German 168A/ English 65D, 165D -- Fall 2001
Undergraduate Lecture
Fulfills GR Area 4c (Gender Studies)

Medieval Women: Faith, Love, and Learning

T/Th  4:15-5:30pm
History Corner (Bldg. 200) Rm. 205

Professors S. Poor and J. Summit
Office Hours:
Poor -- Bldg. 260-208, Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30
Summit -- Bldg. 460-318, Mondays, 10:30-12 and Wednesday 1:15-2:45

Course Home Page: http://www.stanford.edu/class/engl165d/

Course Description:
This course surveys medieval texts written by and about women, from love lyrics and romances to religious treatises and devotional works. These texts share some key concerns that will direct our focus: the representation of women, gender, and sexuality; the conflict between and possible resolution of religious ideals and the secular life; the problem of women's self-definition in a culture in which definitions of creativity and authority commonly excluded women. By tracing these concerns across a range of canonical and non-canonical works, this course aims not only to illuminate the complex role of women in medieval literature and thought but also to demonstrate the vital importance of medieval writings by and about women to our own age, in which women's roles and concepts of gender continue to attract debate.

This course will be primarily taught by lecture, with built-in time for discussion, and weekly sections. As well as lectures by Summit and Poor, it will feature a lively series of guest lecturers, drawn from among the most influential scholars in the field. These guest lectures will take place during regularly-scheduled class time, on (mostly) alternate Thursdays.

Students are not required to have any prior experience with medieval studies; a healthy intellectual curiosity about the Middle Ages and the history of women are the only prerequisites. All readings are in English.

Required Texts: (available at the Stanford Bookstore)
Marcelle Thiébaux, The Writings of Medieval Women
Katharina Wilson, Medieval Women Writers
Chrétien de Troyes, Lancelot: or The Knight of the Cart
Betty Radice (ed.), Letters of Abelard and Heloise
Christine de Pizan, The Book of the City of Ladies
COURSE READER (R)

Requirements:
For 3 units (German Studies 168A/English 65D):
20% Attendance in lecture and discussion section
30% Mid-term essay (3-5 pp.)
50% Final Exam (will consist of two sections: I - identification of key terms of discussion; II - two short essays).

For 5 units (German Studies 168A/English 165D):
Same as above
Final Paper (5-7 pp.) -- this will be averaged in with the Final exam

Class Schedule

Week 1:
9/27 - Introduction

Week 2: The Case of Women: For and Against
10/2 - The Problem of Women (medieval medical and cultural views of women and gender relations)
   Readings: Selection 1 in R (Aristotle, Bible, Aquinas, Hildegard)
10/4 - Women’s answer to troubadour poetry: the Trobairitz
   Readings: Selection 2 in R (Jaufre Rudel, Bernart de Ventadorn); Thiébaut, ch. 11; Wilson, pp. 131-52

Week 3: Men, Women, and Writing in Courtly Romance
10/9 - Women and the Romance Narrative
   Readings: Chrétien de Troyes, “Lancelot, or the Knight of the Cart”
10/11 - Guest Lecture: “Love Songs in Cloth: Women Poets Who Sing and Sew in Medieval France” E. Jane Burns, Women’s Studies, University of North Carolina
   Readings: The Lais of Marie de France in Thiébaut, ch. 12 (intro and texts 1-3); Wilson, pp. 64-83

Week 4: Women, Education, and the Church
10/16 - Heloise and Abelard,
10/18- Hildegard of Bingen
   Readings: Thiébaut, ch. 14; Wilson, pp. 109-30 (optional)

Week 5: The Sacred and the Secular: Women write Courtly Mysticism
10/23 - Mechthild von Magdeburg -- Female Poet and/or Vessel of God  
**Readings:** Wilson 153-85; Thiébaux, from ch. 16, pp. 394-404; Selections 3 and 4 in R  
(Song of Songs, Bernard of Clairvaux)

10/25 - Guest Lecture: “Conquering Love: the Bride of God as Knight Errant” Barbara Newman, English and Comparative Literature, Northwestern University  
**Readings:** Wilson, pp. 186-203; Selection 5 in R (selected poems in Stanzas)

**Week 6:** Popular Religion and Heresy

**Readings:** Wilson, pp. 204-26; Selections 6 and 7 in R (Eckhart, Seuse)

**Readings:** Beatrice of Nazareth in Thiébaux, from ch. 16 pp. 404-12

**Week 7:** Visual Culture

11/6 - Women and Medieval Art

11/8 - Women and Medieval Books

11/9 - **Midterm Paper due** Choose one of the following topics and write a 3-5 page paper (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt. Font):  
1) Consider how the work of one woman writer selected from our readings in weeks 2-6 (one of the Troubadour lyric) revises, subverts, or repeats the terms in which women are represented in one of the contemporary medical, social, theological, or literary (Chrétien, Troubadour lyric) works we examined in week 2 and 3.

2) How does one of the religious writers (Hildegard, Heloise, Hadewijch, Mechthild, Beatrice, Marguerite) refigure women’s role in the Church as represented in the biblical passages we examined in week 2.

**Week 8:** Enclosed Visions

11/13 - How to be an Anchoress” - The **Ancrene Wisse**  
**Readings:** Selection 8 in R

11/15 - Guest Lecture, “Revealing Language: Julian of Norwich as a Vernacular Intellectual” Nicholas Watson, English, Harvard University  
**Readings:** Julian of Norwich, “The Showings” in Wilson, pp. 269-97; Thiébaux, ch. 18
**Week 9:** Worldly Visions

11/20 - “The Book of Margery Kempe”  
**Readings:** Wilson, pp. 297-319; Thiébaut in ch. 19 pp. 467-503

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 10:** The Professional Writer

11/27 - Christine de Pizan, “The Book of City of Ladies”  
**Readings:** Christine de Pizan, “The Book of the City of Ladies”

11/29 - Guest Lecture: “Christine de Pizan’s Visual Legacy in the Renaissance” Susan Groag Bell, Institute of Research on Women and Gender, Stanford University  
**Readings:** Christine, “The Book of the City of Ladies” cont’d.

**Week 11:** Medieval Women in Film

DEC 4 - Carl Dreyer’s “The Passion of Joan of Arc”  
**Screening:** (TBA)  
**Reading:** Joan of Arc in her own words (web-sites:  
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/joanofarc.html  
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1431joantrial.html)

6 - Luc Besson’s “The Messenger”  
**Screening:** (TBA)

**FINAL EXAM:** Monday, December 10, **12:15-3:15**