



ARTH/HIST/REL 380: Saints and Sinners: Medieval Women in Central Italy

Course Syllabus

Instructor: TBD

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: None

Class Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 5:15 p.m.-6:45 p.m.

Office Hours: Mondays, 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

Course Type: Standard Course

Lab Fee: 150 €

Course Description

This course focuses on a few female saints from Central Italy that were active in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, a period rife with social changes and innovations. New powerful orders were founded and accepted by the Church. The papacy migrated to Avignon, in France, creating the setting for the future schism that divided Christianity. New images, artistic formats, and strategies of communication developed in order to satisfy the spiritual and/or political aims of the patrons.

In this context, flourished intriguing female figures of diverse backgrounds such as Clare of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Angela of Foligno and Margherita of Cortona, who were sainted or at least considered saints in the following centuries. Their lives were not always characterized by constant "virtuousness". One of them, Margherita of Cortona, had been a mistress for years, she had a son out of wedlock, however, when she died she was already being considered something else by her citizens. These saints (sometimes presumed) conformity to specific models for female spirituality and behavior hides strength of will and firmness in defending their beliefs. Each of these women will be first presented from a historical and hagiographical point of view, detailing how their saintly persona was constructed. We will then consider how their lives and ideals were visualized in art, but also how art created alternate interpretations of their characters.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Learning Outcomes

Explain major historical behaviors/beliefs/institutions/practices and religious movements, and their relationship

Assessment Measures

Discussion during classes, midterm and final exams' essay and short answer sections

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to the art of their time	
Analyze Western traditions in art, and the social/cultural contexts in which the works of art were created	Students' papers and discussion during classes
Compare and contrast the literary, religious, and artistic methods used to shape and define a female saint	Students' paper and discussion during classes
Discuss, compare and contrast works of art, both verbally and in writing using an appropriate vocabulary	Students' papers, discussion, midterm and final exams' essay and short answer sections

Course Materials

Readings

All readings will be available on Moodle.

Assessment

Class Participation	10%
Field Trip Participation	10%
Students' Paper	15%
Presentation	15%
Quizzes	10%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

Grading

Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	
B	83% - 86%	Superior
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	
C	73% - 76%	Satisfactory
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	
D	63% - 66%	Low Pass
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Course Requirements

Grades are based on a mid-term and final examination; one term paper, which will include illustrations, footnotes, and bibliography and a circa 10/15-minute oral presentation for which a list of topics will be handed out at the beginning of the course; and participation both in class and on field trips to Assisi and Siena.

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Class Participation (10%)

Attendance, attention, active participation in discussion, taking notes, etc.

Field Trip Participation (10%)

Active participation during field trips via discussion on the works of art that have been studied in class and others that might be pertinent.

Students' Paper (15%)

Research paper of minimum 1750 and maximum 2500 words.

Presentation (15%)

An outline of possible topics will be distributed in class and uploaded to the course online folder. Students are encouraged to come up with their own research topics which however must be approved by the professor.

Quizzes (10%)

Students will be required to sit six scheduled quizzes. The five best grades of the six will be considered in the final evaluation (the worst will be dropped).

Mid-Term Exam and Final Exam (each 20%)

Consist of slide IDs; multiple-choice and/or short answer questions on major themes, issues, and key terms; and a short essay. These test the ability to observe, recognize, and describe differences of style as well as to understand and interpret content and meaning.

Course Content Disclaimer

Sensitive topics such as misogyny, female chastity, self-flagellation, disturbing food practices, and the value given to fasting will be addressed.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is **mandatory**. Students are allowed **two "free" absences**, which do not need to be justified. **It is the students' responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity (sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class).** Each additional absence, unless for a very serious reason, will lower the students' grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. It is also the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more absences automatically fails the class.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. **Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason.** Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in. Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important for student performance in class. Missing a mandatory field trip, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to the professor and Umbra Academic Director in a timely manner, will lower students' final grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Covid-related note: Should conditions warrant it, the Director may modify the absence policy to include the possibility of remote work, without students being penalized for not being physically present in the classroom.

