This course will examine the visual, literary, and material culture of the medieval and Renaissance knight in Europe. The fully-armored knight on horseback is a routinely misunderstood figure, shrouded in over two hundred years of stereotyping, lampooning and conflation. The culture of chivalry has often been misinterpreted because of its pronounced contextual complexity – it cannot be understood through the exclusive study of documents, or of pictorial representations, or of surviving material evidence such as weapons and armor. The knight was at once a socio-political figure, a heroic symbol, an economic problem, a demonstration of high technology, a professional sportsman, and a deadly warrior. Therefore we will explore his history in a suitably interdisciplinary way.

On this journey through seven centuries we will examine the knight in all his multi-layered intricacy. We will examine his portrayal by poets, historians, artists, and –perhaps most importantly– by himself, in the form of chivalric texts, histories, and treatises on horsemanship and the martial arts, written by knights for knights. We will trace him through the study of such diverse sources as illuminated manuscripts, funerary efigies, martial arts manuals, and even everyday objects such as candlesticks, mirror-cases and "aquamanile". By combining the exploration of the knight’s physical world (notably the real function and use of his horse, weapons and armor) with literary and art-historical investigations, we will build up a more complete sense of the actual significance of the knight in his beautiful and dangerous world. Since the medieval knight was a “global” figure who operated in an international arena the course will focus broadly on English, French, Italian and Spanish source material. Given in English.

This course is part of the Summer 2010 FRANKLIN INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM (FISP)

The purpose of the Franklin International Scholars Program is to move beyond traditional paradigms of student study abroad and pursue substantive faculty collaborations with partner institutions throughout the world. In this sense Franklin College shares the mission of UGA’s Office of International Education, and FISP will be a key element of that mission. Since teaching and research are indissolubly linked, participants in the Franklin International Scholars Program will always be expected to teach as well as to conduct research. Teaching a class will allow international scholars to rehearse their research agendas before an enthusiastic and critical audience of UGA students. As a means of promoting interdisciplinarity, when possible the international scholars will teach split-level graduate/undergraduate classes, or cross-listed courses at either level. In addition, they will be expected to deliver one public lecture at the Athens-Clarke County Library.

FISP is supported in part by the PRESIDENT’S VENTURE FUND through the generous gifts of the UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA PARTNERS and:

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, the Office of International Education, the Office of the Vice President for Instruction, UGA-Croatia Program Fund, UGA en Buenos Aires Study Abroad Program, the Georgia Center for Continuing Education Conference Center & Hotel, the Department of Comparative Literature, the Department of English, the Department of Germanic & Slavic Studies, the Department of History, the Department of Romance Languages, the Department of Sociology, the Department of Speech Communication, the Latin American & Caribbean Studies Institute, and the Linguistics Program.