

# Study Abroad Course Syllabus

## Medieval England & the Gothic Revival

### May 2021

Dr. Jason Carney, Department of English  
Dr. Charlotte Cartwright, Department of History

*Note that this syllabus is preliminary and may be subject to change before the course begins.*

## Course Description

This interdisciplinary course allows students to connect medieval history with the imagined “medieval” of 18th century Gothic literature. Students will begin by reading and analyzing three seminal Gothic novels: Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*, Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and Lewis’ *The Monk*. At the same time they will visit surviving medieval cities, castles, cathedrals and abbeys to learn the history of late medieval England. In class discussion students will be able to explore how 18th century authors reimagined the medieval countryside, architecture, religion, and lifestyle in comparison with historical understanding of the medieval period. Students will have the opportunity to write a research paper on a history or literature topic of their choosing that allows them to further research the course themes.



*Whitby Abbey, Yorkshire, will be one of the medieval sites visited.*

## Course Background

In May of 1747, the antiquarian and art historian Horace Walpole, took the lease on an unassuming 17th century house, Strawberry Hill, in Twickenham, located just southwest of London. Walpole was a leader among a small but growing group of artists and writers who went against the Enlightenment neoclassical sensibilities (which celebrated ancient Greece and Rome). Instead, Walpole and others celebrated the aesthetic and culture of England's medieval past. Compelled by his love of all things medieval, Walpole transformed Strawberry Hill House into a faux Gothic castle complete with battlements, stained glass windows, and other various architectural forms deemed "Gothic," i.e. medieval. Walpole's architectural curio spawned what would later become the Gothic Revival in architecture, which would reach its apex with the embracing of the Gothic style for the rebuilt Houses of Parliament in 1840.



*Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham, London*

This Gothic trend did not stay in architecture, however, for Horace Walpole, inspired by occupying the fantasy world of his "little Gothic castle" wrote *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*, a novel of ghosts, labyrinthine dungeons, and secret murder. Walpole's novel, like his strange house, spawned a literary movement that began in 1764, reached its effulgence in the 1790s, and continues on even today in film, television, and music. Central to this multi-media enduring phenomenon is a fascination with medieval times and aesthetic attempts to capture the essence of this past era.

Our class will probe several questions: why did the Gothic emerge in the late 18th century? To what extent was it a response to the Enlightenment? How did medieval times serve as an aesthetic resource for key Gothic writers such as Walpole, Anne Radcliffe, and Mathew Gregory Lewis? How does the reimagined "medieval" of the 18th century compare with the actual historical context for medieval literature and architecture? To help us answer these questions our class will visit the medieval city of York and the Yorkshire countryside to see ruined castles such as Scarborough and monasteries such as Whitby and Fountains. We will then travel to London to visit the Gothic and Gothic Revival sites at Westminster, the neoclassical churches of Early Modern London, and end our trip at Strawberry Hill itself.

## Required texts

- Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (Dover Thrift Edition). ISBN: 978-0486434124. 128 pages.
- Anne Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Dover Thrift Edition). ISBN: 978-0486440330. 624 pages.
- M.G. Lewis, *The Monk* (Dover Thrift Edition). ISBN: 978-0486432144. 320 pages.
- *Erec et Enide*, c. 1170. Text will be provided to you on departure.
- Additional readings will be provided on Scholar and in your readings packet.

## Assigned Coursework

**Response to Discussion Topics:** Before each class you are to write a response to the assigned discussion topics (a paragraph at approximately 100-150 words). Use these entries to gather your thoughts, articulate reactions to readings, and to ask compelling questions. We will use these responses to conduct our discussion.

**Site Visit Papers:** Each student will be assigned two of the sites that the class visits during our time in the UK. Each student will write a two page paper (handwritten is acceptable) that connects the site to one of the texts discussed in class. Students should be prepared to compare the portrayal of the medieval in the text with the historical/archaeological evidence from the site visit.

