

ENL 465 / HON 458 / WS 400

**Body to Text: Gender and the Construction of Spiritual Companionship in
Medieval and Modern Literature**

T Th 9:55 - 11:10 Briggs 230

Dr. Hill-Vásquez

Office Hours: T Th 2:00 - 3:00 and by appointment

Briggs 223

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Course Description

This course will focus on issues of gender and spirituality through unique and exploratory pairings of medieval and modern texts. Engaging modes of literary criticism and interpretation that attend to representations of women and men and to constructions of femininity and masculinity, we will focus on the role of the gendered body in relation to such issues as authorship, cultural authority, and historical representation. We will be particularly attentive to charting a history of spiritual companionship that invokes the role of gender as an inspiring force--a means for creative development, societal improvement, and overcoming oppression. Given our attention to "gender" as a discourse that works to define bodies and make them circulate in specific ways (sometimes unexpected, unsettling, and/or violent), we will examine how gender "conventions" are challenged and/or reinforced in times of societal disruption, stress, and oppression. Our primary readings will be accompanied by secondary readings in feminist literary criticism, queer theory, literary studies of men and masculinity, gender and race theory, and the history of the body.

Required Texts (only editions noted are acceptable)

Petroff, ed., *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*. Oxford UP, 1986.

ISBN: 0-19-503712-X

Banti, *Artemisia*, trans. Caracciolo. Bison, 1995 / University of Nebraska Press, 1988.

ISBN: 0-8032-6119-5

C. H. Talbot, ed. and trans., *The Life of Christina of Markyate*. University of Toronto Press, 1998.

ISBN: 0-8020-8202-5

Lessing, *The Memoirs of a Survivor*. Vintage, 1988.

ISBN: 0-394-75759-9

Naylor, *The Women of Brewster Place*. Penguin, 1983.

ISBN: 0-14-006690-X

Spark, *The Girls of Slender Means*. New Directions, 1998.

ISBN: 0-8112-1379-X

Windeatt, ed. and trans. *The Book of Margery Kempe*. Penguin, 1985/1994

ISBN: 0-14-043251-5

Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*. Perennial / Harper Collins, 1999.

ISBN: 0-06-093167-1

Course Packet Texts (a small copying fee may be necessary)

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Grading

The semester grade for this course (A=100-94%, A-=93-89%, B+= 88-85%, B=84-81%, B-=80-78%, C+=77-74%, C=73-71%, C-=70-68%, D+=67-64%, D=63-60%, F=59-0%), based on 400 possible points, will be assigned according to the following:

Attendance (2 x 27) **54**

Participation (2 x 27) **54**

Quizzes (5 x 10) **50**

In-Class Writing Assignments (6 x 7) **42**

Primary Texts Presentation and Materials **40**

Presentation Handout = 20

Presentation = 20

Primary Texts Analytical Essay **30**

Secondary Text Presentation and Materials **30**

Presentation Handout = 15

Presentation = 15

Final Paper Presentation and Materials **20**

Presentation Handout = 10

Presentation = 10

Responses to Final Paper Presentations **10**

First Draft of Final Paper **10**

Final Draft of Final Paper **60**

Total **400**

Fundamental Requirements

In addition to a large amount of thinking, reading, and writing, you will also be required to participate actively and consistently in class discussion. If you cannot participate actively and consistently in class discussion, you should reconsider your enrollment in this class. Furthermore, in order to succeed in this class, you must think deeply and analytically, and you must express unique and original ideas that are meaningful, purposeful, and significant. You must focus on intellectual inquiry and discussion. You must be intellectually engaged. You must be responsible for your own learning. You must respect the learning process and all members of the class. You must attend class regularly, prepare carefully for each class session, and take responsibility for both your accomplishments and shortcomings. You must work very hard.

Requirements of Literary Analysis

All literature courses are really courses in culture, history, philosophy, religion, sociology, etc., and this course will be no exception. You will be required to examine each assigned text carefully and closely as a document of cultural influence, one that both reflects and shapes its culture. In order to succeed in this class, you must think deeply and

analytically about the texts and issues we will study and you must create responses and essays that express interpretations that are meaningful, purposeful, and significant. A passing piece of writing will develop observations, opinions, and comparisons into meaningful analysis that demonstrates a new idea. A passing piece of writing must contain a specific, meaningful argument that demonstrates complex, original thinking and encourages further thought. Do not simply make observations or state opinions. Avoid basic and familiar ideas. Avoid mere summary and description. Avoid saying the same old things. Avoid merely pointing out similarities and/or differences.

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Class Format

Each class session will be conducted in a seminar format. This means that much of our time together will be devoted to discussion and that your participation in the discussion for each class session will strongly affect your final grade.

