HIST W240

“Between Eve and Mary: Women in Medieval Europe”

Fall 2010

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Office hours: Wednesdays 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this class is to explore the changes in women’s rights and roles in medieval society over the course of the high and late Middle Ages (covering the period of roughly 1050-1500) from a Western European perspective. Discussions will focus on the gap between prescription and reality, women’s contributions to medieval society, ideas and attitudes about women. Discussion topics include: the barbarian legacy, ideas about women (from the church to anatomy), women and property law, marriage and sexuality, women and the church, education and literacy, gendered space, rebellious women, queens and royal dowagers, and singlewomen.

In general: Mondays will be lecture days; Wednesdays and Fridays will be seminar discussions based on the readings for the week. Presentations will be sprinkled throughout.

This is a Common Curriculum Advanced Behavioral / Social Sciences Course. This class also meets the requirements for both the Medieval Studies Minor and the Women’s Studies Minor.

REQUIRED READINGS

All readings for this class can be found on BLACKBOARD.

GRADING SCHEME

Participation: 15%
Biography – ORAL: 15%
-- WRITTEN: 25%
Reading logs: 25%
Final Exam 20%
PARTICIPATION

I understand that it can be intimidating to speak in class. This is why I always begin our class discussions with small group discussions in order to give you the confidence in your answers. Because participation is worth 15%, I urge you to overcome shyness and speak; if you choose not to participate it will be reflected in your overall grade. *Perfect attendance is not sufficient to receive a passing grade.* As a rule of thumb: in a class of twenty-five people, I expect to see active participation in the small groups and everyone should attempt to contribute at least one comment/insight to the larger group discussion every week.

Participation is tied to attendance. You cannot participate in class discussion if you are not there. There are a total of 40 classes in this semester. Each absence (for whatever reason) will result in a penalty of 2.5% (that is \(\frac{1}{40}\)) drawn from your final grade in the course. HOWEVER: if you are deathly ill, or you have a court date or any such matter, why not come and talk to me about it?

BIOGRAPHY

Each student will be given the opportunity to choose an historical figure during the first week of classes. There are two halves to this assignment:

1. Presentation:
   Your mission is to present a biography of this figure to the class. Presentations will be done in pairs; however, the writing of biographies is to be done separately. Presentations should be 15 minutes in length. The purpose of this assignment is to make the class more aware of the important contributions of great women to medieval society.

   Presentation dates are marked in the calendar below. Try to be creative with your presentations. I would like to recommend that students use PowerPoint to create their presentations. I will then post all presentations on BLACKBOARD for students to use as study aids for the exam.

   It is the responsibility of other students in the class to listen to these presentations respectfully, and ask questions. *You will be expected to draw on this material for the exam.*

2. Written Biography:
   All written biographies are due in class Dec. 3, even if you have not yet done your presentation. They should be roughly 12 pages in length (standard margins, double-spaced, 12 pt. font) and include at least six sources, meaning six scholarly journal articles or books. Websites do not count.

   In some ways, biographical writing is the hardest kind of history to write. Instead of a simple biography, try to tell a social history of your woman – that is, put her in context of her era and explain why her contributions to medieval society are important. Please read the hand-out entitled “How to write a social biography” in the “Writing Aids” section of BLACKBOARD.
Some questions to ask of your woman:

A. What contribution did she make to medieval history?
B. Was her role in society active or passive? That is, did she consciously set out to change the society in which she lived, or did it happen by a twist of fate?
C. How was she regarded in her own day?
D. How have historians found out about this particular figure? That is, what primary sources have come down to us to enable us to better understand her?
E. What was most important to your historical figure: Family? Politics? Literature? God?

I will hand-out a bibliography in order to give you some reading suggestions for this project, but here are some good places to start for basic information:


Please remember: your paper can only be as good as the sources that inform it. Some helpful tips:
- Avoid using books or articles older than the 1970s.
- With the exception of specialized encyclopaedias (such as, *The Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, or *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*), I do not want to see encyclopaedias as references in your works cited.
- Avoid the Internet.