Academic Integrity

All forms of **cheating** (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and **plagiarism** (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

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Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate **respect** for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that **cell phones** must be turned off before the beginning of each class. **Computers and other electronic devices** cannot be used during class lectures and discussions.

Bibliography

- David Abulafia, *Italy in the central Middle Ages*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004 – supplied by the teacher.
- Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, Berkeley (Ca.), Univ. of California Pr., 1988 - located in the Course Reserve Section of the Umbra Library.
- Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, *Body and Soul Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994 - located in the Course Reserve Section of the Umbra Library.
- Jerlydene M. Wood, *Women, Art and Spirituality: The Poor Clares of Early Modern Italy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000 - located in the Course Reserve Section of the Umbra Library.
- Maiju Lehmijoki-Gardner, *Wordly Saints: Social Interaction of Dominican Penitent Women in Italy, 1200-1500*, Helsinki, Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1999.

WEEK 1

Mon.	Introduction
Wed.	<i>“Woman” according to Middle Ages men</i> <u>Readings</u> David Abulafia (ed.), <i>Italy in the Central Middle Ages</i> , Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004: Steven Epstein, Chap. 8 “The family”, pp. 183-196.

WEEK 2

Mon.	<i>Women “Living in the World”</i> <u>Readings</u> Sara M. Butler, <i>Marriage</i> , in <i>The Greenwood encyclopedia of Love, Courtship and Sexuality</i> , vol. 2, <i>The Medieval Era</i> , Westport, London, 2008, pp. 147-149; Lindsay Diggelmann, <i>Wedding Rituals</i> , in <i>ibid.</i> , pp. 246-247.
Wed.	<i>Women's Religious Choices</i> <u>Readings</u> Caroline Walker Bynum, <i>Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women</i> , Berkeley, 1988: Part I, Chap. 1 “Religious Women in the later Middle Ages”, pp. 13-23. QUIZ

WEEK 3

Mon.	<i>Power, Education and Literacy of Women in the Middle Ages</i> <u>Readings</u> Jane Stevenson, <i>Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority, from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century</i> , New York, 2005: Chap. 6 “Italy: Renaissance Women Scholars”, pp. 141-145, 149-152.
Wed.	<i>The Thirteenth Century: New Orders and Saints</i>

WEEK 4

Mon.	<p><i>Devotional Background: Penitence</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>André Vauchez, <i>The Laity in the Middle Ages</i>: Chap. 9, “Penitents in the Middle Ages”, pp. 119-127.</p> <p>QUIZ</p>
Wed.	<p><i>Devotional Background: Food and Female Sanctity</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Bynum, <i>Holy Feast</i>: Part II, Chap. 4 “Food in the Lives of Women Saints – Italy”, pp. 140-149.</p>
Fri.	<p><i>Field trip to Assisi</i></p>

WEEK 5

Mon.	<p><i>Mary Magdalene, the Sinner Saint</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Jacobus de Voragine, <i>The Golden Legend</i>, vol. 1, Princeton, 1993: Chap. “Saint Mary Magdalen”, pp. 374-383.</p> <p>QUIZ</p>
Wed.	<p><i>Responses to Mary Magdalene in the Thirteenth Century</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Katherine Ludwig Jansen, <i>The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages</i>, Princeton, 2000: Chap. 10 “In the Shadow of the Virgin”, pp. 286-294.</p>

WEEK 6

Mon.	<p><i>Clare of Assisi: Foundress of the Poor Clares</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Elizabeth Petroff, <i>Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism</i>, New York, 1994: Chap. 4 “A Medieval Woman’s Utopian Vision: The Rule of St. Clare of Assisi”, pp. 66-79.</p> <p>QUIZ</p> <p>Term Paper Topic Due (Late submissions will receive a drop in grade)</p>
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Wed.	<p><i>Imagining Clare</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Jeryldene Wood, <i>Perceptions of Holiness in Thirteenth-Century Italian Painting: Claire of Assisi</i>, in “Art History”, 14/3 (1991), pp. 301-22.</p>
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WEEK 7

