Investigating Medieval Religion

History 299
Spring 2010
PPHAC 338
Monday and Wednesday, 8:55 am – 10:05 am

Prof. John F. Romano, Ph.D., L.M.S.
Office: Comenius 303
Phone: Extension 1398
E-mail: johnfromano@moravian.edu
Office Hours: Monday, 10:15 am – 11:15 am; Tuesday, 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm; Wednesday, 10:15 am – 11:15 am; Thursday, 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm (and by appointment)

Whether they dismiss it as superstitious or interpret it sympathetically, modern historians have always been interested in the role of religion in the Middle Ages. Yet they have adopted different methodologies in their study and arrived at distinct conclusions. This course explores the writings of medieval historians on religion through a combination of lecture and discussion. Students will read, discuss, present on, and write about articles and books from historians whose work reflects the major academic concerns in this field. Topics include the religious experience of women; sacred violence; ritual expressions; the relationship between the dead and the living; reform in the Church; and the interaction between folk culture and high religion. This course will give students the opportunity to study and evaluate some of the most significant scholarly discussions about medieval religion, and practice their critical thinking skills.

We will first study the basic historical outline of religion in the Middle Ages, from ca. 500 to ca. 1500. This work will build the basis for our joint discussion of the historiography of the period – the ways in which historians have approached (and often disagreed about) important issues about medieval religion. Students will be expected to read, discuss, and analyze the merits of the work of historians in these areas, and produce their own research paper that engages with secondary sources.

Students are not expected to have any previous knowledge of the Middle Ages.

Goals of the Course
- To gain a greater understanding of the major events and trends of the history of religion in Western medieval Europe from ca. 500 to ca. 1500.
- To learn the difference between primary and secondary sources, and to study in particular how to analyze and evaluate secondary sources.
- To discover the most significant areas of debate in the history of medieval religion and the historians doing work in these areas.
- To learn the basic tools of researching and writing about secondary sources.
- To improve the ability to read, discuss, write, and present about the past.

Required Books - Available for Purchase in the Bookstore

Please note:
• Two copies of R. W. Southern, *Medieval Religion*, and *Monks & Nuns* have also been placed on reserve at Reeves Library.
• While you are free to purchase the books on the Internet, please find the same editions listed here.
• Be sure to bring assigned readings to class for discussion.
• Additional material will be made available to students enrolled in the course, and two books will be accessed on reserve.

Additional Books on Reserve

Attendance Policy
Students are expected to attend class and be punctual. It is the students’ obligation to take their own notes. Much of the information and methods covered in class, which will form part of the material that will be tested on the exam, quizzes, and papers, cannot be found in the reading. In addition, students will not be able to gain any credit for participation, the midterm, and quizzes if they do not attend class sessions.

In the cases of documented illness or family emergency that will make it impossible for students to attend class or complete assignments, students are urged to get in touch with the instructor.

Academic Honesty Policy
Students are expected to adhere to Moravian College’s Academic Honesty Policy for all assignments in this course. It is imperative that you familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism, which (even when done inadvertently) is considered a serious offense. I expect that all exams and papers are *your own work*. Any time that you use someone else’s ideas in a paper, you must give credit to the person. For further information, see the appropriate pages in the Student Handbook or come speak with me.

Schedule of Classes and Readings

*Monday, 1/18/10:* Introduction

*Wednesday, 1/20/10:* Dividing the Periods of Religious History

**Monday, 1/25/10:** The History of the Papacy  

**Wednesday, 1/27/10:** Bishops and Abbots  

**Monday, 2/1/10:** Late-Medieval Religious Orders  

**Wednesday, 2/3/10:** Beyond the Hierarchy  

**Monday, 2/8/10:** Religious Belief  

**Wednesday, 2/10/10:** Midterm Exam

**Monday, 2/15/10:** Acculturation and Intercession  

**Wednesday, 2/17/10:** Exclusion and Identity  
Reading: John H. Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 118-78.

**Monday, 2/22/10:** Self and “the Other”  

**Wednesday, 2/24/10:** Methods of Research with Secondary Sources  
NB: This session will meet in Reeves Library and it will be led by librarian Beth Fuchs.

