

Winter 2007
English 4b/104b
MTW 10-10:50
Bldg 320; 221

Jennifer Summit
summit@stanford.edu
office hours M 11-12 W 1-3
MJH 318; 3-2634



Medieval Women: Faith, Love and Learning

Course Description:

Women were both the subjects and authors of medieval texts, from love lyrics and romances to religious and philosophical works. Despite the pervasive misogyny of medieval traditions, these texts reveal that women played important, and sometimes quite central, roles in medieval literary and religious cultures, a paradox that defines our focus in this class: in a world in which definitions of creativity and authority commonly excluded women, how did some women nonetheless come to occupy places of supreme cultural influence? Our approaches to this question will be as varied as the individual women we will encounter: a visionary abbess and polymath (Hildegard of Bingen); a wife and mother who traveled the world as a pilgrim (Margery Kempe); a female courtier who became the first professional woman writer (Christine de Pizan); not one, but two, female cross-dressing knights (the fictional "Silence" and the historical Joan of Arc). Together, these texts and authors provide a fresh perspective on medieval traditions, while also challenging definitions of femininity, gender, and sexuality that have persisted to the modern age.

This course will be primarily taught by lecture, with built-in time for discussion, and weekly sections. All readings in English. This course satisfies GER EC-Gender and English Major Requirements: "Gender and Sexuality" and "British Literature before 1750"

Required Texts: (available at the Stanford Bookstore)

Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance

The Lais of Marie de France

Betty Radice (ed.), Letters of Abelard and Heloise

Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love

The Book of Margery Kempe

Christine de Pizan, The Book of the City of Ladies

COURSE READER (R)

Selected online sources (linked to coursework site)

Requirements:

For 3 units

20% Attendance and active participation in lecture and discussion section

30% Mid-term exam (in class; identifications and essay questions)

50% Final Exam (in class; identifications and essay questions).

For 5 units

Same as above

Plus Final Paper (5-7 pages), due Friday, March 23

(for students electing to take the course for 5 units, the requirements will be adjusted thus: 20% Attendance and Participation; 20% Mid-term; 30% Final; 30% Paper)

An Important Note on Academic Integrity:

I am strongly committed to upholding Stanford's Honor Code, by which students agree "that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading." You are expected to be familiar with the Honor Code and its applications; if you have any questions about it, see

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm>

Course Schedule:

Week One: Introduction: the Problem of Women in the Middle Ages

Jan 9: Introduction to class; lecture with slides, "The Paradox of the Medieval Woman"

Jan 10: The Problem of Women (medieval views of women and gender)

Readings: Selection 1 in R (Aristotle, Bible, Aquinas, Galen, Hildegard)

Week Two: Women on a Pedestal: the Virgin Mary and Courtly Love

Jan 15: MLK day; no class

Jan 16: Idealizing Women (1): The Virgin Mary

Readings: Selection 2 in R (Bernard of Clairvaux on Mary)

Jerome, "The Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary"

<http://www.ccel.org/fathers/NPNF2-06/treatise/mary.htm>

look at: Poems in Praise of Mary:

<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/picof90.htm>

Jan 17: Idealizing Women (2): Medieval Arts of Love

Readings: Andreas Capellanus, "A Treatise on Courtly Love" (selections)

http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/special/authors/andreas/de_amore.html

Chretien de Troyes, Lancelot (read part III line 3955 ff, part IV):
<http://omacl.org/Lancelot/>

optional but highly recommended reading: George Duby, "Two Models of Marriage: the Aristocratic and the Ecclesiastical" from Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Medieval France (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1991), 1-22.
<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.01186>
(also linked to Socrates record for this book)

sections begin this week

Week Three: Women rewrite Courtly Love

Jan 22: Women and the troubadours: the Trobairitz write back

Readings: Selection 3 in R (Jaufre Rudel, Bernart de Ventadorn, Biers de Romans, Lombarda, the Countess of Dia)

Jan 23: Marie de France

Readings: Marie de France, Lais: "Prologue," "Guigemar," "Equitan," "Yonec," "Laustic," "Bisclavret," "Milon,"

Jan 24: Marie de France (2)

Readings: "Chevrefoil," "Fresne," "Chaitivel," "Lanval," "Eliduc"

Week Four: Medieval Gender: Nature versus Nurture

Jan 29: A Woman or a Man? The Roman de Silence

Readings: Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance

Jan 30: Silence (2)

Jan 31: Educating Women: The Goodman of Paris (selections)

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/goodman.html>

Week Five: Women and Learning

Feb 5: For Love and Learning: Heloise

Readings: The Letters of Heloise and Abelard, Abelard, Historia Calamitatum: the story of his misfortunes (Radice, ed, 57-106), Heloise and Abelard, The Personal Letters (Letters 1-4) (Radice, ed, 109-156)

Feb 6: For the Love of Learning: Hildegard

Readings: Selection 5 in R (selections from Scivias and Lyrics)

Scivias, Book One: synopsis (and illuminations)

<http://www.oxfordgirlschoir.co.uk/hildegard/scivias1synopsis.html>

Feb 7: Hildegard (2) and Elizabeth of Schönau

Readings: works of Elizabeth of Schönau, selections

<http://home.infionline.net/~ddisse/schonau.html#anchor35322>

Week Six: Women Enclosed; Anchoresses and Visionaries

Feb 12: Anchoresses and Virgins

Readings: Selection 7 in R (selections, Ancrene Wisse and Holy Maidenhood)

Feb 13: A Visionary Anchoress: Julian of Norwich

Readings: Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love

Short Text, Chapters 1-25; Long Text, Chapters 52, 54, 57-61, 83 and 87

Feb 14: Julian of Norwich (2)

Week Seven: midterm

Feb 19: President's Day (no class)

Feb 20: midterm (in-class)

Feb 21: visit to Special Collections; medieval books

Week Eight: Saints in Society

Feb 26: Saints' Lives from The Golden Legend:

Mary Magdalene: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume4.htm#Mary%20Magdalene>

St Margaret: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume4.htm#Margare>

St. Katherine: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume7.htm#Katherine>

Feb 27: A Worldly Woman with a Calling: Margery Kempe

Readings: Book of Margery Kempe, Book One, Chapters 1-61

Feb 28: Margery Kempe (2)

Readings: Book of Margery Kempe, Book One, Chapters 76-89

Week Nine: Women Defending Women

March 5: Christine de Pizan's Defense of Women: from Amazons . . .

Readings: Christine de Pizan, Book of the City of Ladies, Part One (entire)

March 6: . . . to Queens . . .

Readings: Christine de Pizan, Book of the City of Ladies, Part Two (Chapters 7-24, 36-37, 68-69)

March 7: ...to Martyrs.

Readings: Christine de Pizan, Book of the City of Ladies, Part Three (entire)

Week Ten: Medieval Woman as Hero

March 12: Joan of Arc in her Own Words

Reading: Joan of Arc, "Letter to the King of England" and Trial Transcripts:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/joanofarc.html>

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/joanofarc-trial.html>

March 13: **Screening:** Carl Dreyer's "The Passion of Joan of Arc"

March 14: Joan of Arc on Film

****Final Exam: Monday, March 19: 8:30-11:30**