

WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

Graduate Course in Comparative Literature

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Tue. 1:30-4:30pm, LwH 2210

WRITING THE MEDIEVAL BODY

The course will focus on sexuality and illness in the medical, religious, and literary discourses from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. Of particular interest will be the development of medieval technical literature (*Fachliteratur*) as it moved from the monastery to the university and with its preference for prose distanced itself from the "less truthful" texts (romances, poetry, fabliaux, etc.) which were written in verse. Works studied in the course will be examples in which two or more of the discourses converge or collide, starting with Hildegard von Bingen's medical text *Cause et Cure* from the twelfth century. Literary works from the classical Middle High German period will be studied in combination with their foreign, in particular French, forerunners or parodies (*Cligès*). They will include Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*, in which women healers, a love potion, and trial by ordeal figure prominently, Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein* whose protagonist suffers from madness, *Der Arme Heinrich* with a protagonist afflicted by leprosy, and *Gregorius* which features double incest. In the medical works of medieval and Renaissance school medicine the emphasis will be on sexuality and procreation, two areas from which the religious discourse is never completely absent as Maino de Maineri's *Regimen sanitatis*, and Jakob Rueff's gynecological work *Hebammenbuch* illustrate. The course will conclude with a look at the representations of the body in the fabliaux and Shrovetide plays of Hans Sachs.

**Required Texts:**

Cadden, Joan. *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science and Culture*.

**Course Requirements:**

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|-------------------------------|-----|
| Critical Report (1500 words)* | 25% |
| Seminar (up to 1 hour)        | 25% |
| Term Paper (ca. 20 pages)     | 40% |
| Class Contribution            | 10% |

\*Choose one of the books from the list whose authors are underlined, report to be presented in class first, and handed in later.

**Course Outline (subject to minor modifications):**

- Jan. 6 Introduction, (course requirements, outline), WRITING THE MEDIEVAL BODY IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: *The Name of the Rose*
- Jan. 13 MEDICINE AND THE BODY: Transmission of knowledge from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, Humoral Theory, Non-Naturals (overview)
- Jan. 20 MEDICINE AND THE BODY: sex and gender (Laqueur), sexuality (Jaquart/Thomasset), pain (Morris) [critical reports]
- Jan. 27 CHRISTIANITY AND THE BODY: sexuality and procreation (Hildegard of *Cause et Cure*), sexual renunciation (Brown), pleasure (Foucault) [critical reports]
- Feb. 3 CHRISTIANITY AND THE BODY: food and fasting (Bell) (Bynum: *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*) [critical reports]
- Feb. 10 CHRISTIANITY AND THE BODY: construction of gender (Bynum: *Jesus as Mother*) [critical reports]

- Medieval Women*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1987.  
UWO BR 253. B96. 1987
- Foucault *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. 3 New York:  
Pantheon Books, 1978- UWO HQ 12. F6813 1978
- Foucault *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. 2 New York:  
Pantheon, 1985.  
UWO HQ 12. F6813 1988
- Jacquart, Danielle and Claude Thomasset. *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*. Trans.  
Matthew Adamson. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988.  
UWO R141. J3313 1988
- Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, Mass.:  
Harvard University Press, 1990. UWO HQ 1075. L37 1990
- Morris, David B. *The Culture of Pain*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.  
UWO RB 127. M67 1991
- Newman, Barbara. . Berkeley/Los  
Angeles: University of California Press, 1989(PB).

### **Graduate Course Health and Wellness Insert for Graduate Course Outlines**

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health/resources.html](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html)

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health/module.html](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/module.html). This module is 30 minutes in length and provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and of available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After successful completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation.