

## **HIS 383 M/ LAS 386/ RS 392T Angels and Bodies: Toward a History of Time, Space, and Power in the Early Modern Period**

Instructor: Jorge Canizares-Esguerra (History)

Tuesday 3:30-6:30 pm.

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Sor María de Jesús de Agreda was one the most powerful women of the seventeenth century. While deep in prayer in her monastery in Madrid, she would appear in Texas as the ‘lady in blue’, helping Franciscans convert the natives. More important she acted as a confessor to Philip IV, prompting the king to abolish Indian slavery in the borderlands while spreading the cult of the Immaculate Conception. Agreda was one of the most influential theorists of her century, completing eight stout volumes on the life of Mary. Like much else with the intellectual life of the Spanish Monarchy, her views have been forgotten or cavalierly dismissed. Yet at the time, she shaped countless lives and spaces; her views mutated into places of memory, what are now peculiar shrines to Angels and Virgin Maries scattered all over the world. This is not a seminar on Agreda herself, but on the conceptual categories of time, space, and power that made her views possible and influential worldwide.

Early modern categories of time are alien to us. In the Christian Atlantic, from Angola to Brazil to Boston, time was understood “typologically”, as a fulfillment of events already prefigured in the Old and New Testaments and in the Book of Nature. The learned studied parallel structures in the lives of both societies and individuals and could also predict likely futures. The power of prophecy therefore lay in the correct interpretation of the past: St John of Patmos’ Book of Revelation only made sense in light of the past history of humanity. Space had also structures. Temples, altars, and shrines are what are left of these views in the Catholic world. The Trinity, for example, was not a theological abstraction but a reflection of spatial and power relations on earth. It was also a commentary on the evolution of time: ranging from societies first held by the power of the Law (God Father) to societies then held by Grace (Christ) lastly to societies enjoying growing spiritual illumination (Holy Spirit). In the Spanish Monarchy a tradition developed that saw the growing manifestation of the Spirit through Mary (and through the work of mendicant, apostolic religious orders like the Franciscans and Jesuits). The history of Mary, her apparitions, and her images constituted therefore the history of the Church itself. Mary became just as powerful as Christ in the Trinity. She made herself available through sacred images that were as holy as the body of Christ in the Eucharist. She also was the prime minister of heaven, presiding over ambassadors, the archangels, as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. She constituted the ideal political ruler.

This is a seminar designed to recover what are now peculiar structures of time, space, and power (both political and gendered) but that once understood transform our interpretation of extant sources such as sermons, hagiographies, church spaces, paintings, chronicles, and more. These were widespread cultural ideas shared by the learned, slaves, Indians, and women, who through the display of images and their weekly exegesis in sermons formed a community of interpretation. This seminar is therefore also reconceptualization of the meaning of “literacy”.

### **Readings:**

Some of the readings will be posted on line. Students will be responsible for getting readings that are not posted.

### **Writing Assignments:**

Each week participants should bring to class a ONE page analysis of the readings, including:

- The main thesis.
- The most important historiographical and methodological contributions

### **Weekly meetings:**

Every week one student will be in charge of leading discussion and shall be responsible for identifying the historiographical currents addressed by the readings. To be prepared, the student leading class shall meet with the instructor.

### **Prospectus:**

The prospectus, due at the end of the semester, should lay out a research project, defining the basic problem to be addressed, outlining the existing historiography of the question, and identifying a set of sources to be used in addressing the problem. The prospectus should be approximately 20 pp.

- Sept 25. Topic for prospectus approved (student should have met with instructor)
- October 30. Bibliography approved (one page)
- November: short reports on prospectus to class.

### **Disability:**

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259

### **Schedule (Readings and Topics):**

## Mary:

Sept 4. Gretchen Starr-LeBaue. *In the Shadow of the Virgin: Inquisitors, Frairs, and Conversos in Guadalupe Spain* (Princeton, 2003)

Amy Remensnyder. "Marian Monarchy in Thirteenth Century Castile." In Alan Cooper et al. eds. *The experience of power in medieval Europe 950-1350* (Ashgate, 2005) (**blackboard**)

Sept 11. David Brading *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe Image and Tradition Across Five Centuries* (Cambridge, 2001).

Amy Remensnyder "Christian Captives. Muslim Maidens and Mary" in *Speculum* 28 (2007) (**blackboard**)

## Trinity:

Sep 18. John Leddy Phelan. *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. University of California, 1970) (**blackboard**)

Sep 25. Carol Delaney. *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem* (Free Press, 2011)

## Miracles and Space

Oct 2. William Taylor. *Shrines and Miraculous Image: religious Life in Mexico Before the Reforma* (University of New Mexico Press, 2010).

Oct 9. Gauvin Alexander Bailey. *Andean Hybrid Baroque. Convergent Cultures in the Churches of Colonial Peru* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2010)

## Women

Oct 16 Erin Kathleen Rowe. *Saint and Nation: Santiago, Teresa of Avila and the Plural Identities in Early Modern Spain* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011) (**blackboard**)

Oct 23. Gunnarsdóttir. *Mexican Karismata. The Baroque Vocation of Francisca de los Angeles, 1674-1744* (University of Nebraska Press, 2004) (**library electronic resource**)

Oct 30. No classes

## Indians

Nov 6. Jaime Cuadriello. *The Glories of the Republic of Tlaxcala. Art and Life in Viceregal Mexico* (University of Texas Press, 2011)

Nov 13. Alcira Dueñas. *Indians and Mestizos in the Lettered City* (**library electronic resource**)

#### Blacks

Nov 20. Maria Elena Diaz. *The Virgin, The King, and the Royal Slaves: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780* (Stanford, 2001) (**library electronic resource**)

Nov 27. Nicole von Germeten. *Black Blood Brothers: Confraternities and Social Mobility for Afro-Mexicans* (University of Florida Press, 2006) (**library electronic resource**)

#### Politics

Dec.4. O'Hara. *Flock Divided: Race, Religion and Politics in Mexico 1749-1857* (Duke, 2010) (**library electronic resource**)