

Medieval Worlds' will provide a new type of forum for interdisciplinary and transcultural studies of the Middle Ages. It will specifically encourage and link comparative research between different regions and fields, and promote methodological innovation in transdisciplinary studies. It focuses on the 'Middle Ages', here used as shorthand for a period roughly between 400 and 1500 CE, including chronological extensions to both sides where it is thematically fruitful or corresponds to periodization current in that field. It takes a global approach, with a focus on Europe, Asia and North Africa. Studies of transcultural relations and processes of hybridization have seen a dynamic development in recent years. There has been relatively less attention to comparative studies, and this is the main approach chosen by 'Medieval Worlds'. Progress in comparative methodology can be made, to avoid reifying cultures as objects of comparison, or ignoring their global interaction or hybrid nature. Comparison should be used more to further the understanding of one's own object of study. 'Medieval Worlds' will encourage a critical debate between the disciplines about approaches and methods, and thus help to avoid methodological shortcuts and facile generalizations.

'Medieval Worlds' proposes an innovative way to achieve a new dynamic of wide-ranging comparative studies. The online, open-access format allows a much more flexible, to-the-point collaboration between different fields and disciplines than previously possible. The journal will of course invite comparative articles by individual authors or groups of authors. The main thrust is, however, to enable the systematic production of matching or complementary studies across the fields and disciplinary boundaries. 'Medieval Worlds' will try to create a kind of market place where partners for comparison can be found, and articles dealing with a topic from different angles can be published in pairs, small clusters or thematic issues. It will explore ways to bring together scholars from different disciplines interested in comparable topics, and encourage interdisciplinary groups to publish focused sets of articles. 'Medieval Worlds' will be open to normal submissions on comparative topics, but also on subject matters that lend themselves to comparison, which will then be advertised in a call for complementary papers from different fields; it will establish a 'Medieval Worlds forum' to put people working on related topics in different academic environments in touch with each other; it will publish calls for matching articles and for contributions to thematic issues; and it will organize small interdisciplinary workshops on invitation which will address promising topics and yield materials for publication. In short, 'Medieval Worlds' aims at creating a well-moderated forum for comparative studies, and organize a process of exchange and debate that may create a dynamic extension of our view of the global past beyond regional and disciplinary boundaries.