What marked out some people as “friends of God” in medieval and Renaissance Europe? And how could contemporaries and modern authors write about interior religious states? The notion of sainthood and the status of mystical visionaries could, in fact, be topics of major dispute, as the example of Joan of Arc demonstrates. Was she a saint, a witch, or a demoniac? A saint could be an asset as well as a source of trouble. This course examines the linked phenomena of mysticism, visions, and sanctity, as well as the tensions surrounding them, through an introduction to major scholarship on the field, as well as to important contemporary sources for the study of saints and mystics.

W August 25. Introduction to the class.

Part 1: Origins of the cult of the saints

M August 30. The contours of holiness in medieval and Renaissance Europe.


W September 1. The cult of martyrs: Perpetua, envisioned.

Readings: Jennifer A. Rea and Liz Clark, *Perpetua’s Journey: Faith, Gender, and Power in the Roman Empire*, xi-xvii, Part I (1-86); Part II (only 91-93, 98-103, 105-110);


W September 8. Martyrdom as subversive: Perpetua, text and context.

**Reading:** Rea and Clark, *Perpetua’s Journey*, Part III (169-84), Part II (144-66).


**Part 2: Desert fathers and mothers; monastic saints**

M September 13. The desert fathers.


W September 15. The desert mothers.


*Valerie R. Hotchkiss, Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe* (London: Routledge, 1999), ch. 2 (BB).

**Reading response #1 due by September 15 at 9 a.m.**


In-class viewing of *Simon of the Desert* (Luis Buñuel, 1965).

W September 22. Monastic sanctity.


**Part 3: Relics and miracles**

M September 27. Relics in theory and practice.

**Readings:** *Gillian Clark, “Victricius of Rouen: Praising the Saints.” Journal of Early*

W September 29. Reliquaries.


Also, please visit the wonderful online exhibit “Treasures of Heaven” at [http://www.learn.columbia.edu/treasuresofheaven/](http://www.learn.columbia.edu/treasuresofheaven/), especially the section labeled “Relics and Reliquaries.”

M October 4. Relic thefts.


W October 6. Functions of miracle collections.


**Reading response #2 due by October 6 at 9 a.m.**

M October 11. Fall break.

**Part 4: Sanctity and religious “Others”**


Topics for final papers due on October 18 by 5 p.m.

M   October 18. Christians, Muslims, and other converts.

    Reading: Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the Wise: A Translation of the Cantigas de Santa María, trans. Kathleen Kulp-Hill (Tempe AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), Cantigas numbers 27, 169, 185, and 329 (BB);


W   October 20. Gender non-conforming saints (with guest Leah DeVun).


M   October 25. Sanctity, visions, and dissent.

    Readings: “Na Prous Boneta” (BB), https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/naprous.asp;


Part 5: The question of female sanctity


Reading response #3 due by October 27 at 9 a.m.
M  November 1. Women and possession.

Readings: Thomas de Cantimpré, The Life of Christina the Astonishing, in Thomas of Cantimpré: The Collected Saints’ Lives (BB);


W  November 3. Challenges to Bynum’s model of female piety.

Readings: “Catherine of Siena: Her Life and Letters,” in Mary-Ann Stouck, A Short Reader of Medieval Saints (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 156-88 (BB);

Part 6: Mendicant sanctity

M  November 8. Francis of Assisi, or, rather, the multiple Francises.


W  November 10. The mendicants and Capetian royal sanctity.


Part 7: Papal canonization

M  November 15. The canonization process.
For students in W section, secondary source comparison paper due November 15, by 11:59 p.m.

Part 8: The cult of the saints in art and lived religion

W November 17. Field trip to Memorial Art Gallery.


Reading response #4 due by November 17 at 9 a.m.

M November 22. Living with the saints: woodcuts and lived religion.


W November 24. Thanksgiving holiday.

Part 9: Contested visions; contested sanctity


Reading: Extracts from The Book of Margery Kempe, in Medieval Writings on Female Spirituality, ed. Elizabeth Spearing (New York: Penguin, 2002), 226-54 (BB); Clementine Oliver, “Why Margery Kempe is Annoying and Why We Should Care,” in Glenn, Middle Ages, 323-32 (BB).

M December 6. Saint or heretic?: Joan of Arc.

For students in W section, draft of final paper due on December 6 by 11:59 p.m. (Make an appointment to discuss your draft with the instructor.)


Reading response #5 due by December 8 at 9 a.m.

Final paper must be submitted to Blackboard by noon on Friday, December 17.

Books to purchase:
Required:


Recommended:

All other readings in the course are available through Blackboard and are labeled in the syllabus with the indication (BB).

Course requirements for students in HIS 289:
• Attendance at and active participation in all classroom discussions (10%).
• Five written responses (2-3 pages; 500-750 words) to the assigned readings for a given day (40%); distributed as indicated in timetable. Responses for a given set of readings must be submitted to Blackboard by 9 a.m. on the day those readings will
be discussed in class. E.g., if you choose to respond to the readings on the desert fathers, that response paper will be due on September 13, by 9 a.m.

- For readings to which you do not submit a written response, you must submit on Blackboard either a question raised by the day’s readings or a salient quotation that you wish to discuss in class (5%). Postings are due by 9 a.m. on the day of class.
- An article review (4-5 pages; 1000-1250 words) of one of the articles or chapters marked in the syllabus by an asterisk (*) (20%). You may not write about the same secondary source for the article review and for one of your response papers. The paper will be due two class periods after that reading is discussed in class.
- A final paper (10-12 pages; 2500-3000 words) on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor (25%). Your paper should compare two different accounts (written, visual, musical, or dramatic) of a single visionary or saint’s life (or miracles). Alternatively, for example, you might look at two different saint’s lives in the case where one text serves as a clear model for another text. Your topic should lead you to the close reading of at least two sources, as well as an exploration of major scholarship on the subject. Due December 17, by noon.

