

Medieval Martyrs, Mystics and Monastics



HNRS 2030
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12:30-1:20 MWF

French House 200

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In this class, we will examine the pursuit of holiness in early and medieval Christianity by exploring three themes - martyrdom, monasticism and mysticism.

- ❖ How did ideas about the pursuit of holiness change as Christianity transformed from a marginal, persecuted religion to a powerful one?
- ❖ What do we learn about a religious tradition by understanding what practitioners held up as exemplary behavior?
- ❖ How did ideas about gender influence the practice and experience of devotion in early and medieval Christianity?
- ❖ What factors determined whether individuals received praise or blame for their efforts to pursue holiness as they understood it?

We will look at how these practices and the beliefs behind them developed in ancient and medieval Christianity, keeping in mind the social context in which they emerged.