

**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:

Ron Hanson. *Mariette in Ecstasy: A Novel*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991.

Jerome Kroll and Bernard Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind: The Psychology of Medieval Mystics and Ascetics*. New York and London: Routledge, 2005.

Steven Fanning. *Mystics of the Christian Tradition*. New York and London: Routledge, 2001

Bernard McGinn. *Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*. New York: Modern Library, 2006.

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

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/> 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*.

Kroll and Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*, “Introduction,” pp. 1-13.

McGinn, *Christian Mysticism* [Francis of Assisi and the Stigmata] pp. 225-230.

PAPER ONE DUE

DEFINITIONS AND MODELS

Tues Sept 11: What is mysticism?

Fanning, 1-30.

McGinn, *Christian Mysticism*, “Introduction,” pp. xii-xviii.

John of the Cross, “Living Flame of Love,” [Blackboard]

McGinn, *Christian Mysticism*, [John of the Cross] pp. 72-77, 211-222, 384-388.

Thursday Sept 13: Mysticism and Visions

Fanning, pp. 75-80.

Barbara Newman, “What does it mean to say ‘I saw’: The Clash between Theory and Culture in Medieval Visionary Culture,” *Speculum* 89 (2005): 1-43. [PCL: JSTOR]

McGinn, *Christian Mysticism*, [Augustine and Gregory the Great] pp. 317-323; [Julian of Norwich] pp. 238-245.

Tues Sept 18: Mysticism and Religion

“The Reality of the Sacred: Mircea Eliade” in Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, 158-197. [Blackboard]

Ann Taves, “Religious Experience,” *Encyclopedia of Religion* 7736-7750. [Blackboard]

“Is this your brain on God?” <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=110997741>

Thursday Sept 20: Other definitions:

“Religion as a Cultural System: Clifford Geertz” in Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion* pp. 233-267. [Blackboard]

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]

K. Kerby-Fulton, "Prophet and Reformer: "Smoke in the Vineyard," in *Voice of the Living Light* p. 70-91 [Blackboard]

Tues Oct 9: Mystical Marriage

Fanning, 85-101.

Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermons on the Song of Songs, McGinn, pp. 27-34, 222-224, 256-261, 234-238, 525-528.

E. Ann Matter, "Mystical Marriage," *Women and Faith: Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*, L. Scaraffia and G. Zarri, eds., pp. 31-41.

PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE

Thurs Oct 11: Hadewijch of Brabant

Hadewijch of Brabant, Visions and Poems [Blackboard]

M. Suydam, "The Touch of Satisfaction: Visions and the Religious Experience According to Hadewijch of Antwerp," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 12 (1996): 5-27 [PCL: ATLA Religion Serials]

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>

Jeffrey Hamburger, "The Visual and the Visionary: The Image in Late Medieval Monastic Devotions." *Viator* 20 (1989): 161-182 [PCL: Periodical Archive Online]

Tues Oct 23 : Beatrice of Nazareth: Her life

Life of Beatrice of Nazareth [Blackboard]

Kroll and Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*, "Mysticism and Altered States of Consciousness," "Pain and Laceration of the Flesh," "Beatrice of Nazareth," pp. 37-75, 146-160.

Thurs Oct 25: Beatrice of Nazareth: Her words

Beatrice of Nazareth, "Seven Manners of Loving" [Blackboard]

A. Hollywood, "Inside Out: Beatrice of Nazareth and Her Hagiographer," *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, Catherine M. Mooney, ed., 78-98

Tues Oct 30: Religion and Heresy

McGinn, *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 481-488.

Robert E. Lerner, "Ecstatic Dissent," *Speculum* 67 (1992): 33-57. [PCL: JSTOR]

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 Prou Boneta
Na Prou Boneta and Alisseta Boneta
<http://www.history.vt.edu/Burr/heresy/beguins/Heresy.html>
Louisa Burnham, "The Visionary Authority of Na Prou Boneta" [Blackboard]

Thurs Nov 8 Meister Eckhart
McGinn, 35-40, 412-420, 438-443, 495-500, 529-534.
A. Hollywood, "Suffering Transformed: Marguerite Porete, Meister Eckhart, and the Problem of Women's Spirituality," *Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics*, 87-113
[Blackboard]

Tues Nov 13 Henry Suso
McGinn, pp. 231-238.
Excerpts, "The life of Henry Suso by himself" <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/suso/susolife.toc.html>
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.