

[CFP for Sewanee Seminar: Medieval Race and the Modern Scholar](#)

Announcement published by Matthew Irvin on Friday, October 13, 2017

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

October 26, 2017

Location:

Tennessee, United States

Subject Fields:

Cultural History / Studies, Humanities, Medieval and Byzantine History / Studies, Political History / Studies, Race Studies

In this seminar, we will study the ways in which the Middle Ages invented race as well as the means by which modern understandings of the medieval world continue to inform and influence race.

The seminar's modern inspiration is the long established, if increasingly visible, use of medievalism in movements whose objectives are to grant rights and privileges to people of certain races while withholding them from others. When neo-Nazis marched on Charlottesville, Virginia, USA, in August 2017, [some carried shields emblazoned with the Black Eagle of the Holy Roman Germanic Empire](#). It was apparently unknown to its white supremacist bearers that the insignia is strongly associated with Saint Maurice, who was black and is widely depicted in medieval European art with dark skin.

The seminar's medieval inspiration could come from any one of a plethora of medieval texts—chronicle romances such as *The Three Kings of Cologne*; pseudo-Aristotelian scientific texts; the travel narratives of the Nestorian monk Rabban bar Sauma; from any number of pieces of visual art, such as depictions of Saint Maurice; from any number of medieval episodes, such as events comprising the Crusades.

The seminar will explore the intersections, productivities, and even potential drawbacks of using critical race theory, postcolonial studies, and decolonization as tools for understanding medieval studies' place in the world and shaping the field as a political and cultural actor—within and outside the classroom. The seminar will ask, what extant theories might effectively do this work? To what extent does medieval critical race studies require the development of entirely new theories and practices in order to approach medieval material in intellectually responsible ways?

How might the methods of the various disciplines within medieval studies—literature and history, among others—intersect and diverge in effecting and continuing to establish a rigorous medieval critical race studies?

Seminar participants will contribute 7-9 page essays on any related topic. Papers will be pre-circulated before the Colloquium. Participants will present shorter, lightning-talk versions. Participants are encouraged to consider pedagogy as well as research; the seminar will include a collaborative pedagogical workshop.

Applicants should submit a 250-300 word abstract to [cord.whitaker\(at\)wellesley.edu](mailto:cord.whitaker@wellesley.edu) by **October 26, 2017**. Please write “Sewanee Seminar” in the subject header.

Please see the full seminar description at <http://medievalcolloquium.sewanee.edu/seminar-medieval-race-and-the-modern-scholar.php> for further details.

Contact Info:

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