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Spring 2020 Office Hours:
M W F 10:00-10:45, 3:00-5:00
and by appointment

**MEDIEVAL WOMEN MYSTICS
SPRING 2020**

EUS 347 35985
GSD 361D 37605
RS 357 15 42455
WGS 340 51 45090

Global Culture Flag
Writing Flag

MWF 2:00-3:00
BUR 337

The life and writings of Saint Birgitta of Sweden, fourteenth-century visionary, religious reformer and pilgrim, will be examined and compared with her predecessor Hildegard of Bingen (Germany) and her successor Margery Kempe (England). Social and historical contexts for all three visionary women will be explored in depth, particularly the factors behind Birgitta's emerging as such an authoritative voice, both political and religious, within the milieu of fourteenth-century Europe. Other related figures, predominantly Julian of Norwich, but also Christina Mirabilis, Jeanne d'Arc and Catherine of Siena will also be visited. We will also explore varieties of spirituality and spiritual thinking including: anchorism and asceticism; Marian piety and Goddess-imagery; virginity and female creativity; and bridal imagery. Any theoretical framework – religious; scientific; theological; medical; archetypal; or any other – may be allowed. No single orthodoxy or heterodoxy should become primary in our investigations: all may have a voice (and it need not be a consistent one). We will try to allow the past to speak for itself, always realizing that we, the readers/listeners/watchers, will necessarily apply some kind of “spin” based on our own backgrounds.

Two things to remember always, when you investigate the lives and thoughts of people of the past: 1. They were vastly, almost unimaginably, different from us; and 2) They were uncannily like us. Both 1) and 2) are entirely true.

BOOKS and PACKET: Not ordered through the Co-Op, since they tend to serve small classes so poorly. Get them any way you can: used, library, online – as soon as you can.

Birgitta of Sweden: Life and Selected Revelations, ed. Marguerite Tjader Harris. Paulist Press, 1990.

ISBN 0809131390
(called **Harris** in syllabus)

Selected Writings: Hildegard of Bingen (Penguin Classics), by Hildegard of Bingen, ed. & tr. Mark Atherton. Penguin, 2001.

ISBN-10: 0140436049

ISBN-13: 978-0140436044

(called **Hildegard** in syllabus)

The Book of Margery Kempe, ed. & tr. B. A. Windeatt. Penguin, 1994.

ISBN 01404 32515

(called **Kempe** in syllabus)

Revelations of Divine Love, by Julian of Norwich, ed. & tr. Elizabeth Spearing and A. C. Spearing. Penguin, 1998.

ISBN 01404 46737

(called **Julian** in syllabus)

PACKET available at Jenn's Copy on Guadelupe.

Some biographical data for the curious, before we start:

HILDEGARD VON BINGEN (1098-1179):

Tenth child of Rhenish nobles; Benedictine nun and abbess

The first woman to receive permission from the Pope to write on theological subjects

The first scientific writer to discuss sexuality from a woman's viewpoint

The most prolific female author (of all time) in Latin (poetry and prose)

Composer, poet, visionary, and probable migraine sufferer!

BIRGITTA BIRGERSDOTTER (St. Birgitta / St. Bridget / St. Bride of Sweden: 1303-1373):

Noble child-bride, mother of eight; king's cousin, lady-in-waiting; widow and nun

Prophetess and reformer (chastised a series of Popes. . .)

Founder of a new religious order; traveled the known world

Sainted and then almost un-sainted, a generation later

The only Swede mentioned in Hartmann Schedel's world history,

Chronicorum liber (Nürnberg, 1493) (aka the Nuremberg Chronicle)

The co-patron saint of the European Union (there are several others)

JULIAN OF NORWICH (1342-1416?)

Anchoress (kept the Benedictine vow of stability: didn't move from her cell)

Visionary

Author, *Revelations of Divine Love*

Famous for the hazelnut metaphor and "Sin is behovely, but all shall be well"

MARGERY KEMPE of LYNN (1373-?), a.k.a. "The Madwoman of God":

Dictated the first known autobiography in the English language

Proto-bourgeois wife and mother -- and then not!

Copied Birgitta's pilgrimages; deliberately shadowed her life

Serious Drama Queen; canny student of human nature

NOTE: These four women are IN NO WAY the ONLY medieval European women mystics. They are just a small sample!

F.A.Q. “Are these women saints?”

A. Depends on whom you ask!

Birgitta: Canonized in 1391 by Pope Boniface IX, so definitely a saint. One of the patron saints of the European Union (which is getting to be a pretty big club by now, so as not to offend anyone). Feast day July 23.

