Brian A. Catlos, History Department, University of California, Santa Cruz. Will present “Is Mediterranean Studies Nothing More than an Excuse to Eat Goat Cheese and Olives? (or Power, Institutions, Identities in the Medieval Mediterranean).”

Sharon A. Kinoshita, University of California, Santa Cruz, will present “What is Medieval Mediterranean Literature?”

They are currently directing residential research group during the Fall 2007 at the UCHRI at UC Irvine


The Medieval Mediterranean is famous as a locus of exchange and acculturation, and of conflict and confrontation, among the Christians, Muslims and Jews who inhabited its shores. Trends and features common to their societies, whether in politics, administration, minority-majority relations or learned culture, are frequently analyzed in terms of transmission from one community to another. However, the transmission of ideas, policies and structures functions most effectively when conditions within the adopter-society are sufficiently similar to that of the donor-culture as to render the object of transmission readily intelligible and evidently advantageous. The present paper examines some of the common features of Christian and Islamic societies of the Mediterranean as manifestations of a shared environment -- one which facilitated the process of transmission as much as it resulted from it, and which reveal "Mediterranean" substrata not circumscribed by ecumenical divisions.

Suggested Readings can be found at: http://medievalstudies.ucsb.edu/events.html and http://www.history.ucsb.edu/courses/course.php?course_id=647

If you have any questions, please contact Edward D. English, english@history.ucsb.edu

Sponsored by Medieval Studies, History of Science, Religious Studies, History, Spanish & Portuguese, the IHC