

COURSE DETAIL

READING THE QUEER MIDDLE AGES

Country

Ireland

Host Institution

Trinity College Dublin

Program(s)

Trinity College Dublin

UCEAP Course Level

Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)

Women's & Gender Studies History

UCEAP Course Number

136

UCEAP Course Suffix**UCEAP Official Title**

READING THE QUEER MIDDLE AGES

UCEAP Transcript Title

QUEER MIDDLE AGES

UCEAP Quarter Units

5.00

UCEAP Semester Units

3.30

Course Description

In 1394, John Rykener, having been detected in women's clothing and calling themselves 'Eleanor', was arrested in London for 'committing that detestable, unmentionable, and ignominious vice' with John Britby. This case went unremarked for decades despite the printing of a calendar of these records, because the editor summarized it only as 'Examination of two men charged with immorality'. This course takes this case as a starting point and asks: was Eleanor Rykener a trans woman? Was John Rykener a man in drag? Were they genderfluid? Are these terms applicable in the Middle Ages? Did this case even happen or was it all a political satire? Students read comparable cases from elsewhere, recent scholarship on the issue, other sources relating to queer identities in the Middle Ages, and historical fiction focusing on Rykener as a character.

Language(s) of Instruction

English

Host Institution Course Number

HIU33108

Host Institution Course Title

READING THE QUEER MIDDLE AGES

Host Institution Course Details

<https://www.tcd.ie/history/assets/pdf/ug/25-26/list3/queer-middle-ages.pdf>

Host Institution Campus

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department

History

Course Last Reviewed

2025-2026

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