Hildegard: Canonization papers sat on the popes’ desk(s) for literally centuries; finally named a “doctor of the Church” by Pope Benedict in 2012. A bit more ambiguous, but she’s been *called* a saint for ever. (Local veneration can also mean sainthood, just geographically limited.) Feast day September 17.

Julian: Not canonized, but venerated in the Catholic Church (May 13), the Lutheran Church (May 8) and the Church of England (May 8).

Margery: Not canonized, but venerated in the Church of England (November 9) as well as in the Episcopal Church (USA), together with mystic writers Richard Rolle (b. circa 1300) and Walter Hilton (b. circa 1340) (September 28), both of whom were important for Margery’s thinking.

CLASS POLICY NOTE:

All four of our main authors would have considered themselves pious Christians. (Today we would call them “Catholics,” but as there were no Protestants yet, the only Christians in western Europe *were* Catholics back then [Catholic simply means “universal”].) Religion played a hugely significant role in their lives that it may or may not play in the diverse lives of North Americans today.

However, although these women all professed the same religion, in many respects they were entirely unlike one another. As we read their works, we will find that each has a unique spirituality, a characteristic intellectual and/or emotional approach to her religion. None of these approaches mirrors perfectly any of the diverse Christianities of today, although there are many overlaps with some of today’s Christian thinkers. We will let these equally diverse women speak for themselves. How should we react to them?? (This is a rhetorical question to which there is no “right” answer. They *will* embarrass us, I guarantee you – but perhaps not on the issues you think they will. Margery made a career of embarrassing people, in her own life, after all.)

How about this: **As long as we all maintain respect for *each other*** in class discussions, it will be legal (even encouraged) in this class to express *any kind* of reaction to our authors’ lives and works, from *any point of view or identity*, whether pious or impious, medieval or postmodern, orthodox or heretical, feminist or patriarchal, Catholic or Protestant, evangelical or mainline, charismatic or rationalistic, Christian or nonchristian, traditionalist or pagan, believer or unbeliever, optimistic or pessimistic, consistent or inconsistent, queer or not queer, medievalist or modernist, Freudian or Jungian, sexual or asexual, Democrat or Republican, American or European – or anything else you can think of. We’ll try, in person, to model the opposite of the Internet: addressing each others’ arguments, not each other as persons. Let a thousand flowers bloom!

HANDY WEB SITES:

Online Medieval Sources Bibliography:

<http://medievalsourcesbibliography.org/sources.php?id=-990066772>

Janet Sloger's Medieval Women Writers Bibliography:

<http://www.library.rochester.edu/robbins/women-writers>

McMaster U's Medieval Women Bibliography:

<http://mw.mcmaster.ca/scriptorium/biblio.html>

Umiltà: Portal to Julia Bolton Holloway's interlinked Websites about Julian of Norwich and her times, including material on Birgitta.

<http://www.umilta.net>

You will doubtless find many other sites. These women are Very Trendy right now. Before you consult any other Websites, though, let me have a look at them. There is a lot of not-very-informed breathless enthusiasm out there, especially for Hildegard.

GRADING:

Your grade will come from:

Reading Journals, posted on Canvas: 25 %

Group Project: 15 %

Three Papers (first two: reaction/position papers; last one: research paper) exploring topics related to the Readings, turned in to me in physical form: 60 %

NO FINAL.

NOTE:

Journals: Posted on Canvas™. Used mostly for personal reactions, but can also contain questions, arguments, refutations based on the readings. These help me immeasurably in drafting ideas for class discussions.

Don't worry about my agreeing with your conclusions, on any type of writing assignment (reaction/position paper, research paper, or journal entry). Simply believe in your argument, and make it as well as you can.

Mechanics are also significant: proofread/spell-check carefully, and weed out all mistakes of typing or English usage that you can find.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Judicial Services web site at

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

SEMESTER SCHEDULE:

(Note: Readings indicated for any given day are to be read before you come.)

Day 1 / Wed Jan 22: First day of class

Introduction. “The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.” (L. P. Hartley, 1953) Pre-conditioning for time travel. What was medieval Christianity like (in the West)? What were medieval women like?

Music: Medieval Baebes; Nick Cave; Bok-Muir-Trickett; Garmarna.

Handouts: Song texts, Time Line, Readings for Day 2 (What do/did women want?; Gender Wars; Aquinas; Jacques de Vitry; Felix culpa; Manly Men of Yore. (#1-#6 in Packet) Read online: Geoffrey Chaucer, Wife of Bath’s Tale summary
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wife_of_Bath%27s_Tale#Synopsis

Day 2 / Fri Jan 24: Discussion: What do/did women want?, Gender Wars, Felix culpa; Geoffrey Chaucer, Wife of Bath’s Tale.

