

Medieval Spirituality 1000-1400

AT351/CH51

Easter 2017

1:30-4:15 PM

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Office: Seabury 409 Hours Wed 4:30

Description

The breathtaking beauty of the Gothic cathedral, the colorful world of Knighthood, the curious and compelling Monastic Orders, the mysterious records of the great mystics—these are the material of the Middle Ages, and authentic aspects of our own history and tradition. And every one is an expression of medieval spirituality. Our course will explore that spirituality systematically—we will read the great *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas meditatively, we will discover the religious connection between Knights and Monks, we will enjoy a contemplative virtual tour of Chartres Cathedral, and we will sample the sometimes sublime, sometimes startling writings of the late medieval mystics—and the visual art of Hieronymus Bosch and Peter Brueghel. (Note: this is also the fourth and final elective in Prof McPherson's series on great eras in Spirituality, but these courses re nonsequential and have no prerequisites).

Course Objectives—the student will:

1. Become acquainted with the spiritual and ascetical traditions of the high medieval West—that is, the western Church and civilization, 1000-1450 CE.
2. Discover how this tradition developed in the context of political and military history, advancing western philosophy, and art.
3. Realize the significance of this tradition for contemporary spirituality—how, for example, knowing the teachings of Guigo II on meditation might be helpful in spiritual direction today.

Required Readings:

The Quest for the Grail

Maurice Keen, *The Penguin History of Medieval Europe* (Penguin, 1968)

Warren Hollister et al, *Medieval Europe: a Short Sourcebook* (McGraw-Hill, 2001)

Frederick Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy* (Dover, 2001)

Janetta Rebold Benton, *Art of the Middle Ages* (Thames and Hudson, 2002)

Denis McNamara, *How to Read Churches* (Rizzoli, 2011)

(Besides these required texts, there will be

1. suggested supplementary readings for research projects.
2. 2. Primary text suggestions; in this category students have a choice: the preferred edition of the work, available from Amazon, or an online version. The latter are often by necessity a little creaky with age, but I have read them all and approve them. *New Advent* and *Monachos* are two sites you should get to know anyway, as is the *Perseus Project* (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>) for Classics, and for many things early Christian and medieval. If you happen to know Latin or Greek, and even if you don't, this site is invaluable: <http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/>. Go straight to "Conspectus Rerum Auctorumque." Both *Perseus* and *Omnia* contain plenty of English translations of many, many works.)
3. Translations of primary texts by CMcP, sent to the students electronically.
4. Study Guides by CMcP

These three categories are not included in this syllabus because that would make it go on forever.)

Assignments

1. **Personal Expectations:** having read the course description, schedule, and other materials in this syllabus, all students will write a one-page description of their personal goals, or "what I would like to get from this course." (This counts as first reflection paper, see below).
2. **Class Participation:** for the course to be a genuine exploration, this is mandatory. All students should plan to participate vocally every session.
3. **Weekly Reflection:** each week, every student will submit an **informal**, non-graded reflection paper about 1 page in length. These are due every week **by Friday noon**.
4. **Term project (10-20 pages):** each student will develop a term project/paper exploring some aspect of Medieval Christian Spirituality. This may take any of several forms (e.g., besides a conventional research paper, an adult education series) but must meet the 10-20 page criterion. The project must evince research beyond the required readings and original thought. (Most students in the past have found the weekly reflection papers a perfect way to discover what they want to do for the project). Project due 12 Dec; Rough outline and thesis statement (or other indication of what project is intended to be) due by the end of MARCH (**or earlier**).
5. **(Optional) Class Presentation:** any student who wishes may share a 15-minute presentation of her/his term project (or other material relevant to

this course) at any point during the term; see Professor ASAP to schedule and for assistance.

Evaluation

Grade: will be based on the volume and, especially, the quality of work evinced throughout the semester. Requirements for each grade:

C/auditor:

1. required reading (3 books).
2. Participation and attendance every session.

B:

1. all of the above plus:
2. weekly reflection papers
3. term project 10-15 pages, evincing intelligent research.

A:

1. all of the above plus:
2. term project 15-20 pages, evincing creative research.

GTS regulations stipulate that any student wishing to take this course Credit/No Credit must declare that intention at the beginning of the semester; send an e mail to Professor regarding this before the add/drop deadline. All others will receive a letter grade.

Course Policies

Laptops may be used for note-taking and for instant reference, but not for anything irrelevant to this course. Cell phones should be turned off.

Any student needing an accommodation because of disability or for any other reason should speak with Professor or e mail during first week, and provide some sort of documentation.

Medieval Spirituality bibliography required

Maurice Keen, *The Penguin History of Medieval Europe* (Penguin, 1968)

Warren Hollister et al, *Medieval Europe: a Short Sourcebook* (McGraw-Hill, 2001)
Frederick Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy* (Dover, 2001)
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Denis McNamara, *How to Read Churches* (Rizzoli, 2011)

I. Medium Aevum

Jan 30 Intro

II. A White Mantel of Churches

2/6 11th century historical and theological background

2/13 11th century prayer, poetry, mysticism, and meditation

2/20 11th century art and architecture

III. For the Love of God

2/27 The Age of Regulae: 12th century historical and theological background

3/6 12th century prayer and poetry

3/20 A Visit to the Cloisters

IV. The Great Synthesis

3/27 The Great Synthesis: 13th century history and theology

4/3 13th century meditation, poetry, and prayer

4/10 13th century art and architecture

V. The Waning of the Middle Ages

4/17 Medieval Autumn 14th century backgrounds

4/24 14th century prayer

5/1 14th century art and architecture

VI. To here from There

5/8 concusions and term project report