Course Description:
Toleration and, indeed, acceptance or even celebration of difference (whether of race, ethnicity, class, gender, culture, or religion) are very recent and hardly generalized values. This course aims to explore the meaning of toleration and the processes by which it can be achieved through an examination of encounters with difference in medieval and Renaissance Europe, a culture which, on the whole, valued intolerance. The course will begin with readings that familiarize students with the structure of this society and the key normative values, categories, principles, and expectations that informed its identity as well as its approach to people who did not appear to conform to these norms. Students will then analyse primary-source texts and images that bear witness to a number of encounters which threw into sharp relief the difference between the normative (i.e. Catholic, male, heterosexual, and often elite) European and the “Other.” These encounters were fraught and often hostile, but they opened the eyes of many European observers to the ubiquity of difference and the humanity of those who were different. This was the beginning of a complex process of self-examination and familiarization with difference that formed the basis for the possibility of creating the concept of toleration. As an extension of the themes in HCOL 085, students will also consider the different “ways of knowing” that were used by the contemporaries of these encounters, and that evolved or were challenged in trying to make sense of them.

Course Goals:
I. Human individuals and groups may well have a natural propensity for intolerance against those perceived as “Other,” but it is also the case that intolerance is culturally conditioned and historically specific. Intolerance can, moreover, be encouraged and rewarded in order to achieve particular political and ideological ends. The readings, (including images), activities, and assignments in this course are designed to: 1) introduce students to the structures and mechanisms of intolerance in Western
European societies during the 11th through early 16th centuries; 2) have them explore a number of specific instances of intolerance in action: against Jews in the late Middle Ages; against witches, “sodomites,” and Jews in Renaissance Italy; and against the indigenous peoples of the Americas during the early period of Spanish colonization; 3) expose them to the writings of four Europeans who encountered and devoted significant attention and thought to describing and categorizing alien peoples (“wild” Irish, Mongols, and native Americans) with whom they came into contact; and 4) introduce them to early theories of toleration, which were themselves the product of contact with the “Other.”

II. In HCOL 85 we explored different “ways of knowing.” This theme can be further extended to include consideration of the academic disciplines. In disciplinary terms, both the content and the approach of this course is historical, so the second major goal of this course is to introduce you to history as a way of knowing, with its own traditions, debates, and distinct theoretical assumptions and methodological practices.

Learning Objectives:
1) Students will develop critical reading and thinking skills.
2) Students will practice and improve their writing and oral presentation skills.
3) Students will learn to comprehend, explain, and apply a basic set of analytical concepts.
4) Students will develop basic research skills.
5) Students will develop skills for working together on group projects.

Assignments and Methods of Evaluation:
Assignments will be designed with the foundational goals of the FY Writing Requirement in mind. Students will write two short (2-3 pages) papers in connection with their readings, do a variety of tasks (including a brief written report and oral presentation) in association with their group poster project and research essay, and prepare a longer (roughly 8 pages) research essay growing out of their work for the poster project.

Student work will be evaluated as follows:

- Class participation and homework: 25%
- Short papers: 20% (10% each)
- Group poster project: 25% (15% individual; 10% group)
- Research essay presentation: 10%
- Research essay: 20%
List of Readings and Course Materials:
Required Books (available at UVM Bookstore):

  Paperback: ISBN 1405129646
  ISBN 9780226538549
  Paperback: ISBN 0140444238
  Paperback: ISBN 0802064361
  Paperback: ISBN 0812218809

There will also be several short primary and secondary texts available on Blackboard.
Primary:

Secondary:

Schedule of Classes and Assignments (subject to minor modifications):

All PLENARIES listed below will be on Wednesdays, 5:05-6:20 pm.
Week One: Jan. 15 & 17. Defining Christendom

Week Two: Jan. 22 & 24. Forming a “Persecuting Society”

Week Three: Jan. 29 & 31. From a “Persecuting Society to the Irish “Other”

Week Four: Feb. 5 & 7. Irish and Mongols
First paper due, Thursday, Feb. 6, in class and by email.

Week Five: Feb. 12 & 14. Humanizing the Mongol “Other”

Week Six: Feb. 19 & 21. The Roots of European Anti-Semitism

Week Seven: Feb. 26 & 28. Narrating Anti-Semitism

Week Eight: Mar. 7. Violence and Memory
Second paper due, Thursday, Mar. 7, in class and by email.

Spring recess!

Week Nine: Mar. 19 & 21. Intolerance in Renaissance Italy
Plenary: March 20, Poster Information, Billings Lecture Hall

Week Ten: Mar. 26 & 28. Intolerance in Renaissance Italy
Week Eleven: Apr. 2 & 4. Theorizing Toleration
PLENARY: Apr. 3, Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, Billings Lecture Hall

Research essay proposals and initial bibliographies due, in class, Thursday, Apr. 4

Completed posters due, 11:59 p.m., Sunday, Apr. 7

Week Twelve: Apr. 9 & 11.
Tues: poster presentation workshopping. Thurs: individual meetings on research essay projects.
First research presentation PLENARY, Apr. 10, James Jeffords Hall 127

Week Thirteen: Apr. 16 & 18. New World Encounters I
Tues: Las Casas, In Defense of the Indians [on Blackboard]; Thurs: research essay project workshopping.
Second research presentation PLENARY, Apr. 17, James Jeffords Hall 127

Week Fourteen: Apr. 23 & 25. New World Encounters II
Tues: Cornish, “Spanish Thomism and the American Indians” [on Blackboard].
Thurs: individual research presentations I.
Research Symposium PLENARY, Apr. 24, UVM Alumni House, 61 Summit St.

Week Fifteen: Apr. 30 & May 2.
Tues and Thurs: individual research presentations II and III.

Final versions of research essays due, Tuesday, 7 May, at 12:00 noon, in my mailbox in Wheeler House and by email.