Daughters of Eve, Sisters of Mary: Women in Medieval History
HIS 310-01
TR 11-12:15

Instructor: Caitlin Saraph
Office: 103K Foust (CASA)
Office Phone: 336-334-4361
E-mail: cmsaraph@uncg.edu (this is going to be your best bet)
Office Hours: By appointment (I’m here all the time, just ask).

Course description:

In order to investigate the lives and experiences of medieval women, we will take a thematic approach, rather than a strictly linear narrative of all of medieval history. We will focus on primary sources by and about women, as well as historians’ interpretations of those texts, to investigate such topics as power and agency, religion, sexuality, and family life. We will attempt, through our readings, to come to grips with the paradoxical dichotomy that medieval women were understood as both “daughters of Eve” (inherently sinful and duplicitous) and “sisters of Mary” (inherently virtuous and spiritual), and what this meant for women’s lived experience, as well as their later interpretation by historians.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate broad knowledge of the political, religious, and social history of women throughout the Middle Ages.
2. Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives.
3. Synthesize material from a variety of sources to produce a larger analytical conclusion
4. Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing.
5. Demonstrate logical argumentation in speech and in writing.
6. Apply theoretical frameworks – gender, agency, power – to analyze how and why women’s roles varied across socio-economic, religious, and temporal boundaries.

Texts:

**Online texts.** We will have no hard-copy textbook for this class. All the readings are digital and located online. **Readings can be found on Blackboard, unless otherwise noted.** For each of these readings, I have listed the link where they may be found (The on-line version of this syllabus has clickable links, where applicable, and so does Blackboard). If you have trouble using the internet, please see me for assistance. Please note that lacking internet access the day a reading is due is no excuse for not having read it. You have the whole semester to access, print, or save copies of the readings.

The standard expectation of students in a 300-level class is that they will read 100-150 pages per week. Be prepared for the fact that we will be doing a significant amount of reading this semester. This reading is NOT optional, it is a necessary precursor to our in-class discussions.

Attendance:
After you have missed three class periods for any reason, your final grade for the course will be reduced by two percentage points (ie from 85 to 83) for each additional absence.

Assignments and Grading:

Class participation: 10%
Quizzes: 10%
Analysis of Gender: 20%
Article Analysis: 15%
Article Analysis: 15%
Final research paper: 30%

Broken down as: prospectus (3%), annotated bibliography (7%), and paper (20%)

Grading Scale:

100.99-97.00 = A+  99.99-87.00 = B+  79.99-77.00 = C+  69.99-67.00 = D+  59.99-0 = F
96.99-94.00 = A  86.99-84.00 = B  76.99-74.00 = C  66.99-64.00 = D
93.99-90.00 = A-  83.99-80.00 = B-  73.99-70.00 = C-  63.99-60.00 = D-

I do not accept late work. All assignments must be turned in by 4 pm on the day that they are due.

Class participation: A great deal of our class-time will be spent discussing the texts we read and their relationship to our overarching themes. In order for this to be functional, you will need to have read the texts and be willing to speak up. Simply showing up to class and never opening your mouth will earn you, at best, a D for this portion of your grade. The full participation rubric can be found on Blackboard. (SLOs 1, 2, 4, 5)

Quizzes: Pop quizzes will be held randomly throughout the semester, at the beginning of class. They will be based on the reading questions for each day and will require a short paragraph response. The quizzes are mostly intended to keep you honest about doing the reading, and if it is clear from class participation that you are staying engaged with the material, then quizzes will be few and far between. (SLOs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Article Analysis: Students will write two 2-page papers analyzing a scholarly article chosen from the list of additional readings for that week. One of these papers must be completed before Spring Break, the other must be completed by the final exam period, but they can be turned in at any point before those two deadlines. (SLOs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Gender Analysis: Students will write a 3-5 page paper analyzing how gender was understood in a medieval context, as well as how it can be used as a historical tool of analysis. More detailed instructions for this assignment can be found on Blackboard. (SLOs 3, 4, 5, 6)

Research project: Students will formulate a thesis, conduct research, and complete a 7-10 page research project on a medieval woman of their choice. This project will be broken down as follows: a prospective thesis/research topic (3%), an annotated bibliography of at least five scholarly sources (7%), and the 7-10 page paper (20%). More details about each part of this assignment will be available on Blackboard. (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Academic Integrity Policy:

I do not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or any other violation of the honor code. Any violations will be dealt with according to the Academic Integrity Policy (if you don't know what the policy says, it's right here: http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/). Go read it. This includes any and all
plagiarism from websites – the only websites you should be using are those specifically assigned. If you think I won’t notice that you copied and pasted whole paragraphs from Wikipedia, you’re wrong.

