From the fall of Rome to the dawn of the Renaissance, a range of architectural monuments shaped Byzantine and western medieval daily life, religious experience, and royal and civic spectacle. This course introduces students to the architecture, monumental arts and built environment of the eastern and western European Middle Ages from the third to the fifteenth century C.E. We will learn about the awe-inspiring basilicas of the Early Christian Mediterranean, the domed churches and gilded palaces of Byzantium, the cloistered monasteries and pilgrimage destinations of Romanesque Europe, and the great commercial cities with their merchants’ houses and Gothic cathedrals that rose across Europe. The course integrates the study of the architecture and its related arts (monumental painting, mosaics, furnishings) with the study of medieval culture and society, exploring the roles of royal courts and secular civil authority, religious performance and observance, crusading and trade between East and West, and rising urbanism. The course will proceed chronologically, with thematic and topical issues simultaneously addressed.

The course is lecture-based, though regular class discussions are held throughout the semester. Evaluation is by participation (including short written assignments), examinations and a research paper of 7-8 pages.