

SYLLABUS

READING THE BIBLE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Instructor: Johanna Bos

This is a one-credit course to prepare students for the travel seminar to Italy and France, “Reading the Bible through the art of the early Renaissance” (J-term 2013). The course may also be taken for one credit in Area A by students who are interested in the topic but do not intend to participate in the travel seminar. Note that the course is obligatory for participants in the travel seminar. The travel seminar will be led by co-teachers Johanna Bos and visual artist Joanie Jerman under the auspices of the Women’s Center Artist-in-Residence program and will require a separate syllabus.

Course Description

It is often assumed that the texts of the Bible received little attention in the Christian context of Western Europe before the arrival of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. According to this insight, it was only through the work of Martin Luther, John Calvin and others that ordinary Christians became familiar with the contents of the Bible. While there is some truth to this general understanding, it is also true that the Bible was both translated and studied during the Middle Ages into the early Renaissance. The course will provide an overview of different approaches to Scripture followed by representative schools of thought in the late Middle Ages, as well as of translations of the Bible or portions of it. At the same time, we will proceed with an acknowledgement of a general lack of literacy among the laity as well as a portion of the clergy and consider the thorough-going influence of art on knowledge and interpretation of the texts of the Bible. The overview of scholarship on the Bible will take into account the regions of Western Europe that includes Great Britain and the Low Countries, while the focus will shift to the south of France and northern Italy when considering the influence of painting and sculpture especially on the sensibilities of the laity.

Course objectives

Recognizing the vastness of the subject, It is our goal to achieve Insight into means of studying and interpreting Holy Scripture in Western Europe during the Christian era in the period leading up to the Protestant Reformation. Specifically, we want to acquire information about and critically evaluate the enormous influence of Christian art on the formation of Christian piety and knowledge of Sacred Scripture.

Specific objectives and learning goals

1. Basic knowledge and recognition of approaches to biblical interpretation dominant in Western Europe during the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance.
2. Familiarity with the names and methods of certain scholars and divines who concentrated in their work on the interpretation of Scripture.

3. A heightened appreciation of the role of the Bible in the formation of the Christian faith during the late Middle Ages in Western Europe.
4. Familiarity with some of the most important representatives of early Renaissance painting and sculpture in northern Italy (Rome, Florence, Siena) and southern France (Montpellier, Avignon, Auch).

Method

The class will meet once a week for lecture and discussion. In the first half of the course the focus will be on the more theoretical aspects of the topic while we move to the figurative aspects in the second half of the semester. Especially during the second half there will be a good deal of visual representation through Power Point slides. Because books on the subject may be prohibitively expensive, the reading material will consist for the most part of postings on CAMS (see Resources). Women's Center Artist-in-Residence Juliet Ehrlich will be on hand to help with interpretation of the visuals. Reading assignments for the course will be more extensive in the first half, because of the nature of the topics.

Requirements and evaluation

All students will receive a grade at the end of the semester. For the students participating in the Travel Seminar this grade will be averaged with the travel seminar grade and count as one-third of their final grade.

A. Preparation for class and active, thoughtful participation in discussion (30%)

B. A short paper (5-pages), due at mid-term, will present a brief review, followed by a critical discussion of a school of thought of biblical interpretation, or its major representative, in the Christian world of medieval western Europe. The student shall demonstrate knowledge of and insight into the biblical scholarship of the chosen model and its setting within the larger framework of biblical study in the Middle Ages. [See objectives 1) and 2) (35 %)]

C. Five short papers (one page minimum) due no later than a week following a specific class, will review an artist and his/her work among examples presented in a class session. The review will include an appreciation of the ways in which the work may have influenced popular piety and information about the Bible. In this way students shall demonstrate a basic understanding of the art of the period and the region and its importance for shaping Christian piety [see objectives 3) and 4) (35 %)]

All papers should be typed, double spaced (12-pt. Times New Roman font) and submitted electronically to the instructor's email inbox.

Policy on Late Work:

Written assignments submitted late, when no extension has been granted, will be penalized in the grading by one letter grade increment for every day (i.e., a B+ paper becomes a B if one day

late, a B- if two days, a C+ if three days, etc.). Assignments submitted more than ten days after the due date will not be accepted.

