CWL 820
Medieval and Early Modern Encounters

This graduate seminar examines the literatures of travel and encounter from the pre- and early modern eras, focusing especially on encounters between Europe and the Islamicate world. We will survey a wide swath of cultural production from travel reports to literature, cartography, and artistic production, that emerged from diverse types of encounter including the Crusades, pilgrimage, and missions, trade and diplomacy along the Silk Road and in Africa, New World conquests, and Ottoman diplomacy. Throughout we will explore the interplay between the real and the imaginary within premodern travel writing and endeavor to trace its predominant tropes and transformations up through New World representations and the development of Orientalist discourse. Graduate standing or permission of the Instructor.