



SYLLABUS

Religious Studies 332 Religion & Society in the Medieval West

Prof. Alison I. Beach
The College of William and Mary
Fall 2007

Class Meeting: Tuesday & Thursday 2-3:20
Location: Wren 301
Faculty Office: Wren 306
Office Hours: Tuesday 10-11 and Wednesday 2-3
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A. Course Objectives and Requirements

Course Objectives

Content:

1. To become familiar with spiritual, intellectual, and institutional dimensions of medieval Christianity...
2. To trace the development of Christian theology in the Middle Ages...
3. To consider the interaction between Christian thought and practice and secular society (including political, economic, and social forces)...
4. To explore the interaction among Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Middle Ages.

Skills:

1. To read and think critically about the sources of the history of medieval Christianity...
2. To speak thoughtfully and coherently about primary and secondary course readings in class discussions...
3. To prepare a well-researched and well-written research paper focusing on some aspect of medieval Christianity.

Course Requirements

1. Participation in discussions and group activities: 15%
2. Weekly journal entries written in response to the course readings: 15%
3. Midterm Exam on October 18: 20%
4. Final Exam: 25%
5. 10 to 12-page Paper: 25%

B. Course Readings

Books available for purchase in the bookstore:

Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God, the Tree of Life, and the Life of St Francis*.

Peter Abelard, *The Story of my Misfortunes*.

Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*.

Lester Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*.

Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Late Antiquity*.

All other readings are posted on Blackboard under eReserves!

C. Schedule of Classes & Readings

Part One – The Early Middle Ages

August 30

Course Overview

- Thursday 8/30: Introductory Lecture and Slides “The Christian Middle Ages?”
- Begin Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*

September 4, 6 & 11

The Roots of Medieval Christianity

- Tuesday 9/4: Lecture “Augustine and the Christian World View in Late Antiquity”
- Continue Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*
- Thursday 9/6: Discussion of Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*
- Finish Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*
- Begin Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Late Antiquity*
- Tuesday 9/11: Discussion of Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*
- Finish Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*

September 13

From Late Antique to Early Medieval Christendom: Preservation & Transformation

- Thursday 9/13: Lecture “Cassiodorus, Isidore, & Martianus”
- Cassiodorus, *Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning* (eReserve #1)

September 18 & 20

Gregory the Great & the Christianization of the West

- Tuesday 9/18: Discussion: Gregory the Great & His Benedict
- St. Benedict, *Rule for Monks* (if you have not already read this)
- Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* Book 2 (eReserve #2)
- Thursday 9/20: Lecture “Spreading Christianity to the Frontier”
- The Life of St. Leoba (eReserve #3)

- Letters of St. Boniface (eReserve #4)

September 25

The Carolingian ‘Renaissance’

- Tuesday 9/25: Lecture “Charlemagne and Friends”
- Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne* (eReserve #5)

September 27

The Cluniacs and the Latin Church

- Thursday 09/27: Discussion: What can William of Aquitaine tell us about early medieval Christianity?
- Foundation Charter of Cluny (eReserve #6)

October 2

European Christianity at the Millennium

- Tuesday 10/2: Lecture “The State of the Church in the Year 1000”
- Begin Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*

Part 2 – The High Middle Ages

October 4 & 9

Eleventh-Century ‘Revolutions’

- Thursday 10/4: Lecture “The Crisis of Church and State”
- Letters of Henry IV and Gregory VII, *Dictatus Papae*, Papal Election Decree (eReserve #7)
- Tuesday 10/9: Lecture “How the Heavy Plow Changed the World”
- Continue Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*

October 10 & 23

Encountering “The Other”: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the High Middle Ages

- WEDNESDAY 10/10: 6pm Pizza & Lecture “Imagining ‘the Other’”
- R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (eReserve #8)

October 18 – Midterm Exam

- Tuesday 10/23: Discussion: Were the Crusades ‘Religious’?
- Joan Acocella, “Holy Smoke: What were the Crusades *Really* About?” (eReserve #9)
- Fulcher of Chartres, Urban II’s Call to the First Crusade (eReserve #10)

October 25 & 30

The New Apostles

- Thursday 10/25: Lecture “The ‘Evangelical Awakening’ of the Twelfth Century”
- Continue Lester Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*
- Tuesday 10/30: Lecture and Discussion: Religious Women in the Twelfth-Century ‘Renaissance’
- Hildegard of Bingen, Letters (eReserve #11)

· Elisabeth of Schönau, *Visions* (eReserve #12)

November 1, 6, 8, & 13

Spirituality & Education: from Monastery to University and Beyond

■ Thursday 11/1: Discussion: Reading the Bible in the Middle Ages

· Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon* (eReserve #13)

■ Tuesday 11/6: Discussion: Faith Seeking Understanding: Anselm of Canterbury

· Anselm of Canterbury, *Prayers & Meditations* (eReserve #14)

■ Thursday 11/8: Lecture “The World of the Medieval University”

· Peter Abelard, *History of My Calamities*

■ Tuesday 11/13: Lecture “Averroes and the Rediscovery of Aristotle in Latin Christendom”

· Averroes, Middle Commentary on *De anima* (eReserve #15)

November 15 & 27

Why did St. Francis take off his clothes in the middle of town?

■ Thursday 11/15 Discussion: Francis the Fool

· Thomas of Celano, *The Life of St Francis* (eReserve #16)

November 20 & 22 No Class for AAR and Thanksgiving

■ Tuesday 11/27 : Lecture and Discussion “The Franciscans Confront the World”

· Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God* and *Life of St. Francis*

Part 3 – The Late Middle Ages

November 29

The State of Christendom in 1400

■ Thursday 11/29: Lecture “In the Mood for Reform: Popes, Councils & Heretics”

· Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis* (eReserve #17)

December 4 & 6

Popular Piety on the Eve of the Reformation

■ Tuesday 12/4: Discussion: Popular Devotion to Christ's Bodily Suffering

· “The Fifteen Oes” (eReserve #18)

■ Thursday 12/6: Discussion: Witches, Charms, and Holy Greyhounds: the ‘Christian Middle Ages’ Revisited

· “On the Worship of the Dog Guinefort” (eReserve #19)

· Spells and Charms (eReserve #20)