discussion of ABSTRACTS in class*  
Th Mar 16 Belief in the supernatural; superstition, cynicism and science

### Week 9

Mo Mar 20 **Saints, bodily relics, and the power of the dead**  
MSC lecture: \  
Tu Mar 21  
Th Mar 23 *MSC synopsis – upload to Sakai Assignments before midnight*

### Week 10

Tu Mar 28 **Practice of magic: sorcery, necromancy and alchemy**  
**Th Mar 30** *Short assignment #3 – upload before midnight*

### Week 11

Mo Apr 3 **Practice of magic: women, magic, and “witchcraft”**  
Tu Apr 4 \  
Th Apr 6 \  
Week 12

### Week 12

Tu Apr 11 **Vampires before ‘Dracula’**  
**Th Apr 13** *LAST DAY to turn in articles synopsis and review **OR Dabble** (ETs only)*

### Week 13

Tu Apr 18 **Hell Mouths and the geography of the supernatural**  
Th Apr 20

### Week 14

Tu Apr 25 **Medieval Manuscripts at the Newberry Library**  
Sign up for either Tu or Th visit to the Newberry – details to follow  
**Th Apr 27** *Final short assignment (#4) **AND/OR Research Dabble** – upload before midnight*

### Finals Week

**Th May 4** Final term research paper **due** (RTs only) –  
*Upload to Sakai Assignments as Word document before midnight tonight*

**REMEMBER:** *Papers that are not uploaded as Word doc or docx, that do not have complete and correctly formatted footnotes, or that exceed the assigned page limit, WILL NOT BE READ OR GRADED.*

