

**Friars, Heretics, and Female Mystics:  
Religious Turmoil in the Middle Ages**

History 14  
Mr. Bensch  
Spring 2013

Office Hours:  
T 2:45-4:30 and by appointment

The course will explore the transformation of Latin Christianity from the perspective of those fervently pious individuals and groups the Church placed on the margins of acceptable belief and conduct. Before the eleventh century Latin Christendom was ritually unified, institutionally decentralized, and led by saintly men; afterward it accommodated a broad spectrum of religious orders, a papal monarchy, and heretical dissenters and often looked to holy women for inspiration. The reasons for this change and the reaction of the Church to new challenges from the eleventh to the fifteenth century will provide our focus for the semester.

Weekly meetings will be divided into two parts: an introductory lecture and class discussion of general readings, and two student presentations on more specialized topics. In addition, week 12 will be organized in the form of a colloquium on women mystics, for which each student will prepare a presentation devoted to a spiritual text and produce a short research paper from it. Your grade will depend on a midterm (15%), two papers (8-12 pages, i.e. 2,000-3,000 words) (25% each), a final exam (25%), and class participation (10%).

\*\* Indicates books available in the campus bookstore.

I. Week of Jan. 22.

- a) Introduction: Deviance and Authority in the Medieval Church.
- b) Discussion.

Readings: \*\* R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church*, pp. 15-44.

\*\*M. Lambert, *Medieval Heresies*, pp. 1-9.

Selections from the Nicene Creed, Tertullian, Augustine

II. Week of Jan 29.

- a) Heresy and Reform in the Eleventh Century.
- b) Presentations: i. The Rise of Heresy.  
ii. Monasticism and Church Reform.

Readings: \*\* R. W. Southern, 53-67, 91-132, 173-240.

M. Lambert, pp. 9-32.

Selections from accounts of eleventh-century heresy.

III. Week of Feb. 5.

- a) A Radical Alternative: The Cathars.
- b) Presentations: i. The Origins of the Cathars.  
ii. Were Women More Heretical Than Men?

Readings: Lambert, pp. 44-61, 105-26.

\*\* E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, Intro., pp. 3-69, 139-68, 179-204, 231-356.

Selections from Anna Comnena, Bernard of Clairvaux, Bernard Gui, and a Cathar Bible

IV. Week of Feb. 12.

- a) Reshaping the Twelfth-Century Church: New Orders and New Forms of Religious Expression.
- b) Presentations: i. Cistercian Views of Community and Devotion.
  - ii. An Emotional Christianity: Anselm of Bec.

Readings: Southern, pp. 240-72.

\*\* C. Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 110-69.

\*\* *Bernard of Clairvaux*, pp. 65-99, 145-279.

V. Week of Feb. 19.

- a) The *vita apostolica*:: Preaching and Poverty.
- b) Presentations: i. Francis and Dominic.
  - ii. The Waldensians.

Readings: Lambert, pp. 67-91.

Southern, pp. 272-309.

Selections from *Scripta leonis*, Jean de Mailly, Thomas Angi of Letini,

Jordan of Saxony, Humbert of Romans, and the canonization process of Dominic

VI. Week of Feb. 26.

- a) Stirrings of a Women's Religious Movement.
- b) Presentations: i. Traditional female monasticism.
  - ii. New roles for religious women.

Readings: Southern, pp. 309-31

C. Bynum, *Holy Fast and Holy Feast*, pp. 13-29

\*\* E. Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, pp. 136-206, 242-47.

VII. Week of March 5.

- a) Hardening Boundaries: Innocent III and the Fourth Lateran Council.
- b) Midterm on March 4.

Readings: Lambert, pp. 91-104.

Selection from the decrees of the Fourth Lateran, Walter Map, Burchard of Ursperg.

VIII. Week of March 19.

- a) Cracking Down: Holy Dereliction and the Inquisition.
- b) Presentations: i. Persecution and medieval society;
  - ii. Poverty radicalized: the spiritual Franciscans.

Readings: Lambert, pp. 97-99, 176-80, 189-214.

Selection from Peter Olivi, Angelo de Clareno, and an inquisitor's manual.

IX. Week of March 26.

- a) Keeping Control: Mysticism, Speculative and Anarchic.
- b) Presentations: i. Meister Eckhardt.  
ii. Over the Edge? Prophecy, Apocalyptic Hedonism, and the Free Spirit.

Readings: Southern, 300-308.

\*\* *Meister Eckhardt, The Essential Sermons*, pp. 71-95, 123-41, 158-70, 177-208.

Selections from Joachim of Fiore, Condemnation of the Amalricians.

X. Week of April 2.

- a) Women of Spirit: A Celebration of the Body?
- b) Presentations: i. Theological Attitudes toward Women.  
ii. Hungering for God: Holy Women and Anorexia Nervosa.

