Medieval Maps and Diagrams: Marking Space and Time

Prof Karen Overbey
Wednesdays 6-9 pm
Talbot Seminar Room

Medieval geographic representation drew on art and science, fact and fiction, legend, mythology, and history. The diagrammatic Macrobius world maps of the 9th-12th centuries, for example, illustrated the direction of ocean flows and the formation of the seas; mappamundi, such as the thirteenth-century Hereford Map, were dense, encyclopedic accumulations of topographical information, set into a Christian perspective. This seminar explores the range of medieval maps and related schema, and the recent literature on medieval cartography, travel, and technology.

Focus is on western European medieval traditions, c. 600-1400.

Topics include: Anglo-Saxon maps and emerging “nationhood”; Maps, monsters, and moralized geographies; Crusader maps and the representation of Jerusalem; Cosmological diagrams, including the Pythagorean Sphere; Antiquity, the “East” and medieval scientific knowledge; Pilgrimage maps and itineraries; Mapping terrestrial and celestial paradises; Collecting and display of medieval maps; and the role of digital technologies in current scholarship.

Pre-requisite: one FAH course pre-1700. Requirements include attendance at all sessions, individual and group presentations, and 20-page research paper.

Course Requirements
- Attendance at all seminar meetings
- Preparation of readings, participation in discussion, workshops, feedback
- Presentation of discussion topic/readings
- Research project
  - project proposal
  - annotated bibliography (20 sources)
  - seminar presentation
  - draft of research paper (with presentation)
  - revised research paper
  - 2 conferences (1 post-draft)
  - weekly research updates/discussions, including online discussions
Course Policies

Deadlines, and Policies regarding assignments

- All work is due as noted on the course calendar and/or Trunk.
- No late work will be accepted for this course without prior written permission of the instructor. (Emailing me the night before an assignment is due does not constitute permission.)
- Any arrangements for extensions are at the instructor’s discretion, and may include a grade reduction.
- Computer and/or printer failure will not be considered a valid excuse for late or missing assignments.
- Keep a copy of all assignments until you receive your final grade for the course.
- Unless specifically requested, do not submit assignments as email attachments.
- If you are absent from class, for whatever reason, be prepared for the next class meeting by following the syllabus.
- Attendance at all class meetings is expected. More than two unexcused absences will result in a lower grade, as will excessive lateness. Do not enroll in this class if you have foreseeable scheduling conflicts. Excused absences must be documented as emergencies by your academic Dean or advisor. If you have six total absences, you will fail the course.

Especially in the work of the course that is collaborative, be respectful of the members of your team in organizing and planning your work.

Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is intellectual theft, using someone else’s words and/or ideas as if they were your own; plagiarism is dishonorable, and a violation of Tufts’ policies on academic ethics and integrity. You are responsible for educating yourself about what constitutes plagiarism; please read the policies on Academic Integrity, and speak with me if you have any questions. Tufts’ Academic Integrity policy is available online: http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/publicaionsandwebsites/Academicintegrity.pdf

Special Needs

Students with special needs must inform instructor within the first two weeks of the semester, so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged in consultation with the office of Academic Services.
Course Calendar/Topics (see Trunk for reading lists and assignments)

05 September: Cartography in Medieval Europe
READ: Evelyn Edson, “Introduction to Medieval Maps”

12 September: Seeing Medieval Space
• Spatial Thinking
• Medieval Mappae Mundi

19 September: The Hereford mappa mundi (meet at Tisch Library Special Collections)
• Guest Lecture by Asa Mittman, University of California, Chico
• workshop with Hereford Map facsimile

26 September: ‘Objects and Issues’ presentations

03 October: Sources and Contexts
• Medieval Science and Learning
• Reception of Maps and Diagrams

10 October: Christian Topographies
• Pilgrimage and Paradise
• Devotional Bodies

17 October: Mapping Territory
• Nation and Empire Building
• Local Meaning: The Gough Map

preliminary project proposal due

24 October: Bodies in Places
• Performance of Space
• Travel, Exploration, and the Exotic

31 October: Digital Mappaemundi: Guest Lecture by Martin Foys, Drew University
revised project proposal and annotated bibliography due

07 November: Presentations/Drafts due

14 November: Presentations/Drafts due

21 November: no class meeting (Thanksgiving break)

28 November: Presentations/Drafts due

05 December: wrap up

12 December: final papers due