“Saints and Demons in Medieval Europe: Religious Expression in the Middle Ages”

Spring 2009

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Course Description:
Throughout the medieval period, Christianity exerted a powerful influence over the lives of Western Europeans. Its teachings moulded contemporary beliefs about the universe and the world. At the same time, the church fostered an overriding sense of the importance of order and obedience to authority in daily life. This course examines the depth and fluidity of that influence on Western European society in the high and late Middle Ages (roughly the 12th to very early 16th centuries). Some particular themes of this course will be: exploring the varying forms of religious expression (popular, militant, ascetic, dissenting, mystical); exploring Christianity and the church in everyday life through popular beliefs and lay involvement in the church.

Mondays will be lecture days; Wednesdays and Fridays will be reserved for class discussions of the readings. Attendance at both lectures and class discussions is strictly required, and in discussions especially, students are expected to participate actively.

This is a BLACKBOARD course. All lecture outlines and discussion questions will appear on BLACKBOARD.

Required Texts:
- All articles, as well as some primary documents, are on Blackboard.

Grade Distribution:
Sommerfeldt paper 15%
Walker Bynum paper 15%
Newman paper 15%
Reading Logs 20%
Participation 15%
Final Exam 20%
Assignment Descriptions:

1) Book Assignments
   All book assignments should be approximately 6 pages (12 pt. font, normal margins, double-spaced type), in standard essay format, and should be based almost entirely on what you read in the book (hence, please make references to what you read in the books...). If none of these questions gets you excited, please come up with your own question AND DISCUSS IT WITH ME.

Sommerfeldt Assignment:
   Please answer ONE of the following questions:

   1. How do Saint Bernard’s life and vision embody the values of his age?

   2. How did Saint Bernard, a monk dedicated to retreat from the world, justify playing such an important role in the world outside the monastery?

   3. How might Saint Bernard’s ecclesiology have contributed to the medieval world? (Please note: here I am not asking for a list of his worldly accomplishment; I want you to look at his ecclesiology and understand how this perspective might have improved medieval perceptions.)

Newman Assignment:
   Please answer ONE of the following questions:

   1. Which one female religious discussed here in Newman’s book best exemplifies the religious values/perceptions/ideology of the era?

   2. What techniques did women use to circumvent the more usual path of religious women (silence and subordination)?

   3. Newman suggests the existence of two feminist models that, while opposed in theory, are often combined in practice, the unisex ideal and the Goddess ideal. Does this approach bring new insight to the study of medieval women religious?

   4. How might an understanding of the distinctive voices of medieval women enhance our understanding of spirituality at the beginning of the 21st century? (Be sure to include a discussion of what you see as both negative and positive about medieval women's sense of self and their understanding of relation to God.)

Walker Bynum Assignment:
   Please answer ONE of the following questions:

   1. Walker Bynum argues that blood relics were “both instruments of clerical control and elements of religious and social resistance” (p. 249). Explain what she means by this and tell me what you think about it.
2. Why is the theory of “concomitance” so central to medieval piety and what kind of problems did this theory engender? What are the broader implications of this theory?

3. Did the intensity of blood piety require persecution of the Jews? By that I mean, can you have one without the other?

2) Reading Logs

I want you writing all the time. You will only become a good writer if you are writing every day (and yes, becoming a good writer is essential – good writers are good thinkers). Therefore, students will be required to write a response to the article readings and the week’s primary documents (usually the Wednesday and Friday classes) of roughly one page per reading or chapter. Do not summarize the readings. Instead, discuss something about the article or documents that raised questions / was particularly interesting / relates to other issues we have discussed in the course. The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate that you have thought critically about the readings before class. If you have to miss class for any reason, please email your reading log to me as a Word attachment the same day as the class.

3) Participation

Perfect attendance is not sufficient to receive a passing grade. As a rule of thumb: in a class of 25 people, I expect to see active participation in the small groups and everyone should attempt to contribute at least one comment or insight to the larger group discussion at every class.

4) Final Exam

The final exam will be one essay question. You will be given the question in advance. Please allow me to note: knowing the question does not make this an easy exam. Because you know the question in advance, I expect a thoughtful response.

Extension & Late Policy

I need you to write these papers in order for us to have a good class discussion. Because of this, I will not be giving out extensions unless you are on your deathbed. If you do choose to hand in your paper late, you will lose one full letter grade per day. For example, if your paper would have received an “A” on the deadline, the next day it will receive a “B”.

Attendance

1. Attendance will be taken orally at the beginning of every class – if you are not present when attendance is taken, you will be considered absent.
2. Each student is permitted to miss class three times without explanation. After that, the student’s grade will be adjusted by 2 percent for each missed class.
3. I cannot, in good conscience, give a passing grade for the course to a student who has missed more than 12 classes, regardless of how well that student has done on class assignments. This rule will apply also in medical circumstances. This is not distance learning. Please keep this in mind and track your absences.
**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>65-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>Minimal pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notice to Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who wish to receive accommodations in this class should contact Disability Services at 865-2990 as soon as possible so that warranted accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. Disability Services are located in the Academic Enrichment Center, Monroe Hall 405.