Readings: Bynum, *Jesus As Mother*, pp. 170-262;  
Petroff, pp. 207-31, 276-98, 308-14, 329-49.

XI. Week of April 9.

- a) A Crisis in Ecclesiastical Order: Papal Schism and the Lollards.
- b) Presentations: i. The Appeal of Lollardry.  
ii. New Visions of the Church.

Readings: Lambert, pp. 217-83.

Southern, 133-69.

Selections from John Wyclife, Norwich heresy trials, Henry of Langenstein, Council of Constance.

XII. Week of April 16.

- a) Mystical Women: A Feminization of Christianity?
- b) Discussion on women mystics.

XIII. Week of April 23.

- a) Radical Challenge and Quiet Reform: Hussites and the *devotio moderna*.
- b) Presentations: i. The Czech Challenge.  
ii. *Devotio moderna*. The New Wave?

Readings: Lambert pp. 284-348;

Southern, pp. 331-60.

Selections from Jan Hus, Peter of Mladonovice, Geert Groote, and Thomas à Kempis.

XIV. Week of April 30.

- a) Conclusion: Medieval Dissent and the Reformation.
- b) Review.

Readings: Lambert, pp. 361-96.

## II. Heresy and Reform in the Eleventh Century.

### 1. The Rise of Heresy.

J. Russell, *Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley and L.A., 1963), pp. 5-53, 241-58.

R.I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 1-45.

J.L. Nelson, "Society, Theodicy and the Origins of Heresy: Towards a Reassessment of the Medieval Evidence," *Studies in Church History* 9, (1969), pp. 65-77.

R. Landes, "Between Aristocracy and Heresy: Popular Participation in the Limousin Peace of God (994-1033)," in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around 1000*, eds. T. Head and R. Landes (Ithaca, 1992), pp. 184-219.

B. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983), pp. 12-18, 88-151.

### 2. Monastic Renewal and Reform.

J. Leclercq, "The Monastic Crisis of the Eleventh and Twelfth Century," in *Cluniac Monasticism in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. Noreen Hunt (London, 1971, pp. 217-37 [Fr. original 1958].

N.F. Cantor, "The Crisis of Western Monasticism, 1050-1130," *American Historical Review*, 66 (1960-61), pp. 47-67.

R. Cowdry, *The Cluniacs and Gregorian Reform* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 3-44, 121-35.

J. van Engen, "The 'Crisis' of Cenobitism Reconsidered," *Speculum*, 61 (1986), pp. 269-304.

S. G. Brown, *Silence and Sign Language in Medieval Monasticism* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 1-28, 143-176. [e-book]

### III. A Radical Alternative: Catharism

#### 1. The Rise of Catharism.

S. Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee* (Cambridge, 1947), pp. 116-30, 171-80.

R.I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 168-242.

J. H. Arnold, *Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc* (Philadelphia, 2001), pp. 1-44.

C. Lansing, *C. Power and Purity: Cathar Heresy in Medieval Italy* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 3-19, 60-134.

C. Taylor, *Heresy, Church and Inquisition in Medieval Quercy* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 1-45, 87-122.

#### 2. Were Women More Heretical than Men?

H. Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, tr. S. Rowan (Notre Dame, 1975), pp. 75-88. [Germ. Ooig. 1935]

Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, tr. A. Goldhammer (Chicago, 1979), 125-46.

R. Abels and E. Harrison, "The Position of Women in Languedocian Catharism," *Medieval Studies* 41 (1979), pp. 215-51.

J. H. Mundy, *The Repression of Catharism at Toulouse* (Toronto, 1985), 1-11, 45-75.

D. Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Late Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2004), pp. 1-8, 85-118.

#### IV. Reshaping the Twelfth-Century Church: New Orders and New Forms of Religious Expression

##### 1. Cistercian Views of Community and Devotion.

E. Gilson, *The Mystical Theology of St. Bernard*, tr. A.H.C. Downes (London, 1940), pp. 3-60, 85-118.

Haydn V. White, "The Gregorian Ideal and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21 (1960), pp. 321-48.

J.R. Sommerfeldt, "Chrismatic and Gregorian Leadership in the Thought of Bernard of Clairvaux," in *Bernard of Clairvaux*. Cistercian Studies Series 23 (1973), pp. 73-90.

P. Ryan, "St. Bernard and the Barundi on the Name of God," *ibid.*, pp. 197-214.

B. P. McGuire, "Monastic Friendship and Toleration in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Life," *Studies in Church History*, 22 (1985), 147-61.

C. Bynum, "The Cistercian Conception of Community," in *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 59-81.

B. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*, pp. 403-55.