Adverse Weather Policy:

If you think that the university might be closed due to weather, either call the UNCG Adverse Weather Line at (336) 334-4400 or check the SpartanAlert website (http://spartanalert.uncg.edu/). If the university is open, we will have class. If the university is closed, I will send an email letting you know how the syllabus has changed and what readings we will cover during the next class.

Other Important Stuff:

Please turn off your cell-phones before the lecture starts. Do not text during my class. It is rude and disrespectful to me, and disruptive to your fellow students. If I catch you texting during my class, I will stop class and ask you to leave, since you obviously have something more important to be doing than learning.

You can bring your laptop to class for note-taking purposes and so you don’t have to print out the readings. However, if I find that you are using your laptop for non-class-related purposes, I will ask you to put it away and not bring it to class again.
**Week 1: Historical Gender**

**Jan 13:** Class intro

**Jan 15:**

Secondary sources:


**Week 2: Religious Archetypes**

**Jan 20**

Primary sources:

Genesis 1-3 ([http://witcombe.sbc.edu/eve-women/genesis.html](http://witcombe.sbc.edu/eve-women/genesis.html))

Excerpts from St. Paul

Excerpts from St. Jerome

Secondary sources:


**Jan 22**

Primary sources:

Aquinas on Mary

Augustine on Mary’s virginity

Tales of the Virgin ([http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/tales-virgin.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/tales-virgin.asp))

Secondary sources:


**Week 3: Other Medieval Ideas on Gender**

**Jan 27**

Primary sources:

Galen and other medical texts (William of Conches)

Perpetua


**Jan 29**

Primary sources:

Byzantine Law

Germanic Law

Anglo-Saxon Law
Norman Law

Secondary Sources:  

**Week 4: Women and Work**

**Feb 3**

Primary sources:  
- Widow Miller  
- Peasant Girl at Work  
- Other women at work

Secondary sources:  

**Feb 5**

Primary sources:  
- Dhuoda’s *Liber Manualis*  
- The Good Wife

Secondary sources:  

**Week 5: Love and Marriage**

**Feb 10:**

*Gender Analysis due*

Primary sources:  
- Church Fathers on Marriage  
- Gratian on Marriage ([http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/gratian1.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/gratian1.asp))  
- Augustine on Marriage  
- Marriage in Literature

Secondary sources:  
Feb 12:
Primary sources:
Christina of Markyate

Secondary sources:

Week 6: Women and Sex

Feb 17
Primary sources:
London accounts
How to determine chastity

Secondary sources:

Feb 19
Primary sources:
Penitential of Theodore
Love Letter and Folk Tale

Secondary sources:

Week 7: Women as outsiders

Feb 24
Primary sources:
Women in Judaism
Women in Islam

Secondary sources:

Feb 26
Primary sources:
Witchcraft texts

Secondary sources:

**Week 8: Female violence**

**Mar 3**
Primary sources:
Women in Frankish Society

Secondary sources:

**Mar 5**
Primary sources:
Excerpts from Beowulf
Johan Nider on Joan of Arc ([http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/nider-stjoan1.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/nider-stjoan1.asp))
Joan of Arc’s letter to the King of England ([http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/joanofarc.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/joanofarc.asp))

Secondary sources:

**Week 9: Spring Break!**

**Week 10: Female lordship**

**Mar 17**
Primary sources:
Norman Noblewomen ([http://www.uncg.edu/~rebarton/normanwomen.htm](http://www.uncg.edu/~rebarton/normanwomen.htm))

Secondary sources:

**Mar 19**
Primary sources:
Letter to Eleanor of Aquitaine ([http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/eleanor.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/eleanor.asp))
Matilda’s intervention in the case of Thomas Becket
Secondary sources:

**Week 11: Mystics**

**Mar 24**

*Paper Prospectus Due*

Primary sources:
Mystics

Secondary sources:

**Mar 26**

Primary sources:
Concerning the Beguines

Secondary sources:

**Week 12: Other female religious practices**

**Mar 31**

Primary sources:
The Rule of St. Claire of Assisi

Secondary sources:

**Apr 2**

Primary sources:
Margery Kempe

Secondary sources:

**Week 13: Women as Theologians**

**Apr 7**
Week 13: Women and Gender

Apr 9

Primary sources:
Catherine of Siena

Secondary sources:

Week 14: Women Writers

Apr 14

Annotated Bibliography due

Primary sources:
Christine de Pisan

Secondary sources:

Apr 16

Primary sources:
Marie de France
Anna Comnena

Secondary sources:

Week 15: Women in Literature

Apr 21

Primary sources:
Erec and Enide

Apr 23

Primary sources:
Prologue to the Wife of Bath’s Tale (http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/CT-prolog-bathmod.asp)
Final exam:

April 30 – final paper due by 4 pm.