

COL 244

Junior Colloquium: The Middle Ages and Renaissance

Humans, Hosts and Other Hybrids

This colloquium introduces the literature, philosophy, and history of the long chronological arc in which Europe as a diverse cultural entity first came into being between the late 1st century CE and c. 1500. We will be exploring the identity of the human by looking both at the edges, that is, the shifting boundaries between human, animal, and divinity, and at the center, that is, the intellectual work of creating such categories. A major concern of this time period is that of identity itself—what metamorphoses of body, spirit or circumstance change the human into something else, or to what extent is the human essentially hybrid—host to others who invade and inspire it? The fifteen centuries of the course take us from the emergence of Christianity in the classical world through the conversion of the Romans of the late Empire and their barbarian rivals to the creation of the feudal kingdoms with their courts, the birth of cities and universities, the new centralizing monarchies of the late Middle Ages and the revival of classical culture in Renaissance Italy.

Textbook

Especially important for context when covering such a long period, the textbook that we have ordered provides succinct but essential historical background for the works we will discuss. It is Medieval Europe: A Short History (10th edn.) by Judith M. Bennett and C. Warren Hollister, available from Broad Street Books. You are urged to obtain a copy, as we will not spend time in class on the basic information that the textbook covers and it will also be helpful when you review for the comprehensive examinations.

Books

The books listed below have been ordered for the course at Broad Street Books. There will also be a course packet (P) and we will give you information about how to obtain it. Handouts are indicated by the letter (H) on the syllabus.

Medieval Europe: A Short History (10th edn.) by Bennett and Hollister
Apuleius, The Golden Ass (trans. R. Graves)
Beowulf (trans. S. Heaney)

Abelard, Ethical Writings (trans. P. V. Spade)

Lost Letters of Heloise and Abelard (trans. C. Mews)

Dante, The Divine Comedy (trans. A. Mandelbaum)

Christine de Pizan, Treasure of the City of Ladies (trans. S. Lawson)

Pico della Mirandola, On the Dignity of Man (trans. P. J. Miller)

Papers and Deadlines

Papers are due on the day and at the time indicated. There are no extensions. Late papers will not receive comments. Papers may be turned in ahead of the due date. There will be three papers, due in duplicate copies, to be turned into our respective boxes in the COL at 12:00 noon on the date due.

Please staple and put page numbers on your papers.

Deadlines: 20 Feb. (4-6 pages) at 12 noon
 3 April (4-6 pages) at 12 noon
 6 May (4-6 pages) at 12 noon

***The Late Roman Empire (c. 100-500 CE)*¹**

- Jan. 21 *The Revelation to John* (late 1st c CE), New Testament (NRSV)
Bennett & Hollister, ch. 1
- Jan. 26 Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* (mid 2nd c.), bks. 1-9
- Jan. 28 Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, bks. 10-19
- Feb. 2 (H) St. Augustine (354-430) *City of God* (413), Bk. 1, preface bk.1 1
- Feb. 4 (P) St. Augustine (354-430) *City of God* (413), Bk. 16
(P) *History of the Monks in Egypt* (c. 394), excerpts

Migrations and Conversion (5th-8th centuries): Selected Cases

- Feb. 9 Ireland:
(P) Cogitosus, *Life of St. Brigit* (c. 650)
(P) Muirchu, *Life of St. Patrick* (7th c.)
Bennett & Hollister, chs. 2 & 3
- Feb. 11 Germanic Peoples (Anglo-Saxons and Vikings):
Beowulf (8th or 11th c.)
Bennett & Hollister, ch. 6
- Feb. 16 *Beowulf*

Feudal Courtly Culture (north and south)

- Feb. 18 (P) Marie de France (Normandy) (late 12th c.), *Fables, Lais*
(P) Gerald of Wales (1154-1223), *History and Topography of Ireland*
(1188), excerpt
Bennett & Hollister, ch. 11, 12
- Feb. 20 1st paper due.
- Feb. 23 (P) Marie de France, *Lais*
(P) Troubadour poets (southern France), selections
- Feb. 25 Medieval bestiaries (student group reports)

¹ The subtitles in bold refer to the historical background for the texts.

Scholasticism and the Birth of the University

Mar. 2 Peter Abelard (1079-1144?), *Ethics*

Mar. 4 *The Lost Letters of Abelard and Héloïse* (12th c.), selections

Spring Break

Mar. 23 (H) Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), *Summa theologica*, selections

The Rise of the Italian City States

Mar. 25 Dante (1265-1321), *Divine Comedy: Inferno*, cantos 1-5, 8-10, 13, 15,
19, 34

Bennett & Hollister, 167-78, 321-25

Mar. 30 Dante, *Divine Comedy: Purgatorio*, cantos 1-3, 5, 9-11, 17-19, 24, 27-31

Apr. 1 Dante, *Divine Comedy: Paradiso*, cantos 1, 10-13, 15-17, 27, 30-31, 33

Apr. 3 2nd paper due.

The Rise of the New Monarchies: France

Apr. 6 Christine de Pizan (1364-1430?), *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (1405)
Bennett & Hollister, chs. 14 & 15

Apr. 8 Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*

Comprehensive Exam Break

Apr. 27 (Bb) Francois Villon (1431-c. 1465), selected poems

The Italian Renaissance (1350-1500)

Apr. 29 Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94), *On the Dignity of Man* (1486)

The Birth of the Witchcraze (c. 1480-1670)

May 4 (P) H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum* (c. 1486), Pt. 2, Q. 1,
chs. 1-10

May 6 3rd paper due.