##### 2. An Emotional Christianity: Anselm of Bec.

**CHECK:** R. Fulton, "Praying with Saint Anselm at Admont: A Meditation on Practice," *Speculum*, 81 (2006), pp. 700-33 and B. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2006)

R. Southern, *St. Anselm and His Biographer* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 3-121.

S. W. Vaughn, *Anselm of Bec and Robert of Meulan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987), 1-77.

J. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 207-42.

B. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*, pp. 326-61.

M. Rubi, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Have, 2009), pp. xxi-xxvi, 121-58.

## V. The *vita apostolica*: Preaching and Poverty

### 1. Francis and Dominic.

M.D. Chenu, "Monks, Canons and Laymen in Search of the Apostolic Life," and "The Evangelical Awakening," in *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century*, tr. J. Taylor and L.K. Little (Chicago, 1968), pp. 202-59.

R.B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 56-180.

R.F. Bennett, *Early Dominicans* (Cambridge, 1937), pp. 18-51.

L.K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy* (London, 1978), pp. 1-41, 146-69.

Duff, E., "Finding St. Francis: Early Images, Early Lives," in *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body* (Bury St. Edmunds, 1997), pp. 193-236.

J. van Engen, "Dominic and the Brothers: *Vitae* as Life-Forming Exempla in the Order of Preachers," in *Christ among the Dominicans*, ed. K. Emery Jr., J. Wawrykow (Notre Dame, ID, 1998), pp. 7-25.

### 2. Dancing on the Edge: Waldensians and Humiliati

M. Deansely, *The Lollard Bible* (Cambridge, 1920), pp. 18-57.

H. Grudmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, tr. S. Rowan (London, 1995 – Orig. 1935), pp. 31-41.

A. Patchkovsky, "The literacy of Waldensians from Valdes to c. 1400," in *Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1530*, ed. P. Biller and A. Hudson (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 112-36.

F. Andrews, *The early humiliati* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 1-8, 23-37, 136-201.

P. Biller, "Goodbye to Waldensianism," *Past and Present*, 192 (2008), pp. 3-33.

## VI. Stirrings of a Women's Religious Movement

### 1. Traditional Female Monasticism.

K. Leyser, *Rule and conflict in an early medieval society*, (Bloomington and London, 1979), 63-74.

G. Duby, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest*, tr. B. Bray (N.Y., 1983), 253-64.

C. Bouchard, *Sword, Mitre, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198* (Ithaca, 1987), 31-5, 48-56, 59-64.

Penelope Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession. Religious women in medieval France* (Chicago, 1991), 1-61, 229-66.

F. J. Griffiths, *The Garden of delights: Reform and Renaissance for women in the twelfth century* (Philadelphia, 2007), pp. 1-23, 194-223.

### 2. New Religious Roles for Women.

H. Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, tr. S. Rowan (Notre Dame, 1975 – orig. 1935), pp. 89-139.

J.B. Freed, "Urban Development and the '*Cura monialium*' in Thirteenth-Century Germany," *Viator* 3 (1972), pp. 311-27.

C. Neel, "The Origins of the Beguines," in *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, eds. J. Bennet et al. (Chicago, 1989), pp. 240-60.

W. Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries* (Philadelphia, 2001), pp. 1-60.

D. Elliot, *Proving Woman: Female Culture and Inquisitorial Power in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2004), pp. 1-21, 47-84.



## VIII. Cracking Down: Holy Dereliction and the Inquisition.

### 1. Persecution and Medieval Society.

J. Blötzer, "Inquisition," in *Catholic Encyclopedia* VIII (N.Y., 1910), pp. 35-36.

E.W. Nelson, "The Theory of Persecution," *Persecution and Liberty, Essays in Honor of George Lincoln Burr* (N.Y., 1931), pp. 3-20.

A.P. Evans, "Hunting Subversion in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 23 (1958), pp. 1-22.

E. Peters, *Torture* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 1-10, 40-73.

R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 1-11, 60-153.

J. Given, "The Inquisitors of Languedoc and the Medieval Technology of Power," *American Historical Review*, vol. 94 (1989), 336-59.

### 2. Poverty Radicalized: The Spiritual Franciscans.

M. Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty* (London, 1961), pp. 31-52, 141-83, 208-46.

B. McGuinn, "Angel Pope and Papal Antichrist," *Church History*, 47 (1978), pp. 155-65.

D. Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the usus pauper Controversy* (Philadelphia, 2001), pp. ix-xii, 57-87, 163-96.

L. A. Burnham, *So Great a Light, So Great a Smoke: The Beguin Heretics of Languedoc* (Cornell, 2008), pp. 1-40, 95-133.

IX. Mysticism, Speculative and Anarchic.

1. Meister Eckhart

R.W. Southern, "Meister Eckhardt," in *Medieval Humanism* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 19-28.

