

English 415 (82542) Fall 2010
Topics in Medieval Literature and Culture:
Saints, Mystics, and Martyrs
M.W. 2-3.15; ED 210

Professor Rosalynn Voaden

Office: LL 214D

Office hours: M.1-1.30; T. 11-12; 2- 4; and by appointment

email: Rosalynn.Voaden@asu.edu. I do not check my email on Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

Required Texts

Dan Brown, *The DaVinci Code*.

Karen Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalene*.

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

Samuel Fanous *et al.*, *The Life of Christina of Markyate*.

Other required texts will be posted on Blackboard, or are available on line. Information on these texts is given in the schedule of readings.

Assignments

This class will involve a variety of assignments, some that will involve active participation and working with a group of your classmates, and others that you will do by yourself.

A - Group Work

I) 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. Everyone will be expected to take an active part and to contribute to the overall success of the production. You will not be required to learn long parts by heart.

II) The Trial

You will have the opportunity to make the trial of Joan of Arc come alive. For this assignment, groups of students will research and reenact various events of the trial, taking on the roles of the most important participants, including Joan. We will not, needless to say, reenact the sentence.

Some class time will be devoted to each of the above projects, but you will also have to meet with your group outside of class to prepare, research and

rehearse. Groups for each of these projects will be assigned early in the semester.

Evaluation of each of these projects will be from two sources: your own self-evaluation of your contribution to the project, and my observation of your involvement. Your self-evaluation will take the form of a brief report in which you indicate, in detail, what you initiated, what you worked on as part of a team, and how you think your contributions contributed to the success of the project.

B - Individual Work

I) Reader Responses

When we start a new topic, as indicated on the syllabus, you will be expected to hand in a one page response to one of the readings for that topic. Your response should include two substantive questions which you should be prepared to raise in class. The questions you raise and the comments you make about the reading may form the basis for the class discussion. This response is due when we start to discuss the topic; late submissions will not be accepted. These responses are worth 2% each, for a total of 20% (you can take a pass on one of the topics). A thoughtful response will earn 2%; one that is dashed off in a hurry will earn 0.

II) Research Paper

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 on the date indicated. 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). All internet sources must be accessed through the Hayden Library gateway. Wikipedia is not, ever, an acceptable reference source. If you need help using the library 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. All your papers should follow the MLA style for footnotes, endnotes and bibliographies. You will be expected to follow MLA format for citations (footnotes or endnotes) and bibliographies in all papers. You can find this ol-line

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/#Works-Cited>

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, but is not limited to, the notes in the texts, articles in the newspaper or journals, or information gathered through the Internet), you **must** attribute your source in parenthesis or in a footnote or endnote. If you use someone else's words - even just a phrase - you **must** enclose those words in quotation marks, and attribute the source. If you are not sure whether you might be plagiarizing, **ASK**.

Passing off someone else's words or ideas as your own, whether you take them from a book or journal, another student's paper or off the Internet, is PLAGIARISM, one of the gravest academic offences. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. It is very easy for me to scan papers to check for plagiarism. Students found guilty will fail the course, not just the paper, and will receive XE (failure for academic dishonesty) on their transcripts.

All required work must be completed to pass the course. All papers must be submitted by the due date through Safe Assignment on Blackboard, as well as in hard copy. Final papers will not be accepted after the due date without a documented medical or compassionate excuse. Papers submitted only by email or electronic attachment will not be accepted.

III) Exams

In addition to the research paper and reader responses, there will be a midterm and a final exam.

The on-going 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.

IV) Class Participation

This is a special topics course, to which you are all bringing your own interests and expectations. 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%.

Grade Distribution

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|------------------|-----|-----|
| Reader responses | 20% | |
| Play | 10% | |
| Midterm exam | 10% | |
| Trial | | 10% |
| Research essay | 20% | |

Final exam 15%
Class participation 15%

Letter Grade Equivalents:

The grading scale for this class is: 95+= A+; 90-94 = A; 85-89 = A-; 80-84 = B+; 75-79 = B; 70 -74 = B-; 65-69 = C+; 56-64 = C; 50-55 = D; less than 50 = E.

I will agree to an Incomplete for medical reasons only.

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. If you miss more than three classes without acceptable (medical/compassionate) documented excuse, you will lose 10% off your final grade for each subsequent missed class. Students who miss more than 12 classes for any reason 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. Please turn off all cell phones before entering the classroom. Students using any function of a cell phone in a test or exam will automatically receive zero on that test or exam, and there may be other serious consequences. You may use a laptop to take notes; if you are found using it for any other purpose you will be counted absent for that class and not be allowed to continue to use your laptop in class.