There are a number of useful databases at Monroe that may help you to find relevant journal articles for your paper (and for many of these women, information is primarily available in journal articles, not books). In particular, please keep in mind:

- *International Medieval Bibliography*
- *Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index*

**READING LOG**

Students will be required to write a response to the article readings (usually the Wednesday and Friday classes) of at most one page per reading. Do not summarize the readings. Instead, discuss something about the article that raised questions / was particularly interesting / relates to other issues we have discussed in the course. The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate that you have thought critically about the readings before class.
All reading logs must be typed. You may hand them in at the beginning or the end of class, whatever you prefer. If you have to miss class for any reason, please email your reading log to me as a Word attachment the same day as the class.

FINAL EXAM
For the final exam, you will be given the questions in advance. Please note: knowing the questions in advance does not necessarily make this easy. It means that I will expect to see a more polished and well-thought out essay than if you had had the question sprung on you. We will discuss this in more detail as we get closer to the date.

EXTENSION & LATE POLICY
If you need an extension, please ask for one in advance (“in advance” means at least 2 days before it is due). Late papers will be penalised a full letter grade per day. For example, if your paper would have received an “A” on the deadline, the next day it will receive a “B”.

GRADING SCALE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>Superlative</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-89</td>
<td>Very good</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-85</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>Fairly Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-79</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-75</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>Almost satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Minimal pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
<td>Fail</td>
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NOTICE TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
A student with a disability who qualifies for accommodations should contact Sarah Mead Smith, Director of Disability Services at 865-2990 (Academic Resource Center, Room 405, Monroe Hall). A student wishing to receive test accommodations (e.g., extended test time) should provide the instructor with an official Accommodation Form from Disability Services in advance of the scheduled test date.

DEPARTMENTAL STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM
“Plagiarism – the use of another person’s ideas or wording without giving proper credit – results from the failure to document fully and accurately. Ideas and expressions of them are considered to belong to the individual who first puts them forward. Therefore, when you incorporate ideas or phrasing from any other author in your paper, whether you quote them directly or indirectly, you need to be honest and complete about indicating the source to avoid plagiarism. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism can bring serious consequences, both academic, in the form of failure or expulsion, and legal, in the form of lawsuits. Plagiarism is a violation of the ethics of the academic community.”

WHERE TO FIND HELP WITH YOUR WRITING
- Writing across the Curriculum, Bobet 100, ext. 2297

STUDENT DECORUM
1. PLEASE SHOW UP ON TIME. For a 9:30 class, that means you need to be in your seat ready to go at 9:30 (thus, showing up at roughly 9:27ish). If you are not present when I take attendance at the beginning of class, then you are not present that day.
2. Please turn your cell phones off in class.

IN THE EVENT OF A HURRICANE
Please try your best to find access to the internet in order to do your readings. Public libraries and many chain fast-food restaurants (McDonald’s, Starbucks) have wi-fi. I will be in touch with you as soon as I can. An alternative email address for me that may be used in the event that Loyola’s email system is non-functional is: butlersm16@hotmail.com.

REVISION OF THE SYLLABUS:
I reserve the right to revise this syllabus at any point once this course is in progress. I will inform students of any changes.
LECTURE & READING SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1: *The Barbarian Legacy*
- Aug. 30: Introduction to the class
- Sept. 1: lecture: “Women among the Barbarians”

WEEK 2: *The High Middle Ages*
- Sept. 6 – Labor Day (NO CLASS)
- Sept. 8: lecture: “The High Middle Ages: Cultural Change”
- Sept. 10: discussion of Anne L. Klinck, “Anglo-Saxon Women and the Law”

WEEK 3: *Ideas about Women*
- Sept. 15: discussion of Chiara Frugoni, “The Imagined Woman”
- Sept. 17: discussion of Vern L. Bullough, “Medieval Medical and Scientific Views of Women”

