History 350L/ Religious Studies 375s/Ancient History 330
Mystics, Visionaries and Heretics in Medieval Europe

Fall Semester 2012
Unique No. 32933, 39370, 43805
TTh 2-330, GAR 2.128
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I. REQUIRED BOOKS:
The following books are available in paperback.

Required:

In addition, selected readings are available on Blackboard and, where noted, from the electronic resources of the PCL.

II. Course Requirements and Grades
5 1-2 page reading response papers: 3% each = 15%
- paper 1 due Sept 6
- paper 2 due Sept 20
- papers 3-5 due at a date of your choosing, in response to readings.
research project prospectus = 10%
- due Oct 18
research paper (10-12 pages) draft = 15%
- due Nov 13
peer responses = 10%
- due Nov 27
final research paper = 25%
- due Dec 11
class presentation = 15%
attendance and class participation = 10%

THIS CLASS WILL USE THE PLUS/MINUS GRADING SYSTEM. FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE NUMERICAL CRITERIA USED FOR EACH GRADE, PLEASE SEE THE “GRADING CRITERIA” DOCUMENT ON BLACKBOARD.

Attendance policy: I take attendance and expect you to attend class. Excuses will be granted only for a documented medical problem, a religious holiday, or an absence due to official university business;
expect a request for written documentation although this may be waived in the case of a flu outbreak.

**Statement on academic integrity**: Don’t cheat. I report all cases of scholastic dishonesty to the Dean of Students. My recommended penalty for cheating on tests or plagiarism on papers is an F for the course. If you are unsure about the exact definition of scholastic dishonesty or what constitutes plagiarism, you should consult the information about academic integrity produced by the Dean of Students Office: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

**Students with Disabilities**: Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (471-6259) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

**Religious Holidays**: Students can make up work missed because of a religious holiday as long as they provide the instructor with documentation **before** the holiday occurs.

**Blackboard**: Course information, handouts, assignments, etc. will be posted on the class website on Blackboard. To find the Blackboard site, and go to: [http://courses.utexas.edu/](http://courses.utexas.edu/) and log in with your EID and password. Readings can be found under “Course Documents,” the syllabus under “Syllabus.”

**Academic Assistance**: Students may wish to utilize the academic services provided by the UT Learning Center (UTLC) and the Undergraduate Writing Center (UWC). The UTLC is a student academic service that offers both group and individualized programs to help increase efficiency in college-level writing, reading, and learning strategies. All UTLC programs, except appointment tutoring, are free to all currently enrolled students. The UTLC is located in the Jester Center, Room A332A.

The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free assistance to UT undergraduates who wish to work on their writing; students work with trained consultants to define their goals and become more confident writers. The Center is located in the FAC 211, and is highly recommended.

### III. COURSE GOALS

Mystics and visionaries claim to have a particular encounter with the divine that transcends ordinary human experience. In this course, we examine particular mystical and visionary experiences within the context of medieval European Christianity, and we will investigate the interpretative questions these writings raise for historians and scholars of religion. We will explore the tensions between individual experience and communal or institutional religion; the kinds of authority and challenges to authority that these experiences created; the relationship between experiences of the spirit and practices of the body; and the problem of expressing what is inexpressible. In the process, we will examine various theories which scholars have used to study these types of religious experiences.

This course carries a writing flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. Thus you can expect to write frequently, substantially, and with constructive responses from both your instructor and your peers. Students will write 5 response papers to the weekly readings, and will work through the stages of writing a research paper, including the process of revising an initial draft. While the course readings will focus on medieval Christian mystics and visionaries, students are welcome to write research papers on figures from other religious traditions or to examine mystics or visions from the early modern or modern period.
IV. Class schedule and assignments

FRAMING THE QUESTIONS
Thurs Aug 30 – Introduction.

Tues. Sept 4: Imagining mysticism
Begin Mariette in Ecstasy (parts 1-2); create list of questions

Thurs Sept 6: Mysticism: medieval and modern
Finish Mariette in Ecstasy.
PAPER ONE DUE

DEFINITIONS AND MODELS
Tues Sept 11: What is mysticism?
Fanning, 1-30.
John of the Cross, “Living Flame of Love,” [Blackboard]

Thursday Sept 13: Mysticism and Visions
Fanning, pp. 75-80.

Tues Sept 18: Mysticism and Religion

Thursday Sept 20: Other definitions:
Bruce Lincoln, Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11 Chapter One, pp. 1-25 [Blackboard]
PAPER TWO DUE

EXAMPLES AND EXPLANATIONS:
Tues Sept 25: Visionaries: Christina of Markyate
Fanning, 80-85.
Life of Christiana of Markyate and Introduction i - 88. [Blackboard]

Thurs Sept 27 The St. Albans Psalter
Essays: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/~lib399/english/essays/index.shtml
Miniatures; St. Alexis quire; Initials; Conclusion
Images associated with these essays.

Tues Oct 2  Hildegard of Bingen, Visionary
   Hildegard of Bingen, Selected Writings, [Blackboard]
   Images from the Scivias [Blackboard]
   Barbara Newman, Sister of Wisdom. St. Hildegard’s Theology of the Feminine, Chapter 1
   [Blackboard]

Thurs Oct 4 : Hildegard the Prophet
   Hildegard of Bingen, Selected Writings [Blackboard]

Tues Oct 9: Mystical Marriage
   Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermons on the Song of Songs, McGinn, pp. 27-34, 222-224, 256-261, 234-238, 525-528.
   PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE

Thurs Oct 11: Hadewijch of Brabant
   Hadewijch of Brabant, Visions and Poems [Blackboard]

Tues Oct 16: The Nuns of Helfta
   Mechtilde of Magdeburg and Gertrude the Great, Selections [Blackboard]
   Caroline W. Bynum, "Women Mystics in the Thirteenth Century: The Case of the Nuns of Helfta," in Jesus as Mother [Blackboard]

Thurs Oct 18: Devotional Images
   http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/exhibitions/golittlebook/rothschild.html

Tues Oct 23 : Beatrice of Nazareth: Her life
   Life of Beatrice of Nazareth [Blackboard]

Thurs Oct 25: Beatrice of Nazareth: Her words
   Beatrice of Nazareth, “Seven Manners of Loving” [Blackboard]

Tues Oct 30: Religion and Heresy
Thursday Nov. 1 Margarete Porete
Fanning, pp. 101-119.
Margarete Porete, *Mirror of Simple Souls* [Blackboard]
Trial http://www.uncg.edu/~rebarton/margporete.htm

Tues Nov 6 Na Prous Boneta
Na Prous Boneta and Alisseta Boneta
http://www.history.vt.edu/Burr/heresy/beguins/Heresy.html
Louisa Burnham, “The Visionary Authority of Na Prous Bonete” [Blackboard]

Thurs Nov 8 Meister Eckhart

Tues Nov 13 Henry Suso
McGinn, pp. 231-238.
Kroll and Bachrach, ;"Henry Suso," "Mental Illness, Hysteria, and Mysticism.”
FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
Thurs Nov 15 Student Presentations
Tues Nov 20 Peer Reading:
Tues Nov 27: Student Presentations PEER READER RESPONSES DUE
Thurs Nov 29: Student Presentations
Tues Dec 4: Student Presentations
Thurs Dec 6: Conclusions
FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE: December 11.