

REL 320

Magic in the Middle Ages

MW 2:15-3:35

Instructor: Nell Champoux

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12-1, or by appointment

This class will examine religion and magic in medieval Europe. Neither orthodox nor fully peripheral, magical practices in the middle ages give us, as modern readers, a helpful lens through which to examine the broader culture of the time. Readings from a series of magical manuscripts, the medieval theologians who condemned (or, occasionally, approved) such texts, and contemporary scholarship will ground our study. Consideration of relevant art and architecture will also be an integral component of this course.

Requirements

Engaged reading is expected and required. We will be reading texts from another era with norms and habits of language with which you may not be familiar. In order to grasp these texts and be prepared for discussion you need to spend time thinking about them critically *before* coming to class. To help you with this, note questions in the margins, circle any words you don't know (look them up, but there will be words in our readings that aren't in the dictionary, so ask for their meaning in class), and underline compelling passages.

Participation – 20%

Active participation in class discussions and small groups is mandatory. Those feeling truly uncomfortable speaking up in class need to email me with thoughts and observations.

Questions – 20%

For each class you must write down one well thought out question that cannot be easily answered from the reading. After formulating your question, make an attempt to answer it yourself in a couple of sentences or a paragraph or, if you are truly stumped, outline the reasons why this question is so difficult to answer. As you are allowed three absences, you may also skip three of these assignments.

Tests – 30%

There will be three tests. They will not be cumulative.

Attendance is expected and required. Up to three classes may be missed, anything beyond that will result in your final grade being lowered by a third of a letter grade (i.e. an A would become an A- after three absences, a B+ after four). If you have a serious and documented health or family issue or are participating in a university sanctioned activity that usually counts as an excused absence and

must miss more than three classes please let me know before the absence takes place (except in the case of a real emergency).

Final Paper – 30%

8-10 pages.

5% of your grade for this paper will be for your initial topic statement and bibliography. The remaining 25% will be for the paper itself.

Texts

Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic Ed. Claire Fanger (can be found at the Schine bookstore)

All other texts can be found on blackboard or online and must be printed and brought to class.

Computer and Cell Phone Use

Cell phones and computers may not be used in the classroom.

Academic Integrity

Do not cheat, do not plagiarize. Doing so will result in a failing grade for this course. For more information and the full university-wide policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

Disability-Related Accommodations

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 304 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website, Office of Disability Services <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>

Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus during the course of the semester. If changes need to be made, you will be given plenty of advance warning about the changes in class, via email, or on Blackboard.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Monday Aug 31

Introduction

Wednesday Sept 2

- Exodus 4, 7-12 (online at <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/English-Standard-Version-ESV-Bible/>)
- Matthew 8-10.5, 12 (online at <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/English-Standard-Version-ESV-Bible/>)
- Life of St. Benedict in *The Golden Legend* pp.186-193 (on Blackboard)

Monday Sept 7

No Class – Labor Day

Wednesday Sept 9

- Norman Cohen "The Night Witch in Popular Imagination" in *Europe's Inner Demons* pp. 162-180 (on Blackboard)
- *Episcopi* in *The Witchcraft Sourcebook* pp. 33-35 (on Blackboard)
- Malleus Mallificarum selections pt 1 questions 2 and 6 (on Blackboard)

Monday Sept 14

- Norman Cohen "The Society of Witches that Never Was" in *Europe's Inner Demons* pp. 144-180 pp.144-161 (on Blackboard)
- Nicholas Eymeric: Magic and Heresy, 1376 in *The Witchcraft Sourcebook* pp. 43-46 (on Blackboard)
- Richard Kieckhefer "Witch Trials in Medieval Europe" in *The Witchcraft Reader* pp. 21-30 (on Blackboard)

Wednesday Sept 16

- Steven McClusky "Astronomy and Christian Thought" in *Astronomies and Cultures in Early Medieval Europe* pp. 29-48 (on Blackboard)
- Genesis 1-3 (online at <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/English-Standard-Version-ESV-Bible/>)

Monday Sept 21

No Class – Eid ul Fitr

Wednesday Sept 23

- Thomas Bradwardine "On Acquiring a Trained Memory" in *The Medieval Craft of Memory* pp. 205-214 (on Blackboard)
- Mary Carruthers *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* pp. 1-14

Monday Sept 28

No Class – Yom Kippur

Wednesday Sept 30

- Michael Camille "Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing" in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance* pp. 197-223 (on Blackboard)
- Katherine Tachau "Seeing as Action and Passion in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries" in *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* pp.336-359 (on Blackboard)

Test #1

Monday Oct 5

- Daniel Connolly *Imagined Pilgrimage in the Itinerary Maps of Mathew Paris* (on JSTOR)

