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Fall 2015 Office Hours:  
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**BIRGITTA, HILDEGARD AND MARGERY  
FALL 2015**

EUS 347      35515  
GSD 361D    37325  
RS 357       48215  
WGS 340     46125

MWF 2:00-3:00  
GEA 114

Counts toward the global cultures flag requirement.

**DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:**

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 different from us; and 2) They were uncannily like us. Both 1) and 2) are entirely true.

**BOOKS: 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)

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)

**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

**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 Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton (September 28).

**CLASS POLICY NOTE:**

All four of our 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 diverse 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*, 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, medievalist or modernist, Freudian or Jungian, Democrat or Republican, American or European – or anything else you can think of. . . 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: 25 %**

**Group Project: 15 %**

**Three In-Class Tests (objective + essay): 60 %**

## NO FINAL.

### NOTE:

Journals: 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 (essay test question, 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.

Especially relevant on test days -- take note of the following:

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](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

## SEMESTER SCHEDULE:

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

1.: August 26 Wednesday: 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; Geoffrey Chaucer, Wife of Bath's Tale); Manly Men of Yore.**

2.: August 28 Friday:

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.)

**Handout for next time: Christina Mirabilis material.**

3.: August 31 Monday:

**Handouts and discussion: Skellig Michael; Rosaries; Saints (Clive Barker).**

Temporary Transit to Liège, late 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Discussion: Christina Mirabilis material.

**Handouts for next time: Draumkvedet; Lyke-Wake Dirge.**

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

4.: September 2 Wednesday:

Purgatory: A New Idea ( first appearing, 11<sup>th</sup> 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).

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.

Discussion.

**Reading Journals Due.**

**Handouts 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.).**

5.: September 4 Friday:

Readings due: Bridal Imagery). Discussion.

**Handouts: 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.

**Handout for next time: Barbara Newman, selection from “Life and Times of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179).”**

**September 7 Monday: Labor Day holiday.**

6.: September 9 Wednesday:

Transit to 12<sup>th</sup>-century Rhineland. Reading due: Newman, “Life and Times of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179).” Discussion.

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

**Handouts for next time: Hildegard’s *Symphonia*; Holsinger, “Flesh of the Voice”; Saints articles from the New Advent Encyclopedia.**

**Read for next time: Hildegard (Atherton), introduction (to page xxv).**

7.: September 11 Friday:

PowerPoint: Hildegard’s Saints.

Discussion: *Symphonia*; Holsinger.

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

**Handout for next time: Barbara Newman, selections from *God and the Goddesses*. Claire Fanger’s review of that book.**

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

8.: September 14 Monday:

Reading due: Newman, *God and the Goddesses*.

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

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

**Handouts 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).**

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

9.: September 16 Wednesday:

**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.**

10.: September 18 Friday:

Discuss: *Scivias* texts. (What do you think is going on here?)

**Handout for next time: *Scivias* picture titles.**

11. : September 21 Monday:

Art show: *Scivias*.

**Handouts for next time: Deadly Sins, Lingua ignota.**

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

12.: September 23 Wednesday:

Discussion: *Ordo virtutum*.

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

Discussion: Lingua ignota & Hildegard's secret alphabet.

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

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

13.: September 25 Friday:

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

Transit: Sweden, 1300s. Film: Ingmar Bergman's *Jungfrukällan* (1960).  
Worksheet #1.

14.: September 28 Monday:

*Jungfrukällan*, continued. Worksheet #2. Discussion.

**Handouts for next time: Life of St. Birgitta (1303-1373) by Birger Gregersen & Thomas Gascoigne; Birgitta's relics; Birgittine monastery schedule.**

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

15.: September 30 Wednesday:

**Reading Journals Due.**

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

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

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

16.: October 2 Friday:

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.**

**Handout for next time: Lars Bergquist on Birgitta; Five Wounds of Christ.**

17.: October 5 Monday:

**First Test.**

18.: October 7 Wednesday:

Discussion: Four Prayers; Lars Bergquist on Birgitta.

PowerPoint: Birgitta anticipates Loyola's *Exercises*.

CD Concert of Birgitta's music.

**Handouts for next time: Birgitta chapter (intro. & sample texts) from *Women Writing Latin*; Pilgrim Songs.**

19.: October 9 Friday:

Discussion: *Women Writing Latin*; Pilgrim Songs.