Mon.	<i>Review</i>
Wed.	MIDTERM EXAM

SEMESTER BREAK

WEEK 9

Mon.	<p><i>Umiliana de' Cerchi</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Hayden B.J. Maginnis, <i>Images of Devotion and the Beata Umiliana de' Cerchi</i>, in Andrew Ladis and Shelley Zura eds., <i>Visions of Holiness: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Italy</i>, Athens, 2001, pp. 13-20.</p>
Wed.	<p><i>Angela of Foligno, the “Mistress of Theologians”</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Catherine M. Mooney, <i>The Authorial Role of Brother A. in the Composition of Angela of Foligno’s Revelations</i>, in E. Ann Matter and John Coakley eds., <i>Creative Women in Medieval and Early Modern Italy: A Religious and Artistic Renaissance</i>, Philadelphia, 1994, pp. 34-44, 57-58.</p>

WEEK 10

Mon.	<p><i>Angela of Foligno and the Arts</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Kathleen Kamerick, <i>Art and Moral Vision in Angela of Foligno and Margery Kempe</i>, in “Mystics Quarterly”, 21/4 (1995), pp. 148-158.</p>
Wed.	<p><i>Margaret of Cortona: A New Magdalene</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Joanna Cannon and André Vauchez, <i>Margherita da Cortona and the Lorenzetti: Sienese Art and the Cult of a Holy Woman in Medieval Tuscany</i>, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999: Chap. 2 “The Life and Cult of Margherita da Cortona”, section “A Saint for Cortona: The changing Fortunes of the Cult and of the Sanctuary in the Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries”, pp. 29-32.</p>

WEEK 11

Mon.	<p><i>Tomb and Images of Margaret of Cortona</i></p> <p>QUIZ</p>
Wed.	<p><i>Humility of Faenza, a “Boundary Breaker”</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Petroff, <i>Consolation of the Blessed</i>: Chap. “Life of Saint Umiltà, Abbess of the Vallombrosan Order in Florence”, pp. 121-137.</p>

WEEK 12

Mon.	<p><i>The Life of Humility of Faenza according to Pietro Lorenzetti</i></p>
Wed.	<p><i>The Most Famous of Them All: Catherine of Siena</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>André Vauchez, <i>The Laity in the Middle Ages</i>: Chap. “Mystic Sanctity at the Time of Avignon and the Great Schism”, pp. 232-236.</p> <p>QUIZ</p>

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WEEK 13

Mon.	No class
Wed.	<i>Catherine of Siena in the Arts</i> <u>Readings</u> Jane Tylus, <i>Reclaiming Catherine of Siena: Literacy, Literature and the Signs of Others</i> , Chicago, 2009, pp. 169-178.
Sat.	<i>Field trip to Siena</i>

WEEK 14

Mon.	<i>Term paper due</i> <i>Students' presentation</i>
Wed.	<i>Students' presentation</i>

WEEK 15

	The Final Exam and Special Academic Events Calendar will be provided later in the semester.
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Primary Sources

- Bevegnati, Giunta. *The Life of Margaret of Cortona* St. Bonaventure, Franciscan Institute Publications, 2012.
- Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, vol. 1, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993.
- The Lady. Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* ed. Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., New York, London, Manila, New City Press, [2006].