**Research Project:** You will write a 8-10 page research essay on a topic in Gothic culture or medieval history that incorporates a substantive survey of relevant scholarship (5 sources minimum). Your topic will be developed in collaboration with the instructors. The research project will extend over the extended summer semester and will consist of the following components, assigned in the following order.

- Individual consultation (done while abroad)
- 1 page topic proposal (due before our return to the United States)
- Annotated Bibliography & Rough Draft (due one month after return to the United States; will be submitted electronically)
- Final Paper (due electronically two months after return to the United States)

### Comprehensive Final Exam

Will be completed in the UK; more details will be given while we are abroad.

## Grading

Your grade will be calculated using the following percentages:

Responses: 10%

Site Visit Papers: 20%

Research Project: 40%

Comprehensive Final Exam: 20%

Class participation and incidentals: 10%

Grade	Percentage	Scale
A+	97-100	4.0
A	93-96	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	65-66	1.0
E/F	Below 65	0.0

## Course Policies

*Due dates are firm and assignments must be turned in.* All assignments must be turned in during class on the day they are due. Activities turned in late incur point penalties. If any activity is later than one class day, it will not be graded. All major work must be completed to receive a final grade. You may not "skip" a paper assignment and receive credit for the course.

*Email is a great way to clarify assignments or ask questions you have thought of after class.* We expect you to use high communication standards when writing email. This means proper grammar, salutations and a meaningful and identifiable reference line.

*Cell phones are not appropriate for classroom use. Do not just turn your phone to silent, but turn them off.* If you choose to use these devices in class, a significant number of points will be taken away as a penalty.

*Supplies and preparation.* While we are abroad you can write your Response and Site Visit papers by hand, so a computer is not required. You will need to have a notebook that you can carry with you to the site visits and to class. You should also bring a hardcopy of the syllabus to every class along with the course texts. *Smart phones and laptops are not acceptable reading devices.*

*All assignments should be completed according to the criteria set forth in class and on the assignment sheets.*

## Accommodation

Due to this being a Study Abroad course any student with a disability should contact Dr. Cartwright or Dr. Carney BEFORE they put down a deposit for the course to discuss accommodation. All efforts will be made to accommodate students with a disability. Most of the sites we will visit have accommodation for disabled visitors, but please be aware that it may not be possible to access all parts of the sites.

In order for a student to receive an accommodation for a disability, that disability must be on record in the Office of Student Affairs, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, David Student Union (DSU). If you believe that you have a disability, please contact Dr. Kevin Hughes, Vice President of Student Affairs (594-7160) to discuss your needs. Dr. Hughes will provide you with the necessary documentation to give to your professors.

Students with documented disabilities are required to notify the instructors before departure. The instructors will provide students with disabilities with all reasonable accommodations, but students are not exempted from fulfilling the normal requirements of the course.

## Success

We want you to succeed in this course, and encourage you to speak to us outside of class and site visit times to discuss course content, to answer questions you have, and to assist you as you navigate your time in a new country. If we become concerned about your course performance, attendance, engagement, or well-being, we will speak with you first. Be aware that the usual Student Support offices will not be available to assist you during your time abroad, but we will do everything we can to help you. There are course assignments that you will need to complete independently once you return to the United States, and you should plan your time accordingly.



*The Houses of Parliament, London*

## Schedule

Please be aware that we will be climbing stairs to access train and Tube stations and while touring the medieval buildings during our site visits. Students should wear comfortable shoes and clothing with layers. England is notorious for rain, so make sure to bring a raincoat or umbrella every day. See the disability policy above if you have concerns about accommodation.

Note on the Reading: Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* must be read before departure. We strongly recommend that students do as much of the additional reading before departure as possible. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is four volumes. We will be reading the first three volumes. We will read all of Matthew Gregory Lewis' *The Monk*. Manage your reading time to be finished with Radcliffe (vols. 1-3) by the 5th day; finish M.G. Lewis' *The Monk* by the 10th day. *Erec et Enide* should be read by the 11th day. There will be supplemental readings, many of their primary medieval documents, provided in print and on Scholar by the instructors.

