Medieval Monasticism

Instructor: Dr. Teresa Leslie
Office: TLC 3214
Office Hours: Tues and Thursday 10 until 11, Weds. 10 until 1, and by appointment. See me before or after class or contact me by email to arrange a meeting.
Email Address: tleslie@westga.edu This is the most reliable and easiest way to contact me.

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This course offers students an in-depth introduction to Christian monasticism in the medieval west. We will study a variety of forms of religious life, both coenobitic (communal) and eremitic (solitary). We will observe the ways in which monastics interacted with their social and natural environment, and their impact on medieval education, administration, and lay piety. Among the major themes we will explore through our readings, discussions, and lectures are: the role of gender and class in monastic development; monastic spirituality and learning; tensions between regular and secular clergy; patronage and the relationship of monastics to the secular world; and competition among different monastic models.

We will survey a broad range of primary and secondary sources. We will also explore how historians develop their understanding of the past, including the way concepts and theories from related academic disciplines enrich our understanding of history and the impact of current concerns and trends in scholarship on our interpretations of the past.

Learning Outcomes:
Students who successfully complete this course will develop:
-- a basic knowledge and understanding of various aspects of monasticism and religious life in medieval Europe.
-- a basic knowledge of monastic art and architecture of the medieval period and of the images related to monasticism and religious life presented in medieval art and literature.
-- an understanding of historiographical issues related to the study of religion and monasticism in the medieval period.
-- an understanding of how related disciplines, such as anthropology and literary criticism, enhance our understanding of history.
-- an ability to analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources related to medieval history.
-- improved reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

**Texts:**


Additional readings will also be assigned. These readings will be available as class handouts or on the internet.

**Grades/Course Requirements:**
Your final grade in the course will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (3)</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction Papers (3)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Project (two options, see below)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Exams:** There will be three exams during the semester, including one given during finals week. Each exam will be worth 15% of your overall grade for the course. The exams will include both take-home and in-class components.

**Reaction Papers:** You will be asked to write a three reaction paper this semester, responding to material read or viewed for the course. Each of these 3- to 5-page papers will be based on questions posted for that particular assignment on the class Courseden site. More information on the reaction papers will be made available in a separate handout prior to the first such assignment.

**Research Project:** There are two options for your major project of the semester: a research paper of 10 to 12 pages on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor or a pair of “profiles,” one of a key figure in monastic history and one of a key monastic institution. Both options will require research involving both primary and secondary sources. More information about the research project will be provided in class early in the semester as well as posted on CourseDen.

**Class Participation and Homework:** You will be expected to read assigned material and be prepared to discuss it in class. Your participation grade will be largely based on contributions to class discussions and respectful attention to the contributions of others. Evident lack of preparation will lower your participation grade. Regular attendance and asking thoughtful questions during lecture sessions will raise it.
From time to time, you may be given homework quizzes, either online or in class. Quizzes given in class will cover the day’s reading assignment and will usually be announced in advance. If, however, the class demonstrates a general lack of preparation for class discussion, a pop quiz on the day’s reading may be given. There will also be occasional online assignments, which may include reading quizzes, map exercises, or the construction of a timeline. The due dates for these assignments, usually a week from the date the assignment is announced in class, will be posted on CourseDen.

**Make-up Work and Late Assignments:**
Make-up exams will be scheduled ONLY in rare cases, for medical or other emergency. The instructor reserves the right to require written confirmation of this emergency (such as physicians note for illness or police report for accident). If you have a conflict with a scheduled exam that does not fall into this category, please see me as soon as possible PRIOR to the exam to discuss the possibility of arranging to take an early alternative exam.

Due dates for homework assignments will usually be two class periods after the assignment is made. Late work will not be given full credit, and will be accepted only by prior arrangement with the instructor.

**Class Policies:**
Extra credit is not available for this course.

Every effort should be made to attend class regularly. You will be responsible for the material covered in your absence. If you miss a class at which I announce a homework assignment, you are still responsible for completing the assignment on time and the due date for that work will NOT be adjusted. Deductions ARE made for work completed late.

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. This includes talking in class, habitually entering class late or leaving early, using your laptop for activities unrelated to class, and any other behavior that is distracting to the instructor and/or other students. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave the class and dropped from the roll.

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating will receive a 0 for the assignment and possibly face further disciplinary action. If you are not sure if something you are doing would be considered plagiarism, ASK. More information on plagiarism and academic honesty will be posted on the CourseDen class site.
Class Schedule

The schedule below is intended to reflect the general outline I hope to cover, but weekly topics are subject to change. As much as possible, however, we will stick to the dates listed for assignments and exams. You should visit the class site on CourseDen frequently. Information about topics to be covered and assigned readings will be posted there, as will grades.

Week One
Introduction
Desert Fathers and other Early Christian Holy Men

Week Two
Desert Fathers and Other Early Christian Holy Men (cont.)

Week Three
St. Benedict and Monte Cassino

Week Four
Irish Monasticism
Carolingian Period

Week Five
Women of Early Monasticism
Response Paper 1 due, Feb. 5

Week Six
Cluny
Exam 1 Feb. 14

Week Seven
Life in a High Medieval Monastery
(Video from Father Cadfael series)

Week Eight
Monastic Art and Architecture
Response Paper 2 Due, Feb. 28

Week Nine
Seclusion/Frontier: Carthusians and Cistercians
March 4 Last day to withdraw with a W

Week Ten
Mortuary Rolls: Prayer for the Dead
Female Monasticism and Asceticism in the High Middle Ages
Week Eleven
NO CLASSES

SPRING BREAK March 18-22

Week Twelve
Female Monasticism (continued)

Week Thirteen
The Military Orders
Exam 2 April 4

Week Fourteen
Urban Monasticism: The Mendicant Orders
Response Paper 3 due, April 11

Week Fifteen
Urban Monasticism: The Mendicant Orders
Research Project Due, April 18

Final Exam will be given on Thursday, April 25, from 11 until 1:30 in our regular classroom. This exam will include a short section dealing with material from the final two weeks of class as well as a comprehensive section dealing with material from the entire semester. The majority of the comprehensive section will be take-home in nature, with questions given the final day of regular classes and answers turned in at the time of the final exam.