Brainstorming sessions on readings: a) What did women want, back then?

(Can we know? [Freud never found out; Chaucer claimed to know,

however]) b) Gender Wars: The construction of sex and gender

(nowadays) in popular and academic discourse. (How is this pertinent to this semester’s material?)

What do we already know/ think about these issues? Are we willing to modify what we know / think?

(Note: Nobody is required to end up thinking the way *I* think, which changes regularly anyway.)

Packet for next time: Christina Mirabilis material. (#10 and #11 in Packet)

Day 3 / Mon Jan 27: **Packet texts for discussion: Skellig Michael; Rosaries; Saints (Clive Barker). (#8 and #9 in Packet)**

Temporary Transit to Liège, late 12th century.

Discussion: Christina Mirabilis material.

Packet for next time: Draumkvedet; Lyke-Wake Dirge. (#12 in Packet)

Read for next time: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purgatory>

Day 4 / Wed Jan 29:

Purgatory: A New Idea (first appearing, 11th century). (Roots of the idea: I Corinthians 3: 11-15 and I Peter 3:18-19, in the Bible [New Testament].)

Temporary Transit: Norway, Sometime in the Middle Ages (pre-Reformation, in any case).

Packet Reading due: “Lyke-Wake Dirge,” Draumkvedet material. Note the role of Purgatory in Sir Olaf’s vision. Music: Agnes Buen’s or Sondre Bratland’s recording of “Draumkvedet.” Discussion.

Reading Journals Due.

Packet Readings for next time: Bridal Imagery (Wise Virgins [whose wedding is this?]; Song of Songs; St. Bernard; John Donne; Bernini’s St. Teresa; Rumi; Hildegard Elisabeth Keller, etc.). (#7 in Packet)

Day 5 / Fri Jan 31: Readings due: Bridal Imagery. Discussion.

Packet Readings: Arn Magnusson and the Song of Songs; “Feel the Bern” (St. Bernard and the Virgin).

Film Clips (note: fiction!): Arn Magnusson learns about divine & human love.

Packet Readings for next time: Barbara Newman, selection from “Life and Times of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179).” (#13 in Packet)

Day 6 / Mon Feb 3: Transit to 12th-century Rhineland. Reading due: Newman, "Life and Times of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)." Discussion.

Film: Canadian (McMaster University) educational video on Hildegard.

Packet Readings for next time: Hildegard's *Symphonia*. (#17 and #18 in Packet)

Also read for next time: Hildegard (Atherton), introduction (to page xxv).

Day 7 / Wed Feb 5: PowerPoint: Hildegard's Saints.

Discussion: *Symphonia* texts.

CD Concert: Hildegard as a Trendy Modern Composer. (Note variations in styles of recordings!)

Packet and/or Online Readings for next time: Claire Fanger's review of Barbara Newman's book *God and the Goddesses* (2003).

<http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeVII/Newman.htm>

Also read for next time: Hildegard (Atherton), pp. 3-34, 65-84.

Day 8 / Fri Feb 7: Reading due: Fanger/Newman.

Reading in Class: Barbara Newman, selections from *God and the Goddesses*.

Discussion: Natura, Caritas/Amor, Sapientia, Paupertas, the Virgin Mary, etc.

Packet Readings for next time: Picture and verse of Dame Trot (Mother Goose); Four Humors and Trotula; also *Causae et curae* (yes, the last page is missing -- sorry). (#14 and #15 in Packet)

Also read for next time: Hildegard on Gemstones (Atherton), pp. 106-114.

Day 9 / Mon Feb 10: **Reading Journals Due.**

Discussion: Four Humors and Trotula; *Causae et curae*; Plan of St. Gall.

Read for next time: Everything from *Scivias* in Atherton except the Play of the Virtues.

Day 10 / Wed Feb 12: Discuss: *Scivias* texts. (What do you think is going on here?)

Packet Reading for next time: *Scivias* picture titles. (#16 in Packet)

Day 11 / Fri Feb 14: Art show: *Scivias*.

Packet Readings for next time: *Lingua ignota, Ordo Virtutum*. (#19 and #20 in Packet.) Wikipedia: *Deadly Sins*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_deadly_sins

Read for next time: *Play of the Virtues* (Hildegard/Atherton), pp. 53-64).

Day 12 / Mon Feb 17: Discussion: *Ordo virtutum*.

