

Saints & Society

History 12
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Course Description

This course covers the history of Christian sanctity from the first to the thirteenth centuries. It is predicated on the belief that you can tell a lot about a past culture by the way it conceived of its heroes. The bulk of the readings are saints' lives written by Christian hagiographers whose collective task it was to construct a timeless sense of Christian perfection out of a seemingly infinite variety of individual cases. Learning how to read these curious texts for the information they contain about the late antique/medieval mind-set is the principal challenge of the course.

Readings

The specific reading assignment for each meeting will appear in the "Announcements" window on this very Sakai site. Most of the readings are available under "Resources" in the form of PDFs and/or Word documents. The few actual books (in book form) that you will need are listed below under "Books for purchase." They have been ordered for you and are available at Huntley Bookstore.

Units

1. *Imitatio Christi*

- Matthew (80s CE)

2. Virginit

- Paul, *I Corinthians* 7 (53-57 CE)
- *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (mid-2C)
- Tertullian (d. 220), *On Exhortation to Chastity* (204-212)
- Tertullian (d. 220), *On the Veiling of Virgins*, ch. 7-17.
- Cyprian (d. 258), *On the Dress of Virgins*.

3. Martyrdom I

- Acts 6-7: Martyrdom of Stephen (80s CE)
- I Peter (70-90 CE?)
- Pliny, Letter to Trajan (c. 112)
- Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Romans (c. 98-117)

- *Martyrdom of Polycarp of Smyrna* (157)

4. Martyrdom II

- Martyrs of Lyons (d. 177)
- *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* (180)
- Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (180) 3.12.13, 3.18.4-6
- *Martyrdom of Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas* (203)
- *Passion of Sts. Carpus, Papyrus, & Agathonice* (post-251)

5. Holy Relics

- Ambrose, Letter 22 (c. 386)
- Jerome, *Against Vigilantius* (c. 403)
- Augustine, *City of God* 22:4-5 7-9 (413-426).

6. Holy Hermits

- Athanasius, *Life of St. Antony* (356-362)
- *Lives of the Desert Fathers (Historia monachorum in Aegypto, 398)*
- Sophronius, *Life of St. Mary of Egypt* (634-638)

7. Holy Monks

- John Cassian, *Conferences*, book XIX
- Augustine, Letter 211
- *The Rule of St. Benedict*

8. Holy Bishops

- Leontius, *Life of St. John the Almsgiver*
- Sulpicius Severus, *Life of St. Martin*
- Sulpicius Severus, Letters

9. Holy Kings and Queens

- Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Penguin, 1990), pp. 41-164.
- Venantius Fortunatus, *The Life of Radegund*

11. Holy Warriors

- Odo, *Life of St. Gerald of Aurillac*, pp. 90-180.
- Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicle*, pp. 23-90.

12. Holy Wives: Christina of Markyate and Elizabeth of Hungary

- *Life of St. Christina of Markyate* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 3-88.
- Conrad of Marburg, *Summa vitae*.
- *Dicta quatuor ancillarum* .
- Elizabeth of Hungary, Miracle depositions (1233)

13. Holy Merchants

- Kenneth B. Wolf, *The Poverty of Riches: St. Francis of Assisi Reconsidered* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 3-105.

14. Holy Common People

- Rufino, *Life of St. Raymond "the Palmer"*.
- *Life of St. Zita of Lucca*.
- *Life of San Isidro of Madrid*.