For as long as human beings have lived in civilizations, they have dealt with conflicts between tribes, states, regions, and even empires, by means of war. But few eras built their civilizations so closely around the idea of warfare and being a warrior as did the Middle Ages. Medieval times, according to contemporary chronicles, appear to be dominated by knights on horseback living in castles with moats and drawbridges. Even personal quests took on the language of knighthood and warfare. How did this one aspect of society come to be so predominant in medieval culture? What was the place of women and children and non-warriors in such times? And what happened when the wars that defined medieval rulers threatened to tear them and their kingdoms apart? An exploration of these questions lies at the heart of this course. By exploring medieval society and culture we will discover the motivation for these wars, the technical and ideological ways they were waged, and the effects on the populations both at home and at the forefront of these conflicts.

Approved for Arts & Sciences CORE: Historical Context

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