Citation Policy:

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

- Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003. Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Policy on Inclusive Language

In speech and in written assignments, it is the policy of the school to avoid divisive terms that reinforce stereotypes or are pejorative. Do not use language that leaves out part of the population, perpetuates stereotyping, or diminishes importance. Do not use male pronouns (such as “men”) to refer to a group that includes females as well. Consult the Academic Support Center for additional guidance if necessary.

See: http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an early date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

Electronic devices

All electronic devices, laptop computers, i-pads, cell-phones, etc, are to be turned off during class time. Exceptions may be requested from the instructors. Taping of a class may take place only with permission by the instructor.

Resources

A Study Bible, such as the Harper Collins Study Bible or the Oxford Annotated Bible is required for the course.

Posted material from the following:

Louise Bourdua and Anne Dunlop eds *Art and the Augustinian Order in Early Renaissance Italy* (Ashgate 2007)

Margaret Deanesly. *The Significance of the Lollard Bible*

Millard Meiss. *Painting in Florence and Siena After The Black Death – The Arts, Religion and Society in the Mid-Fourteenth Century*. (Princeton, 1951)

Beryl Smalley *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952).

Judith Steinhoff. *Sienese Painting After the Black Death – Artistic Pluralism, Politics, and the New Art Market* (Cambridge, 2006).

Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985) *The Bible in the Medieval World – Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*.

Van Wijk-Bos, Johanna W.H. *Reformed and Feminist – A Challenge to the Church* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991)

Herbert Workman. *John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church* (Orig. Clarendon, 1926; Archon Books, 1966).

Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento (Yale, 2002) Victor M. Schmidt ed.

[Tentative] Schedule

Class Session I: Was the Bible studied in the Middle Ages in Western Europe? How was it studied and interpreted? An initial look at biblical scholarship in Christianity in Western Europe.

Reading: Smalley: 1-36; *Reformed and Feminist*, chapter 2 and part of 5 (see posting on CAMS) Walsh/Wood 287-301.

Session II: Ways of studying the Bible; the Fathers and monastic and cathedral schools. Reading: Smalley 37-82.

Session III: The Victorines. Jewish-Christian conversation and Scripture.

Reading: Smalley: 83-186.

Session IV: Hildegard of Bingen.

Reading: Online article www.Fordham.edu "The Life and Works of Hildegard von Bingen."
Lecturer: Kathryn Johnson.

Session V: John Wyclif and the translation of the Bible.

Readings: Deanesly. *The Lollard Bible*. 1-25; Workman 149-220.

Session VI: The Early Renaissance and the Augustinian orders in Italy.

Reading: Bourdua and Dunlop, pp. 1-40

Mid-term paper due.

For the second half of the class the major resources will be online representations of painters of the early Renaissance as well as postings taken from the resources on art in Italy and France by, for example, Meiss, Steinhof and others.

Session VII: Knowledge of the Bible through sculpture, stained glass and painting. The windows of the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. The doors of the Baptistery Duomo Florence. Brunelleschi.

Reading: A guide to the windows of the Sainte Chapelle.

Session VIII: Depiction of specific biblical figures from the Hebrew Bible in Rome, Florence, Siena and Southern France. Women painters of the early Renaissance: Sofonisba Anguissola, Artemisia Gentileschi.

Reading: Mary Garrad: "Here's Looking at Me: Sofonisba Anguissola and the Problem of the Woman Artist," *Renaissance Quarterly* 47 (1994): 556-622.

Short biographical articles of Anguissola and Gentileschi

Session IX: Depictions of the Virgin: Painting and sculpture in Rome, Florence and Siena; the papal palace and museum in Avignon. Masaccio, Martini, Duccio, and Giotto.

Reading: The Annunciation, Rucella Madonna, Maesta.

Session X: Depictions of Christ: from the Christ-child to crucifixion and Christus Victor. Gaddi, Orcagna and Donatello.

Reading: The Holy Trinity, The Last Supper, Four Miracles

Session XI: Painting in context. The influence of the Black Death (1348) on Renaissance painting.

Reading: Meiss and Steinhof, pp. 1-50

Session XII: Concluding session. Explosion of Art. Michelangelo, Raphael, and Da Vinci.

Reading: Guide to the Sistine Chapel, Pieta David.