

## Course Description



### Luther and the German Reformation

The aim of the course is to examine central writings of Martin Luther, and to place them in their social and cultural context.

Wittenberg, where Luther spent most of his life, was a tiny town with a new university: how did this context affect him? We will explore how his theological ideas developed, why they found acceptance and why their implications were so far-reaching for the society of his time. Luther's psychology is also fascinating. We will examine the dynamics of his close friendships but also explore why he might often be a grand hater, denouncing 'enemies' such as Carlstadt, Müntzer, Anabaptists, Spiritualists, Turks and Jews. How were his moral polarizations related to his view of the Devil? And how did his emotions shape his theology? What were his views on gender? There were many Reformations, and we will also consider the progress of the Peasants' War as it affected Luther as well as writings of Anabaptists and Spiritualists. Finally we will examine the way Luther's biography and his image as a reformer became part of the cultural furniture of Lutheranism.

Throughout the course there will be a strong emphasis on images of all kinds and their use in print.