**Monday, 3/1/10:** Evaluating Secondary Sources  
Assignment: First paper due in class and discussion.

**Wednesday, 3/3/10:** Loving Mothers and Crusades  
Caroline Walker Bynum, “Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother” (*Medieval Religion*, pp. 20-48).  

**Monday, 3/15/10:** Ordering Society and Gender  
Introduction to Part II (*Medieval Religion*, pp. 95-101).

**Wednesday, 3/17/10:** **Wives and Religious Lives**  

**Monday, 3/22/10:** **Nuns and Contemplatives**  
Assignment: First quiz.

**Wednesday, 3/24/10:** **Relations between Sexes and among Faiths**  
Introduction to Part IV (*Medieval Religion*, pp. 317-24)  

**Monday, 3/29/10:** **Anti-Jewish Measures**  

**Wednesday, 3/31/10:** **Prayer and Memory**  

**Wednesday, 4/7/10:** **Gender, Society, and Miracles**  
Luigi Pellegrini, “Female Religious Experience and Society in Thirteenth-Century Italy” (*Monks & Nuns*, pp. 97-121).  
Assignment: Second quiz

**Monday, 4/12/10:** **Oral presentations on material for second paper**
Wednesday, 4/14/10:  Oral presentations on material for second paper

Monday, 4/19/10:  Saints, Beggars, and Lepers
Catherine Peyroux, “The Leper’s Kiss” (Monks & Nuns, pp. 172-88).

Wednesday, 4/21/10:  Building up and Burning Down

Monday, 4/26/10:  Themes in Medieval Religion
Assignment: Second paper due in class and discussion.

Wednesday, 4/28/10:  New Approaches to Ritual
Reading: Eamon Duffy, Stripping the Altars, pp. 91-130.
Assignment: Third quiz

Grading
Midterm, on 2/10  15%
First paper (5-6 pp.), due on 3/1  20%
Quizzes, on 3/22, 4/7, 4/28  5% (all equal weight)
Second paper (11-12 pp.), due on 4/26  30%
Oral presentation (4/12, 4/14)  5%
Participation  25%

Requirements
- The midterm will demonstrate knowledge of significant events, figures, and terms of the Middle Ages, which will facilitate our work with secondary sources. To be taken in class on 2/8. The format of the midterm will be discussed in class.
- The first paper (5-6 pp., due in class on 3/1) will discuss John H. Arnold’s Belief and Unbelief and the secondary sources used to construct it.
- Quizzes will require students to demonstrate knowledge of secondary sources that they have prepared for class. To be taken at the beginning of class on 3/22, 4/7, and 4/28.
- The second paper (11-12 pp., due in class on 4/26) will be an historiographical paper on medieval religion, either discussing the work of a significant medieval historian who is primarily interested in religion or a theme of interest in medieval religion. A session of class will be devoted to discussing the methods of doing secondary research (2/24).
- Late papers will be penalized one “step” per day late (e.g., an A paper would become an A-; an A- paper would become a B+; and so on).
• Descriptions of the format for both papers will be distributed in class and discussed. Both papers should employ footnotes for references, and use the Chicago Manual of Style format.
• Papers must be submitted in hard copy.
• Students who would like help with their writing are encouraged to take advantage of the resources of the Writing Center.
• Participation grades are assigned based upon your contributions in class discussion. It is imperative that you prepare the readings assigned for each day before class and are ready to talk about them. Simply attending class does not guarantee you a high participation mark.
• Students will deliver oral presentations in class on 4/12 and 4/14 on the topic of their second paper, and we will discuss your results as a class. The format of the oral presentations will be discussed in class.
• Please note that it is within my purview as an instructor to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades. I will do my utmost to be fair and consistent.
• There are no make-up exams or presentations, save for documented emergencies.
• There are no extra-credit assignments in this course.
• Please note that this schedule is subject to change when circumstances make it necessary. Students will be made aware of any modifications as soon as possible.

Disabilities

Students with disabilities who need special facilities or consideration should present the appropriate documentation from Disability Support Services to the instructor.