ENGL A490: GREAT FIGURES
JULIAN OF NORWICH AND MARGERY KEMPE

Spring 2011 • Tuesdays, 3:30-6:20 • 221 Bobet Hall • 3 credits

Prerequisites: ENGL T122
ENGL A490 is not a Common Curriculum course.
This course counts toward the English literature medieval period requirement as well as an elective in each of the English concentrations. It also counts toward the minors in Medieval, Catholic, and Women’s Studies and as a spirituality elective for LIM students.

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Office hours WF 1:30-3:30 and by appointment

In this section of “Great Figures” we will read the collected works of two fifteenth-century English mystics, Julian of Norwich’s Vision Showed to a Devout Woman and Revelation of Love and Margery Kempe’s Book, not only as rare instances of major writing by medieval women—and lay women at that—but also as significant works of vernacular theology in their own right. We will situate these texts within their theological and spiritual contexts by reading selections from writers whose ideas either directly or indirectly influenced Julian and Margery, including Augustine, Aelred of Rievaulx, the anonymous author of the Ancrene Wisse, Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, John of Caubulbus, Angela of Foligno, Birgitta of Sweden, and Jacques de Vitry. A key question for the seminar will be authority: in particular, how do lay women achieve the kinds of spiritual authority traditionally reserved to male religious, especially in England against the backdrop of spreading heresy (Lollardy)? Students in the course will learn about dominant trends in late-medieval mysticism; expanding literacy and its impact on the development of lay piety in the Middle Ages; and the specific contents of Julian and Margery’s theology (e.g., their Christology, anthropology, soteriology, theology of sin, ideas about Jesus as Mother, to name but a few). We will examine these rich texts from a number of disciplinary and critical perspectives (theological, literary, historical as well as feminist, historicist, Marxist, queer, psychoanalytic).

Course Goals:

1. to become generally acquainted with the features of medieval mysticism and mystical discourse;
2. to read carefully the writings of medieval England’s two great women mystics, Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe;
3. to investigate the gap between mystical experience and attempts to reduce it to written accounts;
4. to study in some depth Julian and Margery’s particular theological and spiritual innovations;
5. to understand the challenges that mystical experience posed to conventional and institutional forms of authority and its relationship to heresy;
6. to consider the implications of gender on Julian and Margery’s mysticism, writing, and reception;
7. to identify the audiences for mystical writing in medieval England and to trace the reception and circulation of particular texts;
8. to read, think, speak, and write critically about medieval culture within the contexts of an advanced interdisciplinary seminar;
9. to acquire some facility for reading Middle English texts.


**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

The textbooks are available through the campus bookstore. Students wishing to purchase their books from another vendor should be sure to purchase these editions.


We will read Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe’s writings in the original late Middle English (no experience necessary!). The challenge to mystics has always been the ineffability of their experience, so paying close attention to how that experience of the divine is translated into human language is critical to an appreciation of these works. To facilitate reading Middle English, good Modern English “translations” (by Colledge & Walsh and Staley) of both authors’ writings have also been ordered.

A note about textbooks: Students have options when buying textbooks. Many of the titles above can be purchased through Amazon.com and similar vendors, sometimes at a discounted price, but while prices on campus tend to be higher, a percentage of the profit generated by textbook sales at the campus store returns directly to Loyola. Students deciding on a vendor may wish to keep these differences in mind.

All other readings will be made available through electronic reserve on Blackboard.

Students are responsible for completing all readings by the start of class on the day for which they are assigned and should bring all readings to class, including printed copies of materials from Blackboard, which should be kept in a binder. Students who regularly fail to complete the readings or bring them to class will be penalized.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

All assignments are required and must be completed in order for a student to pass the course.

