COURSE DESCRIPTION: Beginning in the late eleventh century, European Christians launched numerous Crusades (religiouisly sanctioned military expeditions) against Muslims, Jews, Christian heretics, and others. In this course, we will trace the complex history of the Crusades, and explore the ways in which historians have grappled with a number of interrelated questions: Why did Crusading achieve such prominence precisely when and where it did? What were the intellectual and religious underpinnings of this newfound linkage between religious fervor and violent military conquest? What impact did Crusading have on the cultural, economic, and political development of Europe? In addition, we will examine the diverse ways in which the Crusades—and, by extension, the Middle Ages more broadly—have been appropriated by subsequent generations, from the 19th century Romantics, to 20th century political scientists, to 21st century filmmakers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Students will become familiar with the overarching narrative(s) of the period of the Crusades, and will be able to differentiate between competing historical explanations for the rise and development of Crusading. They will also be attentive to the inter-religious dimensions of medieval religious violence, and to the ways in which subsequent artists, authors, filmmakers, and politicians have utilized Crusading imagery and symbolism.

AREA OF CONCENTRATION: Europe

TEACHING METHOD: Seminar

EVALUATION METHOD: Student Option

GRADING BASIS: ANC

TENTATIVE READING LIST:
Course Packet

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE: David Shyovitz is Associate Professor of History, and author of A Remembrance of His Wonders: Nature and the Supernatural in Medieval Ashkenaz. His research and teaching focus on medieval intellectual and cultural history, Jewish History, and the dynamics of inter-religious relations.