Course requirements for students in HIS 289W:

- Attendance at and active participation in all classroom discussions (10%).
- Five written responses (2-3 pages; 500-750 words) to the readings for a given day (40%); distributed as indicated in timetable. Responses for a given set of readings must be submitted to Blackboard by 9 a.m. on the day those readings will be discussed in class. E.g., if you choose to respond to the readings on the desert fathers, that response paper will be due on September 13, by 9 a.m.
- For readings to which you do not submit a written response, you must submit on Blackboard either a question raised by the day’s readings or a salient quotation that you wish to discuss in class (5%). Postings are due by 9 a.m. on the day of class.
- A secondary source comparison paper: a 5-7 page (1250-1750 word) paper in which you analyze changing scholarly interpretations by comparing two articles or chapters that we have read (20%). For example, you might compare Martha Newman’s two different treatments of Joseph of Schönau, or you might read Caroline Bynum’s interpretation of female sanctity next to that of Karen Scott. Please consult with the instructor before choosing your pairing. Due November 15.
- A final paper (10-12 pages; 2500-3000 words) on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor, plus meeting with the instructor about your draft (25%). Your paper should compare two different accounts (written, visual, musical, or dramatic) of a single visionary or saint’s life (or miracles). Alternatively, for example, you might look at two different saint’s lives in the case where one text serves as a clear model for another text. Your topic should lead you to the close reading of at least two sources, as well as an exploration of major scholarship on the subject. A first draft must be submitted on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. on December 6, after which you should schedule an appointment to discuss your draft with the instructor. The revised, final paper, to be submitted after receiving (and responding to) written and verbal feedback from the instructor on your initial draft, is due December 17, by noon.
About the reading responses:
You should choose to respond to those readings that most move, intrigue, or puzzle you. Your response should demonstrate that you have read and thought deeply about this set of readings by very briefly summarizing the readings and then discussing a question that these reading have raised for you, exploring something in the readings that provoked some strong response in you, or even digging deeper into some aspect of the readings that you found confusing. The best way to think is to write! Please use quotations (properly footnoted) from the readings (especially the primary sources) to back up your points. Responses for a given set of readings must be submitted to Blackboard by 9 a.m. on the day those readings will be discussed in class.

About the article review/secondary source comparison paper:
An article review offers a summary the article’s thesis, as well as an evaluation of the thesis and how effectively the author has proved that thesis. Your essay should answer the following questions:
- Thesis. What is the author’s thesis? What question is he or she trying to answer, and how does that fit within a wider body of scholarship, at least according to the author?
- Sources. What type(s) of primary sources does the author use to make his or her argument? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the sources?
- Method/approach. What sorts of techniques and methods does the author use to evaluate his or her sources? Does the author rely on any particular social theory or theories?
- General assessment. How successful is the author in establishing his or her point? Do the sources support the thesis being presented?

Your article review will be due two class periods after the date on which we discuss the article or chapter in class.

Students in the W section writing the secondary source comparison paper will want to take these points into consideration, as well as the dates of publication of the two works under consideration, in assessing how scholarly thinking about a given topic has changed over time. Those papers are due November 15.

Citations:
All work in this class should be appropriately footnoted, and the final paper should also include a bibliography of works cited. All citations should be follow the University of Chicago Manual of Style Notes and Bibliography (Turabian) format. See https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html for a quick reference. The full Chicago Manual of Style is available online through River Campus Libraries: https://rochester.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ROCH_INST/1yg5sr1/alma9978312313705216.

Grading scale:

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In case of some mix-up, it is a good idea to save all returned work until you receive your grade at the end of the semester.

**Learning objectives:**
At the end of this course, students will be able to
- Explain the contested nature of medieval and Renaissance sanctity
- Identify some of the cultural uses of saints and their relics in medieval and Renaissance Europe
- Read and understand a primary source as a products of a specific historical context
- Identify and analyze the arguments of major secondary works on medieval and Renaissance saints, mystics, and visionaries
- Formulate an argument in clear, written prose and support it with evidence from primary sources
- Correctly cite sources in footnotes/endnotes and bibliographies

**Statement regarding credit hours**
The College’s credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIST 289/289W are expected to devote at least one hour each week outside of class to analyzing the course readings, working alone or in groups, and to researching in depth their topics for the final paper.

**General policies**

*Late work:*
Late work will be penalized 5% for each calendar day late.

*Attendance:*
This is a discussion-intensive course. Attendance at and active participation in all classes are both mandatory. Students are responsible for all material covered in and announcements made in class. If it appears that students are not doing the readings, I will give reading quizzes without prior notice. I also reserve the right to impose a failing grade for the course after a student’s absence from seven or more class periods. (For the sake of accounting, three tardies will constitute one absence.)
**Students with disabilities:**
The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me as well.

**Classroom etiquette:**
Please turn off cell phones or set them to a silent alert. Do not take them out in class unless instructed to do so. In the rare event you must enter late or leave class early, please let us know in advance.

**Academic honesty:**
All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester’s Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will be treated as such. Anyone who engages in such activities will be turned over to the College Board on Academic Honesty for disciplinary action, as outlined at http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/. For helpful discussions of plagiarism (including subtle instances), see the American Historical Association’s “Defining Plagiarism,” https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/plagiarism-curricular-materials-for-history-instructors/defining-plagiarism, and Benjamin, *Student’s Guide*, ch. 4, especially pp. 78-79, 81, 84-86.

**Disclaimer:** The instructor reserves the right to change topics and assignments on the syllabus at any point in the semester.