WEEK 4: *Women and Property Law*
- Sept. 20: lecture: “Medieval Heiresses and Dowagers”
  - *PRESENTATION: Margery Paston*
  - *PRESENTATION: Eleanor of Aquitaine*
- Sept. 24: discussion of Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, “The ‘Cruel Mother’: Maternity, Widowhood, and Dowry in Florence in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries”

WEEK 5: *Public / Private Divide?*
- Sept. 27: lecture: “Do ‘Separate Spheres’ make sense for the Middle Ages?”
- Sept. 29: discussion of Judith M. Bennett, “Public Power and Authority in the Medieval English Countryside”
  - *PRESENTATION: Isabella d’Este*

WEEK 6: *Medieval Sexuality*
- Oct. 4: lecture: “The Theory and Practice of Sex in the Middle Ages”
  - *PRESENTATION: Heloise*
- Oct. 8: discussion of Leah Lydia Otis, “Prostitution and Repentance in Late Medieval Perpignan”
WEEK 7: *Feminine Rites*
Oct. 15: discussion of Fiona Harris Stoertz, “Suffering and Survival in Medieval English Childbirth”

*PRESENTATION: Trotula of Salerno*

WEEK 8: *Advising Medieval Woman*
Oct. 18: FALL BREAK (NO CLASS)
Oct. 22: discussion of Felicity Riddy, “Mother knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text” and “How the Goodwife Taught her Daughter”

WEEK 9: *Women in the Church*
Oct. 25: discussion of the movie “The Anchoress” (streamed on BLACKBOARD)
Oct. 27: *PRESENTATION DAY: Clare of Assisi, Julian of Norwich*
Oct. 29: discussion of Brenda M. Bolton, “Mulieres Sanctae”

WEEK 10: *Women and the Church*
Nov. 1: *PRESENTATION DAY: Hildegard of Bingen, Pope Joan*
Nov. 3: discussion of Leigh Ann Craig, “Stronger than Men and Braver than Knights: Women and Pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Rome in the Later Middle Ages”

*PRESENTATION: Margery Kempe*
Nov. 5: discussion of Dyan Elliott, “Women and Confession: From Empowerment to Pathology”

WEEK 11: *Rebellious Religious*
Nov. 8: lecture: “Women and the Cathars”
Nov. 10: discussion of Anne Brenon, “The Voice of the Good Woman: An Essay on the Pastoral and Sacerdotal Role of Women in the Cathar Church”
Nov. 12: discussion of Penelope Galloway, “‘Discreet and Devout Maidens’: Women’s Involvement in Beguine Communities in Northern France, 1200-1500”

*PRESENTATION: Marguerite of Porete*

WEEK 12: *Women and Politics*
Nov. 15: lecture: “The Trouble with Queens”
Nov. 17: *PRESENTATION DAY: Margaret of Scotland, Matilda of England*
WEEK 13: Women and Power
  Nov. 22: *PRESENTATION DAY: Isabel la Catolica of Spain, Joan of Arc
  Nov. 24 and 26: THANKSGIVING (NO CLASSES)

WEEK 14: Women and the Book
  Nov. 29: *PRESENTATION DAY: Marie de France, Christine de Pizan
  Dec. 1: discussion of Sandra Penketh, “Women and Books of Hours”
  Dec. 3: discussion of Susan Groag Bell, “Medieval Women Book Owners:
        Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture”
        *ALL WRITTEN BIOGRAPHIES DUE IN CLASS

WEEK 14: Singlewomen
  Dec. 6: lecture: “Singlewomen in Medieval Europe: A Poor Fit”
  Dec. 8: discussion of Sharon Farmer, “‘It is not Good that [Wo]man should be
       Alone’: Elite Responses to Singlewomen in High Medieval Paris”
       *PRESENTATION: Alice Kyteler
  Dec. 10: discussion of Ruth Mazo Karras, “Sex and the Singlewoman”