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.

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.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Note: you must write a response to ONE of the readings on each topic. Your response is due the day we discuss (or start discussing) the reading you have

chosen. You can take a pass on writing on one topic during the semester. However, you must do all the required reading, whether you are responding to it or not.

Week One - August 23

M. Who's Holy? Medieval and Modern Perceptions of Holiness.
Reading: handouts to be given in class

W. Topic 1: Virgin (and not-so-virgin) Martyrs

Medieval Saints - Perpetua (BB)

The Kindness of Strangers - The Nun of Watton (BB)

Week Two - August 30

M. Topic 1: Virgin (and not-so-virgin) Martyrs (cont.)

Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths: St Catherine (BB)

one of: Golden Legend: St Katherine (BB)

City of Ladies: St Catherine (BB)

South English Legendary: St Katherine (BB)

W. Topic 1: Virgin (and not-so-virgin) Martyrs (cont.)

Golden Legend: St Cecilia (BB)

Chaucer: *Canterbury Tales*, Second Nun's Prologue and Tale (BB)

Bokenham: *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* "St Cecilia" (BB)

Week Three - September 6

M. Labor Day - class cancelled

W. Topic 2: Gender and Holiness

Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths: St Laurence

Golden Legend: St Laurence (BB)

South English Legendary: St Laurence (BB)

Week Four - September 13

M. Topic 2: Gender and Holiness (cont)

Medieval Saints: Life of St Francis (BB)

Lupo Gubbio (The Wolf of Gubbio) (BB)

W. Topic 3: A Medieval Martyr I: Thomas Becket

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/grim-becket.html>

Look at the website on Canterbury Cathedral and the Becket windows and make notes for discussion:

<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/england/canterbury-cathedral-becket-windows.htm>

Week Five - September 20

M. Topic 4: Mary Magdalen, Then

The Making of the Magdalen: pp. 18-142

Golden Legend: Mary Magdalen(BB)

W. Topic 4: Mary Magdalen, Then (cont.)

The Saint's Play *Mary Magdalen* (BB): Introduction and Casting

Week Six - September 27

M. Topic 4: Mary Magdalen, Then (cont.)

The Saint's Play *Mary Magdalen* (BB)

W. Topic 5: Mary Magdalen, Now

The DaVinci Code

Week Seven - October 4

M. Topic 6: A Medieval Saint? I

Life of Christina of Markyate (the whole thing)

W. Topic 6: A Medieval Saint? I (cont.)

Christina of Markyate

Week Eight - October 11

M. Topic 6: A Medieval Saint? I (cont.)

Christina of Markyate and the St Albans Psalter.

The Introduction to the website for the St Albans Psalter, found at:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/>

W. Guest lecture on St Albans.

Week Nine - October 18

M. Midterm exam - everything up to and including Christina of Markyate.

W. Performance of the Saint's Play, *Mary Magdalen*

Week Ten - October 25

M. Topic 7: A Medieval Saint? II

Life of Christina the Astonishing (the whole thing - BB)

W. Topic 7: A Medieval Saint? II (cont.)

Life of Christina the Astonishing

"Demoniacs: Christina Mirabilis" (BB)

Week Eleven - November 1 (All Saints Day)

M. Topic 8: A Medieval Visionary I

Birgitta of Sweden (BB)

W. Topic 9: A Medieval Visionary II

Hildegard of Bingen (BB)

Topic statements for final papers due

Week Twelve - November 8

M. Topic 10: A Medieval Mystic I

The Cloud of Unknowing (the whole thing)

<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/cloud.htm>

W. Topic 10: A Medieval Mystic I (cont.)

The Cloud of Unknowing

Week Thirteen - November 15

M. Topic 11: A Medieval Martyr II: Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc: Her Story, pp. 9-137

W. Topic 11: A Medieval Martyr II: Joan of Arc (cont)

Joan of Arc: Her Story, pp. 9-137

Week Fourteen - November 22

M. Topic 11: A Medieval Martyr II: Joan of Arc (cont)

The Trial of Joan of Arc - casting and organization

<http://www.stjoan-center.com/Trials/> (We will be performing excerpts, not the whole thing)

W. Study Day - no class meeting

Week Fifteen - November 29

M.Topic 11: A Medieval Martyr II: Joan of Arc (cont)

Joan of Arc

W. Rehearsal and review

Week Sixteen - December 6

M. The Trial of Joan of Arc - performance

Final Papers due

Final Exam

Monday December 13, 12.10 - 2pm.