



Still from *The Seventh Seal*, dir. Ingmar Bergman (1957).

HIU22030 **Medievalism on Screen**

Co-ordinator **Peter Crooks**

Credits **10 ECTS**

Semester **Hilary Term**

Assessment Formative Coursework (40%), and a 2,000-2,500 word end-of-term essay (60%)

Module Description: Many of the greatest films ever made—not just historical films, but films across all genres, languages, and cultures—are set in the Middle Ages. Equally, some of the most troubling representations of the past on screen are ostensibly ‘medieval’. This module critically examines how the Middle Ages has been represented on screen, commodified by culture industries and fetishized in modern identity politics. Students are introduced to the concept of ‘medievalism’ as a cultural phenomenon, tracing its origins in the nineteenth century and development up to the present day. Students are equipped with the skills to deconstruct representations of the medieval past and to challenge their own assumptions about the period, often shaped by popular films. The aim is not to test the historical accuracy of these representations but to explore what makes a great work of historical imagination or reconstruction—qualities that transcend traditional academic methods. Three subthemes structure the module: **Alterity:** analyzing the fascination with the Middle Ages and its portrayal of difference; **Identity:** uncovering how political agendas shape medievalist cinema; **Imagination:** reflecting critically on authenticity and the challenges of historical reconstruction.