### Pre Departure: Read *The Castle of Otranto*

#### Day 1 - Departure

[Begin Reading Radcliffe's \*The Mysteries of Udolpho\*](#)

*We will depart from Dulles Airport in the afternoon (the flight is an overnight flight).*

#### Day 2 - Arrival in the UK & Orientation

*We will arrive at London Heathrow in the morning and take the train to York. After we check in at the hotel we will tour the city and have dinner as a group.*

#### Day 3 - Introduction to Medieval History.

*Class will be a lecture/introduction to Medieval England.*

Site Visit 1: York Cathedral

Site Visit 2: Clifford's Tower

#### Day 4 - The Medieval Church & Discussion of Radcliffe.

*Class will be a lecture on the Medieval Catholic Church and a discussion of Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.*

Discussion Topics: TBA

Discussion Response 1 DUE at the start of class

#### Day 5 - The Reformation in England.

*Day trip to Scarborough and Whitby. Class will be a lecture on the Reformation in England.*

Site Visit 3: Scarborough Castle

Site Visit 4: Whitby Abbey

#### Day 6 - Radcliffe.

*Class will be a discussion of Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.*

Discussion Topics: TBA

Discussion Response 2 DUE at the start of class

**Day 7 - The Monastic Orders.**

[Begin Reading Lewis' \*The Monk\*.](#)

*Day trip to Fountains Abbey. Class will be a lecture on Medieval Monasticism.*

Site Visit 5: Fountains Abbey

**Day 8 - M.G. Lewis / Travel to London**

*Class will be a discussion of Lewis' *The Monk*.*

Discussion Topics: The gender dynamics of Gothic literature

Discussion Response 3 DUE at the start of class

*In the afternoon we will take the train to London and check in to our hotel. We will have an orientation to London and group dinner.*

**Day 9 - M.G. Lewis / Medieval Architecture**

*Class will be a discussion of medieval architecture (including Romanesque and Gothic), followed by further discussion of Lewis' *The Monk*.*

Site Visit 6: Open-top bus tour of London and visit to the Tower of London.

Discussion Topics: TBA

Discussion Response 4 DUE at the start of class

**Day 10 - M.G. Lewis / History of Medievalism**

[Begin Reading Erec & Enide](#)

*Class will be continued discussion of Lewis' *The Monk* and comparison of the Gothic cathedral at Westminster with the Gothic Revival style seen at Parliament.*

Site Visit 7: Tour Westminster Abbey & Houses of Parliament

Discussion Topics: TBA

Discussion Response 5 DUE at the start of class

**Day 11 - Free Day****Day 12 - Medieval Romance / Erec & Enide**

*Class will be a discussion of the medieval "romance" genre and comparison with the development of the romance during the Gothic Revival.*

Discussion Topics: TBA

Discussion Response 6 DUE at the start of class

**Day 13 - Putting it all together. Representations.**

*In our class discussion at St Martins-in-the-Fields we will compare and contrast representations of medieval times in Walpole, Radcliffe, and Lewis.*

Discussion Topics: TBA

Discussion Response 7 DUE at the start of class

Students will also sign up for Individual Consultations to prepare for their final projects

**Day 14 - Putting it all together. Themes.**

*In our class discussion at St Martins-in-the-Fields we will compare and contrast the gender and political themes of Walpole, Radcliffe, and Lewis; as well as discuss the endurance of the Gothic into the modern day*

**Site Visit 8: Strawberry Hill House**

Discussion Topics: TBA

Discussion Response 8 DUE at the start of class

**Day 15 - Final Exam.**

*Students will take their final exam in the morning and have the rest of the day free.*

**Day 16 - Travel Home.**