

**Topics in Medieval Literature and Culture:  
Saints, Mystics, and Martyrs  
Eng. 415/545. SLN 86103/06981  
Monday 6.05 - 8.55 LL249**

Professor Rosalynn Voaden

Office: LL 303B

Office hours: Monday 2.30 - 4.00; Tuesday 1-3.30; and by appointment

Phone: 965 3364

email: Rosalynn.Voaden@asu.edu. I would prefer you to contact me by email, rather than by phone. I do not check my email on Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

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**Required Texts**

G.R. Crampton, ed., *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*

J. Wogan Browne and G. Burgess, trans., *Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths*

L. Staley, trans. and ed., *The Book of Margery Kempe*

M. King, trans. *The Life of Christina the Astonishing*

R. Pernoud, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*

C. Wolters, ed. *The Cloud of Unknowing*

A number of required readings will be placed on reserve; these can be accessed either on-line, or in the old-fashioned way. These readings will be assigned throughout the course.

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**Assignments**

Each class you will be expected to hand in a half-page response to one of the readings for that day. The questions you raise and the comments you make about the reading may form the basis for the class discussion. This response is due at the beginning of class; late submissions will not be accepted.

Your major paper will be a 10-12 page research paper on a topic of particular interest to you. You are free to choose your own topic, but if you would like some assistance, come to see me well before the due date with some ideas. I would like you to hand in a title and a one-paragraph topic statement three weeks before the paper is due. For this paper you are expected to do some research beyond the class texts. You should have at least four outside sources, at least two of which should be print (i.e. books or journals, not websites). If you need help using the library, there are orientation tours at the beginning of semester, and the librarians are ready to assist you any time.

Writing a good paper can be a real challenge and offer a great sense of achievement. While our talents as stylists vary, we can all avoid making mistakes in grammar and spelling. For that reason, I suggest you use the *MLA Handbook* for guidance in writing your research papers. It is available in the library, or you can purchase it at the bookstore. All your papers should follow the MLA style for footnotes, endnotes and bibliographies. You will also be given a checklist of common errors for which you will lose marks. You can always ask me for guidance **before** you hand in a paper. You can also get help at the Writing Centre. Just don't leave

either of these to the last minute. All papers should be typed, double-spaced and the pages should be numbered.

If you quote directly or indirectly from any secondary source or critical work (this includes the notes in any of the texts or readings), articles in the newspaper or journals, or information gathered through the Internet, you must attribute your source in a footnote or endnote.

**Passing off someone else's words or ideas as your own, whether you take them from a book or journal, from another student's essay or from the Internet, is PLAGIARISM, one of the gravest academic offences. Plagiarism will earn you 0 on the paper, and may have other serious consequences.**

All required work must be completed to pass the course. Final papers will not be accepted after the due date without a documented medical excuse. Papers submitted by email or electronic attachment will not be accepted.

In addition to the research paper and reader responses, there will be a midterm and a final exam, and there may be various in-class assignments. The ongoing assignment for the course is reading. It is imperative that you complete the assigned reading before the class in which we will be discussing it.

This is a special topics course, to which you are all bringing your own interests and expectations. I hope that most of the class will be spent discussing the texts we read, and I expect all of you to contribute to class discussion. 15% of your grade is based on class participation; if you don't contribute, you can count on losing 15%.

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### **The Play**

Plays based on saints' lives were one of the most popular of medieval entertainments; they also served a didactic function. To give us some idea of what this experience would have been like, the class will prepare and perform a saint's play.

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### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance affects all aspects of the learning experience; this course will cover a large amount of material, and students who do not attend regularly will be at a severe disadvantage, especially since we meet only once a week. If a student has missed more than three hours without acceptable (medical/compassionate) documented excuse, they will lose 1% off their final grade for each missed hour. (I am counting each evening session as three hours). Students who miss more than 20 hours will not be permitted to write the final.

Please make every effort to be on time for class. If you have to leave early, please let me know at the beginning of the class.

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I would like to encourage you to attend the various special lectures offered by the department, the college and the university. Students who do attend such events

can inform me and receive credit, which will be reflected in your class participation mark.

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If you have a registered disability, please arrange to see me during office hours at the beginning of the semester so that we can discuss the accommodation you require. It is better for both of us if I know how best to help you right from the start.

### **Grade Distribution**

Reader responses	15%
Research essay	25%
Midterm exam	15%
Final exam	20%
Play	10%
Class participation	15%

Letter Grade Equivalencies:

85+ = A; 75 - 84 = B; 60 - 74 = C; 50 - 59 = D; >50 = E

I will agree to an Incomplete for medical reasons only.

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### **English 545: Saints, Mystics and Martyrs Graduate Credit**

#### **Assignments**

In addition to those assignments listed in the undergraduate syllabus, you will be expected to do the following.

- 1) Give a fifteen-minute presentation in class on the topic of your research paper. I would like your topic statements by **September 8**.
- 2) Your research paper should be 20 - 25 pages long, fully documented and utilizing at least twelve outside sources.
- 3) Lead small-group discussions or work sessions in class.
- 4) Your reader responses should be at least 1 page long.

#### **Grade Distribution for Graduate Credit**

Reader responses	20%
Research essay	45%
Presentation	10%
Play	10%
Class participation	15%

## Schedule of Classes and Assignments

### **Week One: August 25**

Introduction: The Infinite Varieties of Holiness in the Middle Ages

### **Week Two: September 1**

Labour Day - no class.

### **Week Three: September 8**

Virgin Martyrs

Perpetua (handout); *Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths*

**Graduate topic statements due**

### **Week Four: September 15**

Saints' Legends and How They Worked

Excerpts from *The Golden Legend*, from *The South English Legendary*, and from *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, Bonaventure's *Life of St Francis*, *Medieval Saints*. All these are on reserve. Chaucer's *Second Nun's Prologue* and *Tale* ([www.canterburytales.org](http://www.canterburytales.org)).

### **Week Five : September 22**

Saint's Plays I

*Mary Magdalene* and *The Conversion of Saint Paul* (reserve).

Presentation

### **Week Six: September 29**

Holy Women I

*The Life of Christina The Astonishing*

Presentation

### **Week Seven: October 6**

Holy Women II

excerpt from *The Life of Christina of Markyate* (reserve)

Presentation

**Midterm Exam** (1 hour). Will cover up to Sept. 29

### **Week Eight: October 13**

Visionaries I

excerpts from *Hildegard of Bingen* (reserve)

Presentation

### **Week Nine: October 20**

Visionaries II

*The Life of Bridget of Sweden*, excerpts from *The English Writings of Richard Rolle* (reserve). Excerpts from *The Life of Marie d'Oignies* and *The Book of St Bride* (pp.

218-22 and 207-18 respectively, in your copies of *The Book of Margery Kemp*, Lynn Staley ed.

Presentation

**Week Ten: October 27**

*Visionaries III*

*The Book of Margery Kempe*

Presentation

**Week Eleven: November 3**

*Mystics I*

*The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*

Presentation

**Week Twelve: November 10**

*Mystics II*

*The Cloud of Unknowing*

Presentation

**Undergraduate essay topic statements due**

**Week Thirteen: November 17**

*Saint, Mystic and Martyr I*

*Joan of Arc: Her Story*

Presentation

**Week Fourteen: November 24**

*Harlot Saints*

Readings TBA; Essay writing workshop

Presentation

**Week Fifteen: December 1**

*Religion on the Streets*

Miracle Plays; The anchoress

**Week Sixteen: December 8**

*Saints' Plays II*

The Performance

**Final Essays Due**

**December 15**

**Final Exam 6.05 - 7.55**