Listen to Pilgrim Songs.

**Handouts for next time: Bridget Morris and Clare Sahlin on Birgitta's canonization; Hundred Years' War timeline; Council of Constance; Jean Gerson.**

20.: October 12 Monday:

Discussion: Birgitta's canonization.

**Handout for next time: Straubhaar, on Birgitta's authority.**

21.: October 14 Wednesday:

**Reading Journals Due.**

Reading due: Straubhaar on Birgitta's authority.

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

**Handouts for next time: *Ancrene Wisse*; Modern Hermits material.**

22.: October 16 Friday:

Discussion: *Ancrene Wisse*; Modern Hermits material.

**Handout 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-xxxix); Short Text (pp. 3-38).**

23.: October 19 Monday:

Discussion: Julian of Norwich, Introduction (pp. vii-xxxix); Short Text (pp. 3-38).

**Handouts for next time: Julian background, including T.S. Eliot; Original orthography for "The Hazelnut" (ch. 5).**

24.: October 21 Wednesday:

Discussion: Julian background, including T.S. Eliot; Hazelnut, etc.

**Handouts for next time: Umiltà, Atonement, Servant; and original orthography for "All manner of thing shall be well" (ch. 27).**

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

25.: October 23 Friday:

Discussion: Handouts and reading: Julian, Long Text, chs. 1-43 (pp. 41-105).

All is Well.

**Handouts for next time: Original orthography for "Christ as Mother" (ch. 60); "Pangur Bán" (this cats-and-hermits thing goes waaaay back).**

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

26.: October 26 Monday:

Discussion: Julian, Long Text, chs. 44-86 (pp. 105-180). Christ as Mother.

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

**Handouts for next time: Julian of Norwich shrine (UK) and window (Illinois).**

**Read for next time: <http://the-toast.net/2015/08/05/if-julian-of-norwich-were-your-professor/>**

27.: October 28 Wednesday:

**Reading Journals Due.**

**Handouts for today: Polegnala e Tudora. *Anchoress* material.**

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

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

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

28.: October 30 Friday:

Film Clips: Enclosure Scenes from *Anchoress*, part I. Discussion.



- 29.: November 2 Monday:  
**GROUP PROJECTS DUE: PRESENTATIONS, DAY 1.**
- 30.: November 4 Wednesday:  
**GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS, DAY 2.**  
**Handout for next time: Thieboux.**
- 31.: November 6 Friday:  
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.  
**Handouts for next time: Original text of ch. 3, "It is full merry in heaven"; Noble Cockerel poem.**  
**Read for next time: Kempe (1373-1440?), First Book, chs. 1-30 (to page 114).**
- 32.: November 9 Monday:  
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 14<sup>th</sup>-century English attitude towards life, happiness, physical pleasures?  
**Read for next time: Kempe: First Book, chs. 31-60 (to page 187).**
- 33.: November 11 Wednesday:  
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).**
- 34.: November 13 Friday:  
Discussion: Kempe, First Book, chs. 61-89 (to page 261).
- 35.: November 16 Monday:  
**Second Test.**  
**Handouts for next time: Margery's Fashions (and the problems of translating fashion terms, especially when the translator doesn't know about medieval clothes).**
- 36.: November 18 Wednesday:  
Reading due: Kempe, Second Book, chs. 1-5 (to page 279).  
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])  
**Handout for next time: St. Margaret's Church, King's Lynn.**
- 37.: November 20 Friday:  
PowerPoint: Margery's Itineraries.  
Margery's Pilgrimages can be followed at the McMaster website  
<http://mw.mcmaster.ca/world/pilgrimage.html>  
**Handouts for next time: Lynn Staley; Lack of Sorority.**
- 38.: November 23 Monday:

**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?)

**Handouts for next time: Falconetti; Einhorn libretto. Bring these next Monday!**

39.: November 25 Wednesday: Free. Y'all will be traveling anyway.

**Fri. Nov. 27: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

40.: November 30 Monday:

Film: *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, Carl Theodor Dreyer ( 1928). (Jeanne d'Arc: 1412-1431.)

41.: December 2 Wednesday:

Continuation of Film.

42.: December 4 Friday: Last class day.

Discussion: What do we make of all this?

**Last Test.**

**HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY!**