Film Clip: Performance of *Ordo virtutum* from the film *Vision* (von Trotta, 2009).

Discussion: *Lingua ignota* & Hildegard's secret alphabet.

Packet Readings for next time: "Töris av Wänge" (Swedish ballad), St. Winifred (Wales), Swedish Lutheran hymn "I Himmelen", Bergman Worksheet #1. (#21 in Packet)

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eevqVAiH3Ek>

Day 13 / Wed Feb 19: Reading/watching due: "Töris av Wänge" (Swedish ballad), St. Winifred (Wales), & "I Himmelen".

Transit: Sweden, 1300s. Film: Ingmar Bergman's *Jungfrukällan* (1960).

Worksheet #1.

Day 14 / Fri Feb 21: *Jungfrukällan*, continued. Worksheet #2. Discussion.

Packet Readings for next time: Life of St. Birgitta (1303-1373) by Birger Gregersen & Thomas Gascoigne; Birgitta's relics; Birgittine monastery schedule. (#23-#24, #29 in Packet)

Read for next time: Life of Birgitta by the two Peters, in Harris, pp. 69-98.

Day 15 / Mon Feb 24: Reading Journals Due.

Discussion: Lives of St. Birgitta. Birgittine monastery schedule.

Film: Canadian (McMaster University) video on Birgitta & Catherina of Siena.

Discussion: Topics for first paper.

Read for next time: Fifth Book of Birgitta's Revelations, Harris, pp. 99-156; Seventh Book of Birgitta's Revelations, Harris, pp. 157-218.

Day 16 / Wed Feb 26: Discussion: Fifth Book of Birgitta's Revelations, Harris, pp. 99-156; Seventh Book of Birgitta's Revelations, Harris, pp. 157-218.

Read for next time: Four Prayers, in Harris, pp. 219-235.

Packet Reading for next time: Lars Bergquist on Birgitta; Five Wounds of Christ. (#22 in Packet)

Day 17 / Fri Feb 28: First Paper (Reaction / Position Paper) Due.

Day 18 / Mon Mar 2: Discussion: Four Prayers; Lars Bergquist on Birgitta.

PowerPoint: Birgitta anticipates Ignatius Loyola's *Exercises* (1522-24).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_Exercises_of_Ignatius_of_Loyola

CD Concert of Birgitta's music.

Packet Readings for next time: Birgitta chapter (intro. & sample texts) from *Women Writing Latin*; Pilgrim Songs. (#25 and #26 in Packet)

Day 19 / Wed Mar 4: Discussion: *Women Writing Latin*; Pilgrim Songs.

Listen to Pilgrim Songs.

Packet Readings for next time: Bridget Morris (#27 in Packet) and Clare Sahlin on Birgitta's canonization; Hundred Years' War timeline (Packet #35).

Wikipedia: Council of Constance https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Constance

and Jean Gerson https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Gerson

Day 20 / Fri Mar 6: Discussion: Birgitta's canonization.

Packet Reading for next time: Straubhaar, on Birgitta's authority. (#28 in Packet)

Day 21 / Mon Mar 9: Reading Journals Due.

Reading due: Straubhaar on Birgitta's authority.

Discussion: How to do Group Projects (due at the end of this month).

Packet Readings for next time: *Ancrene Wisse*; Modern Hermits material. (#30 in Packet)

Day 22 / Wed Mar 11: Discussion: *Ancrene Wisse*; Modern Hermits material.

Packet Reading for next time: Crampton Julian introduction.

Read for next time: Dame Julian ("Jelyan" as Margery Kempe calls her) of Norwich (1342?-ca. 1420?), Introduction (pp. vii-xxxi); Short Text (pp. 3-38).

Day 23 / Fri Mar 13 / FREE

Mon-Sat Mar 16-21 Spring Break

Day 24 / Mon Mar 23: Negotiable

Day 25 / Wed Mar 25: Discussion: Julian of Norwich, Introduction (pp. vii-xxxi); Short Text (pp. 3-38).

Packet Readings for next time: Julian background, including T.S. Eliot; Original orthography for “The Hazelnut” (ch. 5). (#31 and #32 in Packet)

Day 26 / Fri 2 Mar 7: Discussion: Julian background, including T.S. Eliot; Hazelnut, etc.

Packet Readings for next time: Umiltà, Atonement, Servant; and original orthography for “All manner of thing shall be well” (ch. 27). (#4 and #32 in Packet)

Read for next time: Julian, Long Text, chs. 1-43 (pp. 41-105).

