

Spring 2011
Prof. Jarbel Rodriguez

Office: SCI 267A

Office Hours: MW 2-3:30 or by appt.

Webpage: <http://bss.sfsu.edu/jrodriguez/> (select HIST 349 under "Courses")

HIST 349 – Medieval Popular Beliefs
HSS 278

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The aim of this class is to provide an introduction to medieval and renaissance popular beliefs. Using saints, relics, miracles, magic, charms, folk traditions, fantastic creatures and places as our points of entry, we will attempt to understand what role popular beliefs played in medieval society and more importantly what these beliefs reveal about the medieval world. The class will be a combination lecture/discussion course in which we will have weekly debates on primary and secondary source readings drawn from saints' lives, proceedings from witchcraft trials, inquisitional records, the writings of mystics, penitential books, and stories about ghosts and supernatural creatures, among others.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will learn and be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Medieval Popular Beliefs, their origins, and their impact on European society, both short and long term (Department Undergraduate Objective 1).
2. Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret historical evidence, both primary and secondary, by their participation in class discussions and the research paper (Department Undergraduate Objectives 2 & 3).
3. Students will have to demonstrate an ability to do extensive research in primary and secondary sources on a topic of their choice pertaining to Medieval Popular Beliefs. They will also have to effectively communicate the results of this research in a 10 page research paper due at the end of term (Department Undergraduate Objective 4).

Required Books

John Shinnars, *Medieval Popular Religion* 2nd ed. (Toronto, 2008)

Robert Bartlett, *The Hanged Man* (Princeton, 2006)

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms* (Baltimore, 1992)

Mark Pegg, *The Corruption of Angels* (Princeton, 2005)

Additional readings can be accessed through the online syllabus.

Grades

Class Participation: 20% (missing classes will impact this part of the grade. I expect every student to participate in every class)

Book Review: 20%, 975 - 1025 words. On any of the above secondary sources (due the day we discuss the book in class)

Research Paper Abstract: 10%

Final Research Paper: 10 Pages 50%

Assignments

Book Review: Select one of the books that we are discussing in class and write a 3-4 page critical review of the author's work. The review is due the day we discuss the book in class.

Class Participation: This is measured by your comments during our weekly class discussions—not so much quantity as quality. I expect everyone to show up having read the assignments and ready to speak up. If you are fatally shy or believe that you cannot make useful comments, now is the time to get over it. Do not risk your grade by not speaking up.

Research Paper: The research paper will be on a topic of your own choosing that relies significantly on primary sources—in other words, do not go and read a couple of books on your topic and tell me what they say. PLEASE NOTE THAT PAPERS THAT DO NOT USE PRIMARY SOURCES CAN NOT EARN A GRADE HIGHER THAN AN 80. Instead, put together a group of primary sources that address your particular topic, develop a thesis/argument and create a work of original scholarship. You are required to turn in an abstract that describes your paper topic along with a brief bibliography of sources and secondary material you are thinking about using. The abstract should contain 6 primary and 6 secondary sources. Among the secondary sources, at least 2 must be articles, while the rest can be books. The abstract is due March 9th. Substantial additional information is available in the class website under "Research Paper." Make sure to use this resource and to understand the information it provides. Late papers will be accepted for one week after they are due and will be penalized 5% each day they are late. It is impossible to pass the course without turning in a research paper. Research paper is due May 18th.

A Note on Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating is the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one's grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another to do so. Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of others by misrepresenting the material so used as one's own work. It includes "borrowing" ideas and quotations from books, articles, and websites. If you are not sure about something, double check with me. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not a defense against it. Cheating and/or plagiarism will result in a 0 in the assignment and could result in expulsion from the University. For more on the University's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, refer to the University Catalog (Policies and Regulations).

History Graduate Students

History graduate students will have to turn in a research paper 15-20 pages in length.

Disability Statement Policy

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

Readings

All readings are to be done by the time of our weekly meetings.

Week 1 – Jan 26: Introduction

Class Introduction – Popular Beliefs

Week 2 – Feb 2: Faith and God

Shinners, #1-5, 8-10, 13, 15, 17, 19

Innocent III, "Sermon on the Resurrection of the Lord" [online]

Week 3 – Feb 9: Virgins, Saints, and Relics

Shinners, #22-23, 25, 27-28, 30-32

Guibert of Nogent, "Saints and their Relics"

Reginald of Durham, "Life of St. Goderic" [online]

Week 4 – Feb 16: Belief and Skepticism

Bartlett, *The Hanged Man*

Week 5 – Feb 23: Devotion and Piety

Shinners, #54-61, 63-65, 69

Week 6 – Mar 2: NO CLASS

Week 7 – Mar 9: Rituals & Sacraments

Shinners, # 46-53

"The Seven Sacraments: Catholic Doctrinal Documents" [online]

Caesarius of Heisterbach, "The Eucharist as Charm" [online]

Caesarius of Heisterbach, "Confession, Ordeal and Miracle" [online]

Caesarius of Heisterbach, "Tales of Confession" [online]

ABSTRACTS DUE

Week 8 – Mar 16: Heresy and Error

Shinners, # 70-76

Bernard Gui, "Inquisitorial Technique" [online]

Angelo Clareno, "On an Inquisitorial Torture Section" [online]

Confession of Agnes of Francou [online]

Confession of Arnaud Gelis [online]

Confession of Barthélemy Amilhac [online]

Confession of Baruch [online]

Week 9 – Mar 23: Belief and Behavior

Pegg, *The Corruption of Angels*

Week 10 – Mar 30: NO CLASS / SPRING BREAK

Week 11 – Apr 6: Pilgrimages and Crusades

Shinners, #29, 33-35, 66-67

Pietro Casola's *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*, chs. X-XIII (pp. 221-280) [online]

Urban II, "Speech at Clermont" [online]

Raymond d'Aguiliers, "The Discovery of the Holy Lance" [online]

Crusader Letters [online]

Week 12 – Apr 13: Judaism

Solomon bar Samson, *The Crusaders in Mainz*, 1096 [online]

Thomas of Monmouth, *St. William of Norwich*, 1144 [online]

Ephraim ben Jacob, *Ritual Murder Accusation at Blois*, 1171 [online]

Rigord, *The Expulsion of the Jews from France*, 1182 [online]

Innocent III, *Constitution for the Jews*, 1199 [online]

King John of England, *Jewish Charters*, 1201 [online]

Las Siete Partidas on the Jews, 1265 [online]

Gregory X, *Letter on the Jews*, 1270s [online]

Ordinance of the Jews of the Crown of Aragon, 1354 [online]

The Expulsion from Spain, 1492 [online]

Week 13 – Apr 20: Belief and Interpretation

Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*

Week 14 – Apr 27: Boo!

Shinners, #37-45

William of Newburgh, *History*, Book 5, chs. 22-24 [online]

The Saga of Grettir the Strong, chs. 32-35 [online]

Week 15 – May 4: Death and Judgment

Shinners, #77-82

Catherine of Genoa, *Treatise on Purgatory* [online] (You can skip the introduction and read only the treatise)

Week 16 – May 11: NO CLASS WORK ON RESEARCH PAPERS

Week 17 – May 18

Research Papers Due in my office by 4:00 PM.