J. Tobin, *Meister Eckhardt: His Thought and Language* (Philadelphia, 1986), pp. 3-64, 147-83.

A. Hollywood, "Marguerite Porete and Meister Eckhart," in *Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics*, ed. B. McGinn (New York, 1994), pp. 87-113.

B. McGinn, *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart: The Man from Whom God Hid Nothing* (NY, 2001), pp. 1-2, 20-52, 114-61.

2. Over the Edge? Prophecy, Apocalyptic Hedonism, and the Free Spirit.

N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, pp. 108-13, 146-86.

R.E. Lerner, *The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages* (Berkeley and L.A., 1972), pp. 1-34, 85-105, 182-90, 228-43.

M. Reeves, "The Originality and the Influence of Joachim of Fiore," *Traditio*, 36 (1980), 269-316.

B. McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim in the History of Western of Fiore in the History of Western Thought* (NY, 1985), pp. 101-17, 145-236.

X. Women of Spirit: A Celebration of the Body?

1. Theological Attitudes toward Women and Female Visionaries.

Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelean Revolution, BC 750-AD 1250* (Montreal, 1985), 1-6, 83-89, 119-126, 361-412, 468-78.

H. Bloch, "Medieval Misogyny," *Representations* 20 (1987), pp. 1-24.

T. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 1-62.

Elliot, D., "The Physiology of Rapture and Female Mysticism," in *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body* (Bury St. Edmunds, 1997), pp. 141-74.

2. Hungering for God: Holy Women and Anorexia Nervosa

R. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago, 1985), 1-54.

J.J. Brumberg, *Fasting Women* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), pp. 8-60.

G. Constable, "Twelfth-Century Spirituality and the Late Middle Ages," *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 5 (1971), pp. 27-60, repr. in *Religious Life and Thought (11th - 12th Centuries)* (London, 1971).

C. Bynum, *Holy Fast and Holy Feast* (Berkeley and L.A., 1987), pp. 31-72, 189-302.

XI. A Crisis in the Ecclesiastical Order: Papal Schism and the Lollards.

1. The Appeal of Lollardy.

M. Deansely, *The Lollard Bible* (Cambridge, 1920), pp. 225-51, 351-73.

M. Aston, "Lollardy and Sedition, 1381-1431," *Past and Present* XVII (1960), pp. 1-44.

J.A.F. Thompson, *The Later Lollards 1414-1520* (London, 1965), pp. 1-20, 211-53.

K. B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 139-76, 207-26.

A. Hudson, "Lollardy: The English Heresy?" *Studies in Church History* 18 (1982), pp. 261-83.

M. Wilks, "Wyclif and the Wheel of Time," *Studies in Church History*, vol. 33 (1997), pp. 177-93.

2. New Visions of the Church.

Y. Renouard, *The Avignon Papacy*, tr. D. Bethell (Hamden, Conn., 1970), pp. 59-110, 116-34.

R. Luma, "A Conciliar Suggestion," in *The Impact of the Church upon its Culture*, ed. J.C. Brauer (Chicago, 1968), II, pp. 121-27.

B. Tierney, *The Foundations of Conciliar Theory: The Contributions of Medieval Canonists from Gratian to the Great Schism* (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 1-22, 132-56, 179-219, 238-47.

R.N. Swanson, *Universities, Academics, and the Great Schism* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 1-21, 148-208.

## XII. Mystical Women: A Feminization of Christianity?

Read in one of the following texts and prepare a collaborative outline for a group discussion on an aspect of women's spirituality that is characteristic of the mystic you choose. Your presentation should focus on a particular aspect of the mystic under discussion and include some of your own research on the topic.

Hadewich, *Complete Works* (N.Y., 1980).

Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe* (London, 1985).

Julian of Norwich, *Showings* (N.Y., 1979).

Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue* (N.Y., 1980).

XIII. Radical Challenge and Conservative Reform: The Hussites and the *Devotio moderna*.

1. The Hussite Challenge.

R.R. Betts, "The Place of the Czech Reform Movement in the History of Europe," *Essays in Czech History* (London, 1969), pp. 86-106.

H. Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley and L.A., 1967), pp. 1-56, 98-108, 126-40, , 240-65, 310-36, 385-418, 481-95.

G. Leff, "Wyclif and Hus: A Doctrinal Comparison," in A. Kenny, ed., *Wyclif in his Times* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 105-25.

F. Smahel, "The Hussite Movement: An Anamoly of European History?" in *Bohemia in History*, ed. M. Teich (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 79-97.

2. *Devotio moderna*: The New Wave?

A. Hyma, *The Christian Renaissance: A History of the Devotio Moderna* (Grand Rapids, 1924), pp. 1-7, 25-35, 301-9.

R.R. Post, *The Modern Devotion* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 1-17, 244-58, 314-43.

J. van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The devotio moderna and the Worlld of the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2009), pp. 1-10, 162-99, 266-319.