The primary source for information about course assignments, besides this syllabus, is a Blackboard web site, http://loyno.blackboard.com. Students enrolled in the course will be able to access the site by clicking on the link for 11S-ENGL-A490-001: JULIAN OF NORWICH/MARGERY KEMPE. Materials that supplement scheduled reading assignments will routinely be posted to Blackboard. Students are responsible for checking regularly for, and reviewing, these materials. Students will also discover on Blackboard a variety of tools for consultation during the semester. Blackboard and e-mail are essential to this class; anyone who is not able and/or willing to check both regularly will find succeeding in this course extremely challenging.

1. Participation (20%).
This course will operate as a seminar and is therefore dependent for its success on the routine, sustained engagement of all of its members. Everyone must contribute meaningfully and respectfully to every class meeting. Attendance is, in a word, expected. More than two absences will result in automatic failure of the course, excepting cases of severe illness or emergency.
2. **Response papers (20%).**
Each student will write a short response (approximately 500 words) to the assigned readings from Julian or Margery for each class meeting. These papers will take the form of a close reading and analysis of a short passage of the student’s choosing. Students will be encouraged to draw on these responses in the course of discussion. **Late response papers will not be accepted.**

3. **Discussion leading (20%).**
Each student will be responsible for leading discussion on one of the assigned secondary readings twice during the semester. Students will summarize briefly (5-7 minutes) the key features of the author’s argument and then pose questions to the seminar for further discussion.

4. **Research-based project (40%).**
Each student will complete a substantial research-based project of 15-20 pp. Students will be encouraged to research and write about Julian and/or Margery from the perspective of their own disciplinary backgrounds. While traditional essays will likely be the norm, students wishing to pursue less conventional projects (e.g., a LIM student wanting to write on possible applications of late-medieval spirituality to her pastoral work) will be encouraged to do so, provided that the project is research-based. At the final class meeting, students will share their work with one another through brief presentations (not more than 10 minutes).

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**Grading**

In this course the instructor will follow the grading standards established by the Department of English for T122 and T125 and published at [http://chn.loyo.edu/english/grading-standards-t122-and-t125](http://chn.loyo.edu/english/grading-standards-t122-and-t125) in evaluating written work.

The grading scale is as follows:

- **A** = 94-100
- **A-** = 91-93
- **B+** = 88-90
- **B** = 84-87
- **B-** = 81-83
- **C+** = 78-80
- **C** = 74-77
- **C-** = 71-73
- **D+** = 68-70
- **D** = 61-67
- **F** = 0-60

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**Late-work Policy**

All work is due on the assigned date, and late work will not be accepted except in cases of documented emergency. There will be no opportunity to improve grades on written work after the fact, so students should please make use of the WAC lab and office hours before submitting their papers. Response papers and the final essay may not be submitted electronically. Absence from class should in no way be construed as tacit approval by the instructor to submit work late. An important part of being a college student is learning how to manage time and prioritize. Students are encouraged to speak with the professor in the office about managing the pace of the reading and writing for the course.

A grade of “I” (incomplete) will be available only to students with documented (i.e., a doctor or dean’s note) emergencies. Students who do not complete all assignments by the last official day of the semester will fail the course.
Emergency Procedures:
In the event that there is an interruption to our course due to the cancellation of classes by the university as a result of an emergency, we will continue our course on Blackboard within 48 hours after cancellation.

All students are required to sign on to Blackboard and to keep up with course assignments within 48 hours of evacuation and routinely check for announcements and course materials associated with each class. Class handouts will be posted under “course materials”.