Bibliography

- Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, Berkeley (Ca.), Univ. of California Pr., 1988.
- Cannon, Joanna and Vauchez, André, *Margherita da Cortona and the Lorenzetti: Sienese Art and the Cult of a Holy Woman in Medieval Tuscany*, University Park (Pa.), Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.
- Cannon, Joanna, *Beyond the Limitations of Visual Typology: Reconsidering the Function and Audience of Three Vita Panels of Women Saints c. 1300*, in Victor M. Schmidt ed., *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, New Haven, National Gallery of Art, 2002, pp. 290-313.
- Georges Duby, Michelle Perrot and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber eds., *A History of Women*, vol. 2, *Silences of the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Giunta, Diega, *The Iconography of Catherine of Siena's Stigmata*, in Carolyn Muessig ed., *A Companion to Catherine of Siena* Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill, 2012, pp. 259-294.
- Hoch, Adrian S., *Pictures of Penitence from a Trecento Neapolitan Nunnery*, in "Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte", 61 (1998), pp. 206-226.
- Hoch, Adrian S., *Notable Changes in Medieval Images of 'Saint' Humility after Counter-Reformation Documents*, "Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte", 75, 1 (2012), pp. 1-32.
- Jansen, Katherine Ludwig. *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Jansen, Katherine Ludwig, *Like a Virgin. The Meaning of the Magdalen for Female Penitents of Later Medieval Italy*, in "Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome", 45 (2000), pp. 131-152.
- Kamerick, Kathleen. "Art and Moral Vision in Angela of Foligno and Margery Kempe," *Mystics Quarterly* 21, 4 (December 1995), pp. 148-158.
- Lehmijoki-Gardner, Maiju. *Worldly Saints: Social Interaction of Dominican Penitent Women in Italy, 1200-1500*, Helsinki, Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1999.
- Luongo, F. Thomas. "The Historical Reception of Catherine of Siena," in Carolyn Muessig ed., *A Companion to Catherine of Siena* Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill, 2012, pp. 25 – 45.
- Hayden B.J. Maginnis. "Images of Devotion and the Beata Umiliana de' Cerchi," in Andrew Ladis and Shelley Zura eds., *Visions of Holiness: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Italy*, Athens (Ga.), University of Georgia, Georgia Museum, 2001, pp. 13 – 20.

- Mooney, Catherine M. "The Authorial Role of Brother A. in the Composition of Angela of Foligno's Revelations," in E. Ann Matter and John Coakley eds., *Creative Women in Medieval and Early Modern Italy: A Religious and Artistic Renaissance*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994, pp. 34 – 44, 57 – 58.
- Mooney, Catherine M. "Authority and Inspiration in the Vitae and Sermons of Humility of Faenza," in Carolyn Muëssing ed., *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, 1998, pp. 123 – 144.
- Mueller, Joan. *A Companion to Clare of Assisi: Life, Writings, and Spirituality*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill, 2010.
- Norman, Diana. *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State*, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1999.
- Petroff, Elizabeth Alvilda. *Consolation of the Blessed Women Saints in Medieval Tuscany*, New York, Alta Gaia Society, 1979.
- Petroff, Elizabeth Alvilda. *Body and Soul Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Ritchey, Sara, "Illness and Imagination: The Healing Miracles of Clare of Montefalco," in: *The World of St. Francis of Assisi: Essays in Honor of William R. Cook*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill, 2015, pp. 80 – 99.
- Smith, Janet G. "Santa Umiltà of Faenza: Her Florentine Convent and Its Art", in Andrew Ladis and Shelley Zura eds., *Visions of Holiness: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Italy*, Athens (Ga.), University of Georgia, Georgia Museum, 2001, pp. 37 – 65.
- Tylus, Jane. *Reclaiming Catherine of Siena: Literacy, Literature and the Signs of Others*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Vauchez, André. *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, Notre Dame (Ind.)-London, University of Notre Dame Press, 1993.
- Vauchez, André. *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Warr, Cordelia, " Re-Reading the Relationship between Devotional Images, Visions, and the Body: Clare of Montefalco and Margaret of Città di Castello," *Viator* 38, 1 (2007), pp. 217 – 249.
- Webb, Diana ed., *Saints and Cities in Medieval Italy*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007
- Wood, Jerlydene M., *Women, Art and Spirituality: The Poor Clares of Early Modern Italy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.