Wednesday Oct 7

Guest lecture on demons (readings TBA)

Monday Oct 12

- *Daniel of the Blossoming Valley*, selections (on Blackboard)

Wednesday Oct 14

- Michael Camille "Art and the Marvelous: Magicians and Automata" in *Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image Making in Medieval Art* pp. 244-258 (on Blackboard)
- Richard Kieckhefer *Magic in the Middle Ages* pp. 95-105 (on Blackboard)

Monday Oct 19

- Kocku von Stuckrad "Interreligious Transfers in the Middle Ages: The Case of Astrology" (online at <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/brill/jre/2008/00000001/00000001/art00003>)
- Valerie Flint *The Rise of Magic in Medieval Europe* pp.87-126

Wednesday Oct 21

- *Zohar* pp.142-147 (on Blackboard)
- *To Write Without Pen and Ink* pp. 177-180 (on Blackboard)
- *The Sword of Moses* (online at <http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/sword.htm>)

Monday Oct 26

- Augustine *City of God* selections (on Blackboard)
- Richard Kieckhefer pp. 8-17 in *Magic in the Middle Ages* (on Blackboard)

Wednesday Oct 28

- Aquinas Contra Gentiles Bk 3 vol 2 Chapters 101-107 pp.81-104 (on Blackboard)
- Jolly in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe* pp.6-7, 13-26 (on Blackboard)

Monday Nov 2

- Lester Little *Benedictine Maledictions*, pp. 17-51 and 186-200 (on Blackboard)

Test #2

Wednesday Nov 4

- John Friedman "Safe Magic and Invisible Writing in the *Secretum Philosophorum*" in *Conjuring Spirits* pp. 76-86
- Albertus Magnus *The Book of Secrets* selections (on Blackboard)

Monday Nov 9

No Class – Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion

Wednesday Nov 11

- Richard Kieckhefer *Forbidden Rites A Necromancers Manual of the Fifteenth Century* pp. 1-15 and 42-68

Monday Nov 16

- *Sworn Book of Honorius* selections (online at <http://www.esotericarchives.com/juratus/juratus.htm>)
- Richard Kieckhefer "The Devil's Contemplatives: The *Liber Iuratus*, and the *Liber Visionum* and Christian Appropriation of Jewish Occultism" in *Conjuring Spirits* pp. 250-265

Wednesday Nov 18

- *Ars Notoria* selections (online at <http://www.esotericarchives.com/notoria/notoria.htm>)
- Michael Camille "Visual Art in Two Manuscripts of the *Ars Notoria*" in *Conjuring Spirits* pp. 110-139

Topics and proposed bibliographies for final papers due.

Monday Nov 23

- Prologue to the *Liber visionum* pp. 1-11 (online at <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Volumelll/Morigny.html>)
- Nicholas Watson "John the Monk's *Book of Visions of the Blessed and Undefined Virgin Mary, Mother of God: Two Versions of a Newly Discovered Ritual Magic Text*" in *Conjuring Spirits* pp. 163-186.

Test #3

Wednesday Nov 25

- Prologue to the *Liber visionum* pp. 12-26 (online at <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Volumelll/Morigny.html>)

-- Claire Fanger "Plundering the Egyptian Treasure: John the Monk's *Book of Visions and its Relation to the Ars Notoria of Solomon*" in *Conjuring Spirits* pp. 216-249.

No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Monday Nov 30

-- Nell Champoux *Sketching a Medieval Mind: Perception and Cognition in John of Morigny's Liber Visionum* pp. 1-31

Wednesday Dec 2

Writing Workshop

Monday Dec 7

-- Marsilio Ficino selections (on Blackboard)

Wednesday Dec 9

-- Ioan Couliano *End Game* pgs. 179-223 in *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*

Monday Dec 14

Final Papers Due

A Good Student (From the writings of St. Richard Chichester, 13th century)

Richard therefore hastily left both his father's lands and the lady who had been chosen as his wife, and all his friends, and betook himself to the University of Oxford and then to that of Paris, where he learned logic. Such was his love of learning, that he cared little or nothing for food or raiment. For, as he was wont to relate, he and two companions who lodged in the same chamber had only their tunics and one gown between them, and each of them a miserable pallet. When one, therefore, went out with the gown to hear a lecture, the other sat in their room, and so they went forth alternately; and bread with a little wine and pottage sufficed for their food. For their poverty never suffered them to eat flesh or fish, save on the Sunday or on some solemn holy day or in presence of companions or friends; yet he hath oftentimes told me how, in all his days, he had never after led so pleasant and delectable a life.