Day 27 / Mon Mar 30: Discussion: Julian, Long Text, chs. 1-43 (pp. 41-105). “All is Well.” *Everybody gets a hazelnut to contemplate, yay*

Packet Readings for next time: Original orthography for “Christ as Mother” (ch. 60); “Pangur Bán” (this cats-and-hermits thing goes waaaay back). (#32 and #33 in Packet)

Read for next time: Julian, Long Text, chs. 44-86 (pp. 105-180).

Day 28 / Wed Apr 1: Discussion: Julian, Long Text, chs. 44-86 (pp. 105-180). Christ as Mother.

Cats: Film Clip, “Pangur Bán”: *The Secret of Kells* (2009).

Packet Readings for next time: Julian of Norwich shrine (UK) and window (Illinois).

Day 29 / Fri Apr 3: **Reading Journals Due.**

Packet Readings for today: Polegnala e Tudora. Anchoress material. (#34 in Packet)

Discussion: Reviews and background for Chris Newby’s film, *The Anchoress* (1993).

Bulgarian folk song, Polegnala e Tudora, used in the film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBY98KJig5I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txQUVbO0oQ0>

Day 30 / Mon Apr 6: Film Clips: Enclosure Scenes from *Anchoress*, part I. Discussion.

Day 31 / Wed Apr 8: **GROUP PROJECTS DUE: PRESENTATIONS, DAY 1.**

Day 32 / Fri Apr 10: **GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS, DAY 2.**

Packet Reading for next time: Marcelle Thiebaut (1987) on Margery Kempe.

Day 33 / Mon Apr 13: Transition to Margery Kempe: Birgitta and Julian’s (potential) influences on Margery. Discussion: Margery’s social position vis-à-vis the call to a religious life.

Discussion: Topics for second paper.

Packet Readings for next time: Original text of ch. 3, “It is full merry in heaven”; Noble Cockerel poem. (Packet #36)

Read for next time: Kempe (1373-1440?), First Book, chs. 1-30 (to page 114).

Day 34 / Wed Apr 15: Discussion: Kempe (1373-1440?), First Book, chs. 1-30 (to page 114). “It is full merry in heaven”), Noble Cockerel poem: what might we conclude about 14th-century English attitude towards life, happiness, physical pleasures?

Read for next time: Kempe: First Book, chs. 31-60 (to page 187).

Day 35 / Fri Apr 17: Discussion: Kempe: First Book, chs. 31-60 (to page 187).

Reading Journals Due.

Read for next time: Kempe, First Book, chs. 61-89 (to page 261).

SOMETIME AROUND THESE DATES (to be announced) we'll be taking a class hour to visit a special selection of texts at the Ransom Center *curated just for our class* -- books and manuscripts from their collection that are pertinent to our authors and their times! Watch this space!

Day 36 / Mon Apr 20: Discussion: Kempe, First Book, chs. 61-89 (to page 261).

Day 37 / Wed Apr 22: **Second Paper Due.**

Packet Readings for next time: Margery's Fashions (and the problems of translating fashion terms, especially when the translator doesn't know about medieval clothes). (Packet #37)

Day 38 / Fri Apr 24: PowerPoint: Margery's Fashions.

Fashion Show: Secular clothing of Margery's time. ("Gold pipes on her head"??? "Slashing" [daggys]?? What??)

Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, circa 1415 (illustrations are contemporary to Margery, show both upper-class and peasant clothes [peasants are often wearing cast-off, out-of-fashion aristocrat clothes])

Discussion: Final Paper (Research Paper).

Packet Reading for next time: St. Margaret's Church, King's Lynn.

Day 39 / Mon Apr 27: PowerPoint: Margery's Itineraries.

Margery's Pilgrimages can be followed at the McMaster website

<http://mw.mcmaster.ca/world/pilgrimage.html>

Packet Readings for next time: Lynn Staley; Lack of Sorority. (#38 in Packet)

Day 40 / Wed Apr 29: **Reading Journals due.**

Discussion: What are we to make of Margery?

How is she different from Hildegard, or Birgitta, or Julian, or Christina

Mirabilis? How is she like them? Was she sane? (If you roomed with her, would you stay sane?)

Packet Readings for next time: Falconetti; Einhorn libretto. (#39 in Packet)

Day 41 / Fri May 1: Read through and discuss the poems from the Einhorn libretto.

Day 42 / Mon May 4: Continuation of Film.

Day 43 / Wed May 6: Continuation of Film.

Day 44 / Fri May 8: Last class day.

Discussion: What do we make of all this?

Last Paper (Research Paper) Due.