Attendance and Participation

You will receive 2 points for each day you attend class. You must arrive on time and stay for the entire class period to receive 2 points (e.g., if you arrive late and/or leave early, you will not receive more than 1 point for attendance, and you may, in fact, receive no points). You will then receive a maximum of 2 additional points for participation in classroom discussions and group work. For class meetings which do not include class discussion and/or group work (rare), each student will receive 2 points as long as they are attentive and participate in whatever activity is scheduled and/or unfolds. Participation will figure heavily in final grading; to achieve a ÒCÓ or higher in this course, you must be prepared for discussion for each class meeting. Do not, therefore, get behind in your reading and work. Be prepared for every class session with interesting ideas and comments. If you treat yourself, your abilities, and the texts you study with seriousness and dedication, the course will be challenging and rewarding for all of us.

You are allowed one "free" attendance day. That is, if you miss one class meetings, you will still receive 2 points for attendance, but you will not receive any points for participation. There will be no other "excused" absences. Alternatively, see "Attendance and Participation 'Make Up' Policy" below. Your "free" attendance day can not be combined with the below "Make Up" Policy. If you miss more than five classes, however, you will automatically fail the course.

Attendance and Participation "Make Up" Policy

If you miss a class meeting, you may attempt to make up the points by completing a three-page analytical essay, with an argument, based on a topic of my choice (usually a text from the class meeting missed). In order to exercise this option, you must let me know by the next class meeting, following the missed class meeting, that you wish to

write the three-page essay. I will then assign you a topic. The essay will then be due one week later at the beginning of class. *Make sure you indicate at the top of your essay that you are submitting it for possible attendance and participation points.* You may exercise this option for only two missed class meetings. Any additional class meetings cannot be "made up."

More on Responsibility

If you experience a situation that absolutely must preclude you from meeting course expectations, inform me as quickly as possible either before the situation occurs (if you know about it in advance) or immediately after the situation occurs (if it is unexpected). It is your responsibility to keep me informed. In addition, review the policies on Attendance, etc. above.

Taking Notes

You should take notes during every class session while I am lecturing and while we are involved in a discussion. Important ideas and information will be communicated during discussions and your notes should reflect this.

Quizzes

Students will complete six in-class quizzes based primarily upon reading comprehension. If you miss a quiz, you may attempt to make up the points by completing a three-page analytical essay--with an analytical argument--based on one of the quiz questions. In order to exercise this option, you must let me know by the Thursday following the missed quiz that you wish to write the three-page essay. I will then assign you a topic. The essay will then be due by the following Tuesday at the beginning of class. *Make sure you indicate at the top of your essay that you are submitting it for possible quiz points.* You may exercise this option for only one missed quiz. Any additional quizzes cannot be "made up." Quiz 1 will be a practice quiz which may be used for extra credit points (up to 10).

In-Class Writing Assignments

Throughout the semester, you will complete a series of brief in-class writing assignments, usually based on the reading due for the class meeting. If you miss an in-class writing assignment due to an absence, you may "make it up" if you consult with me by the next class meeting and turn it in by the following class meeting (or earlier). You may exercise this option one time only.

Primary Texts Presentation and Primary Texts Analytical Essay

Working with one other student, you will prepare a presentation based on an analytical comparison of an assigned modern primary text and an assigned medieval primary text.

(If you prefer to work alone on your Primary Texts Presentation, please let me know by our next class meeting.) This Presentation must include a handout for each member of the class. You will receive more detailed instructions regarding the Primary Texts Presentation.

In addition, on the day your presentation is due, you will turn in an individual analytical essay of 4 pages (minimum). This essay must present an interesting and original analysis of the two primary texts you will be presenting as well as a central, controlling argument about these texts. (Note: any essay turned in after the due date noted on the Course Schedule will lose 5 points per day. This includes non-class days.) You will receive more detailed instructions regarding the Primary Texts Analytical Essay.

Secondary Text Presentation

Working with one other student, you will prepare a presentation on one of the assigned secondary texts. This presentation must also make use of the other texts assigned for the class session during which you will be presenting. You will receive a handout providing more detailed instructions. (If you prefer to work alone on your Secondary Text Presentation, please let me know by our next class meeting.)

Final Paper (approx. 10 pages)

Drawing from your work throughout the semester, you will develop an analytical research paper based on one modern primary text and one medieval primary text. (Many students choose to focus on the texts prepared for their Primary Texts Presentation and explored in their accompanying essay.) In addition to developing an interesting and original analysis of the texts as well as a central, controlling argument, your paper must include reference to at least four secondary sources (which may include those read for the course during the semester). Proper MLA citation is required as is adherence to all Format Requirements. The Grading Rubric will figure heavily in my grading of these essays.

