Heaven and hell, angels and demons, the Virgin Mary and the devil battling over the state of human souls, the world on the edge of apocalypse awaiting the coming of the Judge and the resurrection of the dead, the transubstantiation of bread and wine into body and blood, the great adventures of the saints. As Rudolf Bultmann put it in his summary of the “world picture” of the New Testament, “all of this is mythological talk,” arguably unnecessary for Christian theology. And yet, without its mythology, much of Christianity become incomprehensible as a religious or symbolic system. This course is intended as an introduction to the stories that medieval Christians told about God, his Mother, the angels, and the saints, along with the place of the sacraments and miracles in the world picture of the medieval church. Sources will range from Hugh of St. Victor’s summa on the sacraments, Guido of Monte Rochen’s handbook for parish priests and Hildegard of Bingen’s visionary Scivias to the Pseudo-Bonaventuran Meditations on the Life of Christ, Jacobus de Voragine’s Golden Legend, instructions for summoning angels and the York cycle of mystery plays. Emphasis will also be given to the way in which these stories were represented in art.


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Reading, attendance, and participation in class discussion (10% of your final grade)

2. Scriptural exegesis (2-3 pages, 10% of your final grade). Due January 23 in class.

3. “Sermons” (three blog posts, 900-1200 words each, 35% of your final grade), reflecting on our class discussion for the day. Reflections must be posted within 48 hours of our class discussion (by Wednesday at 1:30pm for Monday discussions; by Friday at 1:30pm for Wednesday discussions). Blog address: http://speculumaureum.blogspot.com

4. Final paper (8-10 pages, double-spaced, 45% of your final grade). Due March 20 in Canvas Dropbox. File format: YOURLASTNAME.pdf

READING AND DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENTS

**January 7 Myth**


**January 9 Creed**


January 14 Heaven and earth
Genesis 1-2
Revelation 1-22
Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.16.2, “The Trinity Apocalypse”
http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/viewpage.php?index=1199

January 16 The Temple of the LORD
Psalms 2 and 109 (Septuagint/Vulgate numbering)
Exodus 25-40
1 Chronicles (Paralipomenon) 28-29
2 Chronicles (Paralipomenon) 1-8
Isaiah 6
Ezekiel 1 and 40-44
Letter to the Hebrews 1-13
Margaret Barker, Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem
(“Creation”) [BR129 .B37 2004]

January 21—NO CLASS

January 23 Made in the image and likeness of God
Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Song of Songs I: Sermons 1-20, trans. Kilian Walsh, Cistercian
[BS1485.B5 1971]
(Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1951), book I, part VI (“On the
creation of man”), pp. 93-120 [BX2200.H891 Hathi Trust]

Caroline Walker Bynum, The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336 (New
Reclothed Skeletons”) [BL87.A1L5 no. 15]

January 28 Holy Heroes!
Anselm of Canterbury, Prayers nos. 8-16, trans. Ward, pp. 127-206
 Jacobus de Voragine, Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints, trans. William Granger Ryan, 2
vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1:374-83 (St. Mary Magdalen), 2:3-
10 (St. James the Greater), 2:44-58 (St. Dominic), 2:272-80 (All Saints), 2:334-41 (St.
Catherine) [BX4654.J3340 1993]


**January 30 Angels and archangels**

Pseudo-Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy*  
[http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/areopagite_13_heavenly_hierarchy.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/areopagite_13_heavenly_hierarchy.htm)


Honorius, *The Sworne Booke*  
[http://www.esotericarchives.com/juratus/juratus.htm](http://www.esotericarchives.com/juratus/juratus.htm)

York Mystery Plays, ed. Beadle and King, pp. 1-7 (“The Barkers: The Fall of the Angels”)


**February 4 The Mother of the LORD**

The Gospels: Luke 1-2; John 2

Anselm, *Prayers* nos. 5-7, trans. Ward, pp. 106-26


[https://issuu.com/columbiaup/docs/mary_and_the_art_of_prayer_ave_maria](https://issuu.com/columbiaup/docs/mary_and_the_art_of_prayer_ave_maria)


**February 6 God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**


**February 11 Incarnate Word**


February 13 Old Testament
Genesis 3-9 and Exodus 1-14


February 18 Nativity of the LORD


February 20 Last Supper


February 25 Passion


February 27 Resurrection


**March 4 Revelation I: Creation**
Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, Declaration and Book One, pp. 59-148


**March 6 Revelation II: Incarnation and Sacrament**
Hildegard, *Scivias*, Book Two, pp. 149-308

**March 11 Revelation III: Virtue**

**March 13 Judgment Day**
The Gospels: Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21, John 14-17


**Final paper due March 20** in Canvas Dropbox