Nebraska Wesleyan University

HIST 4280 Heresy, Conflict, and Violence

Catalog

2025-2026

Course Description

This course looks at the regulation of belief by political and ecclesiastical authorities in medieval and Early Modern Europe, and how such regulation defined and criminalized heresy, nurtured political and social conflict, and justified the use of violence in shaping religious belief and practice. During the High and Later Middle Ages, the medieval Catholic Church developed institutions to pursue, try, and convict deviant religious of heresy. This feature of medieval religion shaped the subsequent development of Western Christianity over the next four hundred years. This course considers the reasons for the emergence of this persecuting dimension of Christian religiosity, and its consequences during the era from 1200-1700. Among the themes focused upon are the Cather movement and its suppression, the development of the Inquisition, the heretical revolts of late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as well as the Protestant Reformation and the witch hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
HIST-4280 meets with HIST 3280. The requirements of the courses are the same EXCEPT that a research paper is required for students in HIST-4280.
Prerequisite(s): HIST 2170 Body, Mind, Spirit: The Understanding of the Self in Western Culture or HIST 2180 Science and Religion in Western Tradition, or by instructor permission.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Writing Instructive

Course Hours

4 hours

Departments

1. History