



English 632: Mysticism and the Body
SLN 15390
Mon. 4.40 - 7.30. Goldwater 111

Professor Rosalynn Voaden

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Office hours: TBA

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Required Texts

Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast* (U. of California P., 1987)

Anne L. Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau: The Complete Works* (Paulist P., 2000)

Marguerite Tjader Harris, *Birgitta of Sweden: Life and Selected Writings* (Paulist P., 1989)

Columba Hart, *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias* (Paulist P., 1990)

The Cloud of Unknowing <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/cloud.htm>

http://www.margueriteporette.org/cloudofunknowing_oe.html

Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. 1.

<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/hilfr1.htm>

Leonard Hindsley, *Margaret Ebner: Major Works* (Paulist P., 1993)

Bernard McGinn, *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism* (Modern Library, 2006)

Richard Rolle, *The Fire of Love and the Mending of Life* (Cosimo Classics, 2007)

Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins, *The Writings of Julian of Norwich* (Penn State U.P., 2006)

Barry Windeatt, *The Book of Margery Kempe* (D.S. Brewer, 2004)

You will also need a bible, preferably the Douay-Rheims version; failing that, the King James Version. Every possible version of the bible is available, and searchable at: <http://unbound.biola.edu/>

Other readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Seminar Objectives

The goals of the seminar are for you to read a number of major mystic and visionary texts of the late-Middle Ages, and then to consider how various concepts of the body function in the writing and reception of those texts. During the first part of the semester we will explore the texts themselves - I **have chosen to call them "Case Histories"; in the second part of the semester** we will work on the concepts of the body - which I am calling surprisingly, **"Concepts"**.

Assignments

- 1) This is a seminar, and everyone must contribute to the discussion. 20% of your grade is based on active class participation. You are all expected to read the assigned text(s) before the class in which it is to be discussed.
 - 2) You will each give a twenty minute class presentation on one of the Case Histories. This should not be simply a précis or description of the work, since everyone will have read it, but should set the work in its cultural context, refer to related works, and offer suggestions for further reading.
 - 3) You will each write a 5,000 word research paper on one of the Concepts and lead class discussion on it. Your paper will be distributed to the class the week before it is to be discussed. A final version in MLA format, incorporating the suggestions and criticism arising from the discussion, is to be handed in to me one week later.
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Grade Distribution

Case History presentation: 25%
Concepts research essay: 55%

Class participation: 20%

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+; 55-64 = C; 50-54 = D; less than 50 = E.

Needless to say, plagiarism of any kind or degree will earn you an XE grade.

Further Reading

I will be posting pdfs of chapters on various holy women from ***Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition*** on Blackboard. Each chapter is followed by an extensive bibliography.

The TEAMS website has many primary sources which you may find useful.
<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/tmsmenu.htm>

Some of the assigned editions have suggestions for further reading

I will post further suggestions as the course proceeds, and would urge you to let your classmates know, via Blackboard, of any useful sources you come across.

If you have a registered disability, please arrange to see me during office hours so that we can discuss the accommodation you require.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Additional readings may be assigned as the course proceeds.

Part One: Case Histories

January 24

Introduction - Mysticism, the Body, and the Later Middle Ages
Assignment sign up

January 31

Hildegard of Bingen, ***Scivias***
Elisabeth of Schönau

February 7

Margaret Ebner

The women of Helfta. Read the chapter on Helfta in Bynum, *Jesus as Mother* (e-book); the selection from Petroff and the selection from Mechtild of Hackeborn on BB.

February 14

Richard Rolle, *The Fire of Love* and *The Mending of Life*

Robert of Uzès

John of Rupecissa. Read the selection from McGinn, *Visions of the End* (BB)

optional - **a commentary on John of Rupecissa's prophetic works:**

<http://oliviana.revues.org/index331.html#tocto1n2>

February 21

Birgitta of Sweden

Read Dinzelbacher (BB)

February 28

Julian of Norwich

Margery Kempe

March 7

The Cloud of Unknowing

Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. 1

March 14

Spring Break

Part Two: Concepts

March 21

Christ's Body

Read Song of Songs; Underhill (BB)

March 28

The Gendered Body

Read Irigaray (BB); Elliott (BB); Kristeva (BB); Kerby-Fulton (BB)

April 4

The Erotic Body

Read Brown (BB)

April 11

The Suffering Body

The Abject Body

Read Scarry (BB); Garber (BB); Lochrie (BB)

April 18

Passover - this class cancelled

April 25

The Absent Body

May 2

Celebration: Food and Drink for our Bodies