

List III Michaelmas Term

HIU33120 Fashion Victims: Sumptuary laws in Medieval Ireland, Britain and Europe (Sparky Booker)



In the high and late middle ages, monarchs and urban governments across Europe enacted laws dictating what people could wear, what hairstyles they could have, what they could eat, what types of hawks they could hunt with, as well as creating a range of other restrictions on visual display. This module examines why. What was the purpose of these 'sumptuary' laws (as historians have named them)? What conditions led to their enactment? How did they differ across time and space? What types of people were regulated and who was allowed to dress as they pleased? Through weekly seminars, students will interrogate these questions of the original sources and select a subset of sumptuary law to examine in their essay.