This course investigates the critical and nuanced portrayal of legend, government, resistance and rebellion, and desire and ambition in the epic *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings* by Ferdowsi (d. 1020 CE). Ferdowsi depicts the moral, political, emotional, and spiritual struggles of men and women who are advisers, rulers, warriors, rebels, lovers, merchants, tradespeople, tricksters, and/or supernatural figures in the perpetually deferred quest for justice. We will interpret the use of storytelling in this major work of world literature to articulate competing discourses, as well as the work’s reception by the medieval narrative poets ‘Attar and Nizami Ganjavi.

Textbook: