



IHC Visiting Scholar Talk:
Media Before Gutenberg

APR
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TUE

4:00 PM
McCune Conference Room, 6020 HSSB

Although “media” conjures modern, technologized modes of communication (television, the internet, print journalism), mediation is a central part of all communication. In the Middle Ages, media referred to networks of voices, texts, bodies, human actions, and nonhuman forces that were involved in sense perception, social interaction, storytelling, and other acts of cultural transmission. This talk will elaborate on the media ecology of the medieval West by putting Aristotle’s theories of sense perception in dialogue with theories of new media and embodied informatics, from Marshall McLuhan’s description of media as the “extensions of man” to N. Katherine Hayles’s cyborg theory.

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Understanding media before machine technologies and the era of mass communication heralded by the printing press also yields new insights into medieval literature, and this talk will conclude with a discussion of media and mediation in Geoffrey Chaucer’s masterwork, *The Canterbury Tales*.

Ingrid Nelson is the author of *Lyric Tactics: Poetry, Genre, and Practice* (University of Pennsylvania, 2017). She is an Associate Professor of English at Amherst College and a 2017–18 IHC Visiting Scholar.

A reception will follow. Sponsored by the IHC and co-presented with Medieval Studies.