Christianity’s deeply-ingrained discomfort with the human body and sexuality has had a disproportionate impact on women, making rules about proper behavior that confined women’s roles in church and society. At the same time, Christianity has always inspired a powerful feminism, prompting women to break all the rules. This course focuses on Western Europe from the late Roman Empire through the Later Middle Ages. We will begin with the three major sources for these interconnected ideas about the body, sexuality, and women: Greek medicine, Roman literature and law, and the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Testament. We will then explore how these sources combined to shape church and society through such topics as: religious authority and dissent; role of ecclesiastical institutions in constructing gender roles; sacrifice of the body in martyrdom; chastity and holy virginity; contraception and childbirth; mystical marriage to God; marriage laws and male control of female sexuality; visual representations of gender and sexuality; material and visual devotions; and the persecution of witches.
THE BASICS

CONTACT HOURS:
E-mail: eberetz@brynmawr.edu; eberetz@haverford.edu
Hours: W, 3:30 – 4:30 PM @ Bryn Mawr in UnCommon Grounds (or lounge outside);
TH, noon – 1:30 @ Haverford in the Coop;
or by appointment.

TEXTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:
Books to buy:

All other assignments are available on Moodle.
Most assignments are also on reserve in the temporary library in Founders Hall, or as e-resources on Tripod.

CODE FOR ASSIGNMENTS:
(M) Moodle
($) To buy at Bookstore
(*) On reserve in the temporary library in Founders Hall
(E) E-resource on Tripod

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Class Attendance and Participation -- 20% of final grade.
Five Unannounced Quizzes on Day’s Assignment – 20%.
Two Short Papers (5-7 pages) on Assigned Topic -- Due 27 February and 10 April -- 20% each.
Final Paper (10-12 pages) on Assigned Topic -- 20%.

FOR DETAILED REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES, PLEASE SEE PAGE 7.
FOR STATEMENT CONCERNING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS, PLEASE SEE PAGE 8.
T, 23 January -- Introduction: Approach and Sources

TOPIC 1: BACKGROUND

TH, 25 January -- Background, 1: Philosophies of Purity and Subordination
Assignment:

T, 30 January -- Background, 2: Cults of Fertility and Purity in Classical Religions
Assignment:
- (M) Visuals Folder: Good Women, Bad Women, Divine Women.

TH, 1 February -- Background, 3: Marriage in the Classical World
Assignment:
- (M) Visuals Folder with 1) images of marriage and family; and 2) key passages from the Christian Gospels

TOPIC 2: CHRISTIANITY REDEFINES THE IDEAL

T, 6 February -- Theology and Reality: Attitudes toward Contraception

TH, 8 February – Body Condemned; Body Sacrificed
Assignment:
- (M) Genesis 1-3 [New International Version]
T, 13 February -- Empress Helena and Material Christianity
Assignment:
■ (M) Visuals Folder: Helena, Her Devotions, and Her Admirers

TH, 15 February – Disciplining the Body
Assignment: ($, *) Clark, 133-203

T, 20 February – Session on Writing the Papers

TH, February 22 – No Class: Paper Preparation

T, 27 February – No Class: Papers Due at 5PM
Paper to be based on: ($, *) Clark, pp. 204-58.

TOPIC 3: THE FORMATION OF EUROPE

TH, 1 March – No class

T, 6 March – The Church and the Control of Sexuality
Assignment:
■ (M, E) Brundage, 124-75.

TH, 8 March – Living the Ideal of the Early Church

| SPRING BREAK |

TOPIC 4: LOVES PROFANE AND DIVINE

T, 20 March -- The Church and Marriage Law: The Twelfth Century
Assignment: (M, E) Brundage, pp. 176-255.

TH, 22 March – No Class
T, 27 March – Images of Idealized Women in Literature and Art
Assignment:
- (M) Visuals Folder: The Virgin Mary
- (M) Glossary of Beliefs about the Virgin Mary

TH, 29 March – Marriages Secular, Chaste, and Divine: Christine of Markyate

T, 3 April – Seeing and Hearing the Divine: A Book Made for Christine of Markyate
Assignment:
- The St. Albans Psalter Project, University of Aberdeen https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/index.shtml

TH, 5 April – No Class, Paper Preparation

T, 10 April – No Class, Short Paper Due at 5 PM

TH, 12 April – No Class

TOPIC 5: DEFINING ORTHODOXY AND PIETY IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES: A SERIES OF CASE STUDIES

T, 17 April – Legislating Morality in the Later Middle Ages
Assignment: (M, E) Brundage, 417-85.

TH, 19 April – Spirituality, Perfectionism, and the Control of the Body
T, 24 April – Bodily Devotion and the Motherhood of God: Julian of Norwich
Assignment:
- (M) Visuals Folder: Julian’s Material Christianity and the Motherhood of God

TH, 26 April -- Joan of Arc: Virginity, Visions, and Military Power
Assignment:
- (M) Visuals Folder: Early Depictions of Joan of Arc

T, 1 May --- Breaking Moral Rules and Social Roles: The Witches
Assignment:
- (M) Visuals Folder: Witches and Other Scary Creatures

TH, 3 May – Wrap-up and Review

FINAL PAPERS

DETAILED COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

I. General

- Class attendance is required.
- More than 3 absences will lower your discussion grade one whole number; every three thereafter, another whole number.
- Some assignments are available for purchase at the Bookstore; others are available on-line or on Moodle.
- Most are also on reserve in the temporary library in Founder’s Hall or as an e-resource on Tripod.
- Please consult the key on page 1 of this syllabus.
- Study questions will be provided to help you prepare for discussion.

II. Quizzes

- On five occasions during the semester, there will be an unannounced essay quiz on the day’s assignment.
- The quiz will always be based on one of the study questions.
- The lowest grade on those quizzes will be thrown out and the remaining four will be averaged to form 20% of your final grade.
- CRITERIA FOR GRADING QUIZZES: If the quiz shows a working knowledge of the assignment = 3.0; shows evidence of thought about the assignment and question = 4.0; best essay in any batch = 4.33; benefit of the doubt = 2.0; doubt, period = no credit.

III. Short Papers – Due 27 February and 10 April

- Question will be assigned well in advance of each due date.
- Classes before the due dates will be canceled to allow more time to work on papers.
- Late papers (without previous arrangements with the instructor) will lose one whole number per day.
- Papers will be due at 5PM,

III. Final paper

- Question and guidelines to be assigned well in advance of the due date.
STATEMENT CONCERNING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you suffer from a physical disability, please contact me about this as soon as possible about any special accommodations you might need to fulfill the requirements of the class.

First, you should contact Access and Disability Services at Haverford [hc-ads@haverford.edu] or at Bryn Mawr [Deborah Alder, dalder@brynmawr.edu].

If you have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and would like to request accommodations in this course because of a disability, please meet with me privately at the beginning of the semester (ideally within the first two weeks) with your verification letter.

If something comes up along the way, we can always work something out.