**Departmental Statement on Plagiarism**

“Plagiarism – the use of another person’s ideas or wording without giving proper credit – results from the failure to document fully and accurately. Ideas and expressions of them are considered to belong to the individual who first puts them forward. Therefore, when you incorporate ideas or phrasing from any other author in your paper, whether you quote them directly or indirectly, you need to be honest and complete about indicating the source to avoid plagiarism. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism can bring serious consequences, both academic, in the form of failure or expulsion, and legal, in the form of lawsuits. Plagiarism is a violation of the ethics of the academic community.”


For more information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, go to: [http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html)

**Where to find Help with your Writing**

- Writing across the Curriculum, Bobet 100, ext. 2297

**Student Decorum**

Our classroom is not a telephone booth. So, please TURN YOUR CELL PHONES OFF WHEN YOU ENTER THE ROOM.

**Revision of the Syllabus**

I reserve the right to revise this syllabus at any point once this course is in progress. I will inform students of any changes.
Course Schedule

Week 1: Christian Basics I: The Medieval Universe
   Jan. 12: “Introduction to the Class”
   Jan. 14: lecture: “Medieval Cosmology”

Week 2: Christian Basics II: Scripture and Tradition
   Jan. 19: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR DAY – NO CLASS
   Jan. 21: discussion of John Arnold, “Acculturation”
   Jan. 23: discussion of Shinners, ch. 1 “Instruction in the Faith,” pp. 1-36 (please note: this is not the entire chapter).

Week 3: Popular Devotion I: Saints and Demons
   Jan. 26: lecture: “The Cult of the Saints and its role in Medieval Europe”
   Jan. 30: discussion of Shinners, ch. 5 “Demons and Spirits”

Week 4: Popular Devotion II: The Centrality of Relics
   Feb. 2: lecture: “Pilgrimage, relics and the sacraments”
   Feb. 4: discussion of Patrick Geary, “Monastic Thefts”
   Feb. 6: discussion of Shinners, ch. 4, “Saints, Relics, and Pilgrimage”

Week 5: Militant Devotion I: Heroes of Christianity
   Feb. 9: lecture: “Varieties of Monasticism”
   **** Sommerfeldt assignment due date
   Feb. 13: discussion of John R. Sommerfeldt, Bernard of Clairvaux on the Spirituality of Relationship

Week 6: Ascetic Devotion: The Psychology of Asceticism
   Feb. 16: lecture: “Hair shirts, flagellation, and other forms of self-denial”
   Feb. 18: discussion of Rudolph Bell’s “I, Catherine”
   Feb. 20: discussion of movie The Anchoress, 108 min. (please make sure that you have watched this on Blackboard where it is video-streamed, and do a reading log based on your viewing).

Week 7: Newman Work Week
   Feb. 23: MARDI GRAS HOLIDAY – NO CLASS
   Feb. 25: Work on your papers – NO CLASS
   Feb. 27: Work on your papers – NO CLASS
Week 8: Mystical Devotion I: Mysticism through the Ages
Mar. 2: lecture: “Changing Natures of Medieval Mysticism”
Mar. 4: discussion of Richard Kieckhefer’s “Convention and Conversion: Patterns in Late Medieval Piety”
Mar. 6: discussion of Shinners, ch. 2 “God”

Week 9: Mystical Devotion II: Women and Mysticism
Mar. 9: lecture: “Women and Religious Enthusiasm”
**** Newman assignment due date
Mar. 11: discussion of Barbara Newman, From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature
Mar. 13: discussion of Shinners, ch. 3 “Mary”

Week 10: Dissenting Devotion I: Magic and Medicine
Mar. 16: lecture: “Magic and the priority of Human Welfare”
Mar. 18: discussion of Michael D. Bailey, “From Sorcery to Witchcraft: Clerical Conceptions of Magic in the Later Middle Ages”

Week 11: Dissenting Devotion II: The Inquisition
Mar. 25: discussion of James Given, “The Inquisitors of Languedoc and the Medieval Technology of Power”

Week 12: Priestly Devotion: Community and the Church
Mar. 30: lecture: “Preaching, Sermons and the Care of the Soul”
Apr. 1: discussion of R.N. Swanson, “Problems of the Priesthood in Pre-Reformation England”
Apr. 3: discussion of Shinners, ch. 10 “Death and Judgment”

APR. 6, 8 10: EASTER HOLIDAYS – NO CLASSES

Week 13: Militant Devotion II: Defeating Heresy
Apr. 13: EASTER HOLIDAY – NO CLASS
Apr. 15: lecture: “The Best Weapon Against Heresy?: Friars and Dominicans”
Apr. 17: discussion of Barbara H. Rosenwein and Lester K. Little, “Social Meaning in the Monastic and Mendicant Spiritualities”

Apr. 20: lecture: “Late Medieval Religious Practices”
**** Bynum assignment due date
Apr. 22: discussion of Caroline Walker Bynum, Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany & Beyond.
Apr. 24: discussion of Caroline Walker Bynum
Week 15: **Popular Devotion IV: The Place of the Parish in a Secular State**

Apr. 27: lecture: “Parish Church: Sacred Space? Court room? Townhall?!”

Apr. 29: discussion of Daniel Thiery, “Welcome to the Parish. Remove your cap and stop assaulting your neighbor”