You will turn in a "first draft" as well as a "final draft" of your Paper. In addition, you are expected to attend an individual conference with me regarding your Paper. Any paper turned in after the deadline of Tuesday, December 14 at noon will receive a "0."

Final Paper Presentation

Near the end of the semester and before the deadline for your Final Paper, you will present your initial work on your Paper and lead the class in a brief discussion. Your Individual Presentation is an important step toward helping you compose a successful Paper. In addition, each student will hand in a written response to each Individual Presentation.

Format Requirements

If for some reason, you manage to turn in a paper, etc., that does not follow the Format Requirements, I will deduct a number of points to be determined at my discretion. Please see below for all Format Requirements.

Office Appointments

I will be happy to meet with you either during my scheduled office hours or at another time that is convenient for both of us. We can accomplish a lot if we both work hard during an appointment. I love to discuss ideas, new approaches, responses to readings, etc., outside of class.

Plagiarism

When you plagiarize you steal humanity's most important resource: ideas. You cannot present someone else's ideas as your own without plagiarizing (that is, stealing). You must document even the shortest of phrases, sentences, all quotations, and all notes, citations, and references used. If you plagiarize in this course, you will likely fail the course.

Students With Disabilities

If you need accommodations because of a documented disability, and/or if you have medical information to share with me, please discuss this with me before our second class meeting. If you have not already obtained proper documentation from Disability Support Services, I will be happy to direct you to the appropriate office. Please feel free to e-mail me as well.

Major Portfolios - A Reminder

All English majors are required to submit a "Major Portfolio" (or "Senior Portfolio") before they graduate. All English Majors (and those planning on majoring in English) should be saving all writing assignments (including drafts, applicable writing assignments, and any other related materials) from your courses in order to prepare your required Major Portfolio. The requirements for the Portfolio may be found at http://liberalarts.udmercy.edu/english/english_portfolio.html.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that readings for an upper-level seminar course are extensive; we will not always have sufficient class time to discuss in depth all of the assigned readings. Nevertheless, you are responsible for all readings listed on the Course Schedule and quizzes, in-class writings, and other required work for the course will draw upon any and all readings--even those we do not cover in class.

MW = *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*

CP = Course Packet

Unit I: Gender and Experience: History in the Making

Week I

T 9/7 Course Introduction

Handouts: Syllabus & Course Schedule; Format Requirements; Student Information Survey; Initial Course Packet Readings; Course Packet Table of Contents

Th 9/9 Due: Excerpts from Hildegard of Bingen (MW 138-40; 151-57)

Due: Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale (CP-1)

Handouts: Primary Texts Presentation; Secondary Text Presentation; Course Packet Readings

Week II

T 9/14 Due: *Artemisia* 1-85

Quiz 1

Sign Up for Primary Texts Presentation and Secondary Text Presentation

Handout: Primary Texts Essay; Essay Grading Rubric

Th 9/16 Due: *Artemisia* 85-112

Due: Scott, "Women's History" and "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (CP-2)

In-Class Writing 1

Week III

T 9/21 Due: *Artemisia* 112-79

Quiz 2

Th 9/23 Due: *Artemisia* 179-214

Due: Scott, "Experience" (CP-3)

Due: Secondary Text Presentation (1) on "Experience"

Week IV

T 9/28 Due: *Artemisia* 199-214

Due: Primary Texts Presentation (1) on *Artemisia* and Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale

Due: Primary Texts Analytical Essays on *Artemisia* and Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale
(for students presenting on these texts today)

UNIT II - WHO'S SACRED? WHO'S PROFANE? TEXTS, BODIES, AND SPIRITUAL LIVES

Th 9/30 Due: Introductory information - Christina of Markyate (MW 136-38)

Due: *Life of Christina of Markyate* 34-99

In-Class Writing 2

Week V

T 10/5 Due: *Life of Christina of Markyate* 99-143

Due: *Memoirs of a Survivor* 3-63

Th 10/7 Due: *Life of Christina of Markyate* 143-93

Due: Holland, "When Bodies Come Together" (CP-4)

Due: *Memoirs of a Survivor* 63-108

Quiz 3

Week VI

T 10/12 Due: *Memoirs of a Survivor* 108-185

Due: Woolf, "Professions for Women" (CP-5)

Due: Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa" (CP-6)

Due: Secondary Text Presentation (2) on "The Laugh of the Medusa"

In-Class Writing 3

Th 10/14 Due: *Memoirs of a Survivor* 185-213

Due: Primary Texts Presentation (2) on *Life of Christina of Markyate* and *Memoirs of a Survivor*

