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Gender and Mysticism HSSP 4335
Mondays, 7:10-9:40 p.m.
Fall, 2002

This seminar explores the implications of gender on the experience of mysticism throughout Christian history. The differences in how female and male mystics experience unity with God and the differences and similarities in their authority and limits placed on their authority in the wake of special attention received on the basis on their fame as mystics. Special attention is given to the medieval mystical tradition but examples from the span of Christian tradition will be discussed, up to the 21st century.

Students will be responsible for using methodologies appropriate for the discipline of History. Students in Ph.D., MA and MTS programs will prepare a major research project which will involve a research paper of 20-25 pages and a 30 minute oral presentation. Other students will prepare a shorter research paper, of 10-15 pages and will give a short oral presentation of 20 minutes. The project is included in the course requirements so that each participant has the opportunity to explore in-depth a topic of special interest to them that is not formally included in the syllabus of readings and lectures.

Evaluation will be based on:

1. oral presentation of 5-10 minutes on one of the required readings of at least 20 pp. during the course of the semester. This fulfills part of the participation requirement, which also includes the following
2. thoughtful and active participation in class discussion, including presentations on reading assignments, as mentioned above (100 points)
3. two book reviews:
--one oral book review on a book of your choice (with approval of professor) (5-10 minutes) (50 points each = 100) [the oral book review should be on a book should be related to your research project].
Scheduled Oct. 28, Nov. 4, Nov. 11
--every student will write a book review (5 pages) of Glucklich, Sacred Pain. Due October 28 in Class.
No Extensions
4. term paper (200 points) [length depends on degree program] Due December 9 in class No Extensions
5. oral presentation (100 points) [length depends on degree program] Scheduled for Dec. 2 and Dec. 9

Regular class attendance is assumed, as is the timely fulfillment of each of these requirements. No extensions given without prior consent of the professor. That means that all written assignments are due during class on the due date. Late papers are severely penalized. Any requests for extensions must be made before the due date and must be due to reasonable cause. **All papers must be submitted in hardcopy. No computer attachments are accepted.**

All written assignments should be written in correct, standard English. Any papers with more than 5 grammatical/spelling errors may be returned ungraded and counted as late until it is edited and resubmitted. Please contact the professor if this presents a challenge. There are plenty of resources

around to help!

It is assumed that all students have access to the World Wide Web and to email. If this presents a problem, you must contact the professor immediately.

Required Reading:

Bynum, Caroline. Holy Feast, Holy Fast. The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women

Ferazzi, Cecilia. ed. by Anne Jacobson Schutte, Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint

Glucklich, Ariel. Sacred Pain. Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul

McGinn, Bernard. Flowering of Mysticism. Men and Women in the New Mysticism, 1200-1350

Rodriguez, Jeannette. Our Lady of Guadalupe. Faith and Empowerment among Mexican-American Women

Reader of Additional Required Texts is available at Copy Central on Hearst Ave.

[Suggested Reading](#)

Week One: September 9

Defining Mysticism; introducing the Discipline of History; Historical Background of Christian Mysticism

READ: Marina Warner, "Blood and Tears"; McGinn "General Introduction to The Presence of God. A History of Western Christian Mysticism" [both of these readings are found in the Reader]

FILM CLIP: The Chosen; X-Files: Stigmata

Week Two: September 16

Medieval Urban Mysticism

READ: McGinn, Introduction, chapters 1-3, pp.1-152; Passages from "The Book of the Blessed Angela of Foligno" [Angela of Foligno found in Reader]

FILM CLIP: Francesco; Brother Sun, Sister Moon

Week Three: September 23

Women Mystics of the High Middle Ages

READ: McGinn, Chapters 4-6, pp. 153-318; class discussion will also include discussion of texts by medieval mystics found in Reader.

FILM CLIP: The anchoress

Week Four: September 30

Women and Food

READ: Bynum, Holy Feast, Holy Fast; class discussion will also include discussion of texts of medieval mystics found in Reader.

FILM CLIP: Chocolat

Week Five: October 7

Medicalization of Mysticism, A Modern Phenomenon

Depression, Coma, Anorexia, Schizophrenia, Disassociation

READ: Bynum, Holy Feast, Holy Fast; Kathleen Biddick, "Genders, Bodies, Borders: Technologies of the Visible" [Biddick found in Reader]

FILM CLIP: Agnes of God

Week Six: October 14

Medicalization of Mysticism, cont.

Depression, Coma, Anorexia, Schizophrenia

READ: Linda Leonard, "The Dark Night of the Soul"; Paula Kane, "'She Offered Herself up': The Victim Soul and Victim Spirituality in Catholicism"; Emmanuel Ghent, "Masochism, Submission, Surrender"; John of the Cross, "Dark Night of the Soul" [all readings found in the Reader]

FILM CLIP: The Messenger; Gods of Time Square

Reading Week: No Class on October 21

Over Reading Week Read Glucklich

Week Seven: October 28

Mystics and Suffering

Discuss Glucklich

FILM CLIP: Dateline Episode on Audrey Santo

DUE: Written Book Review of Glucklich

Week Eight: November 4

Self-inflicted Pain and Martyrdom
continued

FILM CLIP: The Passion of Joan of Arc; Python and the Holy Grail

Week Nine: November 11

Feigning Mysticism

READ: Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint

FILM CLIP: The Song of Bernadette

Week Ten: November 18

Politicizing Visions: Visionaries and Political Empowerment

READ: Our Lady of Guadalupe

FILM CLIP: The Song of Bernadette; The Passion of Joan of Arc

Week Eleven: November 25

Visions, cont. and Visionaries Today

FILM CLIP: Mondo Elvis;

Week Twelve: December 2

Oral Presentations

Week Thirteen: December 9

Oral Presentations, cont.