Students should be familiar with their responsibilities during emergencies, including pre-evacuation and post-evacuation for hurricanes. This information is available on the Academic Affairs web site: http://academicaffairs.loyno.edu/students-emergency-responsibilities

Additional emergency-planning information is also available - http://academicaffairs.loyno.edu/emergency-planning

A Few Final Notes

Classroom etiquette
- Cell phones should be turned OFF (vibrating backpacks are as distracting as ringing ones) and put away before class begins.
- Computers may not be used in class for note-taking purposes without the permission of the instructor and then only in cases where a learning disability or other obstacle prevents a student from taking notes with pen and paper. Class meetings may not be recorded (video and/or audio) without the instructor’s consent.
- Infractions of these classroom rules and any other behaviors deemed disruptive will result in a lowering of the participation and/or final grade at the discretion of the instructor.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the act of passing of someone else’s work as one’s own. It can assume a variety of forms and constitutes only one of several kinds of academic dishonesty, none of which will be tolerated in this course and all of which carry with them the possible consequence of a final failing grade. Loyola’s policies about academic dishonesty appear in the Loyola University Bulletin. When in doubt, students should contact the instructor, who would much rather grant extensions than fail students for turning in plagiarized assignments on time.

Disability Services:
If you have a disability and wish to receive accommodations, please contact Sarah Mead Smith, Director of Disability Services at 504- 855-2990. If you wish to receive test accommodations (e.g., extended test time), you will need to give the course instructor an official Accommodation Form from Disability Services. The Office of Disability Services is located in Monroe Hall 405.

Any additional concerns or questions about the course may be discussed with the instructor at any time.
Schedule

- The instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus at any time.
- Any changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard.
- The most recent version of the syllabus posted to Blackboard should be considered authoritative.
- The version of the syllabus posted to LORA will not be updated regularly and should not be consulted for accurate information about assignments.

Week 1 – January 11

What is Mysticism?


N.b.: Please read McGinn before the first class meeting on January 11.

Become familiar with Middle English (the kind of English spoken and written in England from the 12th through the 15th century) using the METRO: Middle English Teaching Resources Online website:

http://metro.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do. Browse as much of the website as you wish, but be sure to look specifically at the "Spelling and Pronunciation" page at the Central station (http://metro.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k15189&pageid=icb.page194035) and the "Platform 1" page at the Chaucer station (http://metro.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k15189&pageid=icb.page176081). Complete the listening and speaking, grammar, syntax, and reading exercises at Platform 1. (The meter exercises are optional, since we'll primarily be reading prose texts in this course.)

Week 2 – January 18

Vernacular Theology and Censorship in the 14th and 15th Centuries

Questionnaire due

Practice with Middle English (bring The Writings of Julian of Norwich)

Nicholas Watson, “The Middle English Mystics”

Nicholas Watson, “Censorship and Cultural Change”

Discussion leader:

Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, “‘Extra Fidem Scripture’: Attitudes toward Non-Biblical Vision in Great Schism England and the Vogue for Hildegardiana” from Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England

Discussion leader:

Week 3 – January 25

Franciscan Spirituality and the Body of Christ

John of Caulibus (?), from Meditations on the Life of Christ

“The Prologue,” “Contemplation of the Humanity of Christ,” “The Lord’s Supper,” “The Passion of the Lord Jesus,” “Meditation on the Passion at Matins,” “Meditation on the Passion at Prime,” “Meditation on the Passion at Terce,” “Meditation on the Passion at Sext and None,” “Meditation on the Passion at Vespers,” “Meditation on the Passion at Compline”

Julian of Norwich, A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman, §1-15


Discussion leader:

Denise N. Baker, “From Visualization to Vision: Meditation and the Bodily Showing,” from Julian of Norwich’s
Showings: From Vision to Book
Discussion leader:

Week 4 – February 1

Anchoritic Spirituality

Film: The Anchoress (available for streaming on Blackboard)
Selections from Ancrene Wisse
Aelred of Rievaulx, selections from De institutione inclusarum
Julian of Norwich, A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman, §16-25
Christopher Cannon, “Enclosure”
E. A. Jones, “Anchoritic Aspects of Julian of Norwich”
Discussion leader:
Annie Sutherland, “Julian of Norwich and the Liturgy”
Discussion leader:

Week 5 – February 8

Trinitarian Theology in the Revelation of Love

Augustine, selections from De Trinitate
Walter Hilton, selections from Scala perfectionis
Julian of Norwich, A Revelation of Love, chapters 1-26
Nicholas Watson, “The Trinitarian Hermeneutic in Julian of Norwich’s Revelation of Love”
Discussion leader:
Alexandra Barratt, “‘No such sitting’: Julian Tropes the Trinity”
Discussion leader:

Week 6 – February 15

Sin and the Parable of the Lord and Servant

Julian of Norwich, A Revelation of Love, chapters 27-51
Discussion leader:
Brad Peters, “A Genre Approach to Julian of Norwich’s Epistemology”
Discussion leader:

Week 7 – February 22

Jesus as Mother

Aelred of Rievaulx, selections from De institutione inclusarum
Selections from Ancrene Wisse
Julian of Norwich, A Revelation of Love, chapters 52-65
Caroline Walker Bynum, “Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Writing,” from Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages
Discussion leader:
Discussion leader:
Week 8 – March 1

**Mysticism, Authority, and Gender**

Julian of Norwich, *A Revelation of Love*, chapters 66-86
Lynn Staley, “Julian of Norwich and the Late Fourteenth-Century Crisis of Authority,” from *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture*

Discussion leader:
Sandra J. McEntire, “The Likeness of God and the Restoration of Humanity in Julian of Norwich’s *Showings*”

Week 9 – March 8

**Mardi Gras – no class meeting**

Week 10 – March 15

**The Making of an Urban Mystic**

*The Book of Margery Kempe*, Book I, proem-chapter 25
Kate Parker, “Lynn and the Making of a Mystic”

Discussion leader:

Week 11 – March 22

**Affective Mysticism and Gender**

Jacques de Vitry, selections from *The Life of Marie d’Oignies*
Selections from Angela of Foligno, *Memorial*
Selections from Birgitta of Sweden, *Book*

*The Book of Margery Kempe*, Book I, chapters 26-36
Denis Renevey, “Margery’s Performing Body: The Translation of Late Medieval Discursive Religious Practices”

Discussion leader:
Sarah Salih, “Margery’s Bodies: Piety, Work and Penance”

Discussion leader:

Week 12 – March 29

**Heresy**

*The Book of Margery Kempe*, Book I, chapters 27-57
John H. Arnold, “Margery’s Trials: Heresy, Lollardy, and Dissent”

Discussion leader:
Carolyn Dinshaw, “Margery Kempe Answers Back,” from *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern*

Discussion leader:
Week 13 – April 5

**Reading and Readers**

Richard Rolle, selections from *Incendium amoris*
Walter Hilton, selections from *Scala perfectionis*
The Book of Margery Kempe, Book I, chapters 58-77
Jacqueline Jenkins, “Reading and The Book of Margery Kempe”

*Discussion leader:*

Felicity Riddy, “‘Women Talking about the Things of God’: A Late Medieval Sub-culture”

*Discussion leader:*

Week 14 – April 12

**Genre: Theology or Autohagiography?**

The Book of Margery Kempe, Book I, chapters 78-89
Julia Lamm, “Revelation as Exposure in Julian of Norwich’s Showings”

*Discussion leader:*

Gail McMurray Gibson, “St. Margery: The Book of Margery Kempe”

*Discussion leader:*

Katherine J. Lewis, “Margery Kempe and Saint Making in Later Medieval England”

*Discussion leader:*

Week 15 – April 19

**Easter break – no class meeting**

Week 16 – April 26

**Authority, Authors, Scribes**

The Book of Margery Kempe, Book II
Lynn Staley, “The Trope of the Scribe and the Question of Literary Authority in the Works of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe”

*Discussion leader:*

Lynn Staley, “Authorship and Authority,” from *Margery Kempe’s Dissenting Fictions*

*Discussion leader:*

Karma Lochrie, “From Utterance to Text,” from *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*

*Discussion leader:*

Week 17 – May 3

**Student presentations**

Research projects due Thursday, May 12