Due: Primary Texts Analytical Essays on *Life of Christina of Markyate* and *Memoirs of a Survivor* (for students presenting on these texts today)

UNIT III - GENDER, COMMUNITY AND THE SPACES WE OCCUPY

Week VII

T 10/19 Due: Introductory information - Marie d'Oignies, Christina Mirabilis, and Hadewijch of Brabant (MW 171-78)

Due: Excerpts from *Life of Marie d'Oignies*, *Life of . . . Christina Mirabilis*, and Hadewijch, *Letters* (MW 179-95)

Due: *The Girls of Slender Means* 7-90

Quiz 4

Th 10/21 Due: *The Girls of Slender Means* 91-42

Due: Niranjana, "Of Gender and Space: An Outline" (CP-7)

Due: *The Women of Brewster Place* 1-5

In-Class Writing 4

Week VIII

T 10/26 Due: Introductory information - Clare of Assisi and Catherine of Siena (MW 231-35; 238-40)

Due: Excerpts from *The Testament of St. Clare* and Catherine, *Letters* (MW 242-45; 263-66, 273-57)

Due: *The Women of Brewster Place* 6-74

Due: Carpenter, "The Communities of a Thirteenth Century Holy Woman, Ida of Nivelles" (CP-8)

Th 10/28 Due: *The Women of Brewster Place* 75-129

Week IX

T 11/2 Due: *The Women of Brewster Place* 129-73

Due: Stein, "Becoming Lesbian: Identity Work and the Performance of Sexuality" (CP-9)

Quiz 5

Th 11/4 Due: *The Women of Brewster Place* 174-92

Due: Cole and Guy-Sheftall, "Having Their Say: Conversations With Sisters and Brothers" (CP-10)

Due: Secondary Text Presentation (3) on "Having Their Say"

Due: Primary Texts Presentation (3) on Excerpts from writings / lives of medieval women and either *The Girls of Slender Means* or *The Women of Brewster Place*

Due: Primary Texts Analytical Essays on texts presented today (for students presenting today)

UNIT IV - NAVIGATING THE MATERIAL: THE SPIRITUAL VOICES OF GENDER

Week X

T 11/9 Due: Introductory information - Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe (MW 299-302)

Due: Excerpts from Julian of Norwich, *Showings* (MW 308-13)

Due: *The Book of Margery Kempe* 33-94

Due: *The Crying of Lot 49* 1-30

Th 11/11 Due: *The Book of Margery Kempe* 94-122

Due: *The Crying of Lot 49* 31-63

In-Class Writing 5

Week XI

T 11/16 Due: de Beauvoir, "The Mystic" (CP-11)

Due: Irigaray, "La Mystřrique" (CP-12)

Due: *The Book of Margery Kempe* 122-90

Quiz 6

Th 11/18 Due: *The Book of Margery Kempe* 191-221

Due: *The Crying of Lot 49* 64-79

Due: Beckwith, "Problems of Authority in Late Medieval English Mysticism" (CP-13)

Week XII

T 11/23 Due: *The Crying of Lot 49* 80-119

Due: *The Book of Margery Kempe* 221-61

Week XIII

T 11/30 Due: *The Crying of Lot 49* 120-52

Due: Newman, "The Quest for Metaphor in *The Crying of Lot 49*" (CP-14)

Due: Secondary Text Presentation (4) on "The Quest for Metaphor "

Th 12/2 Due: Flax, "The End of Innocence" (CP-15)

Due: Connell, "The Big Picture: Masculinities in Recent World History" (CP-16)

Due: Primary Texts Presentation (4) on *The Book of Margery Kempe* and *The Crying of Lot 49*

In-Class Writing 6

Due: Primary Texts Analytical Essays on *The Book of Margery Kempe* and *The Crying of Lot 49* (for students presenting on these texts today).

Special note for students presenting on these texts: it will be to your advantage to turn in your Analytical Essays in advance of your presentation.

Week XIV

Individual Conferences on Papers conducted this week M-Th

M 12/6 First Drafts of Final Papers Papers Due at 10:00 a.m or my mailbox in Briggs 122
(with date and time stamp by administrative assistant).

T 12/7 Individual Presentations - Essays

Th 12/9 Individual Presentations - Essays

Week XV (Finals Week)

Th 12/16 Final Draft of Final Paper Due at 10:00 a.m. in Briggs 223 or my mailbox in
Briggs 122 (with date and time stamp by administrative assistant). If you turn it in
earlier, you must turn it into my mailbox in Briggs 122. You must, in addition, have an
administrative assistant note the date **and time**.