I have said already that the motive for loving God is God Himself. And I spoke truly, for He is as well the efficient cause as the final object of our love. He gives the occasion for love, He creates the affection, He brings the desire to good effect. He is such that love to Him is a natural due; and so hope in Him is natural, since our present love would be vain did we not hope to love Him perfectly some day. Our love is prepared and rewarded by His. He loves us first, out of His great tenderness; then we are bound to repay Him with love; and we are permitted to cherish exultant hopes in Him.

Bernard of Clairvaux, On Loving God, Chapter VII
CH 618 - Medieval Spirituality

Dr. Gwenfair Walters Adams
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary: Hamilton Campus
Spring Semester, 2012; Thursdays, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Office Hours: Mondays, 10:30-12:00 noon; Wednesdays, 10:45-11:45 a.m., Thursdays 3:00-4:00 p.m. (and as posted outside office at Library basement 115)
Contact info: provided in class

The late medieval world, in many ways, devoted itself to eternity. Cloistered monks in tonsured silence contemplated God through the daily rhythm of the psalter in the oratory. Butchers, coopers, and candlemakers in guilds produced pageants with Hell-mouths and angels in the streets of York. Priests lifted thin wafer hosts in golden, bejeweled pyxes before delicately painted triptychs and elaborately carved altars that carried the enduring images and crumbling bones of the saints. Soaring cathedrals with flying buttresses and birds nesting in the pilasters encompassed the stained glass scenes of crucifixion suffering. For many, it was an era of passionate spirituality and deep speculation about the divine, a time when the heroes of the day were those who were holy, self-sacrificing, God-focused. It was a culture which encouraged people to go to extremes in their attempts to please God, to strive diligently in earnest anticipation of the afterlife. And it was the world into which the sixteenth-century Reformers were born and to which they responded.

The course is designed to immerse students in this medieval world and to acquaint them with the major themes of its spirituality; to reflect on the various aspects of Medieval spirituality in light of biblical-theological principles; and to provide opportunities for students to apply what is helpful in deepening their love for Jesus Christ, his Word, Church, and World. It will encompass the overlapping realms of lay, mystic, and monastic spirituality and explore issues of community, rules of life, dreams and visions, mysticism, internal and external pilgrimage, spiritual warfare; spiritual disciplines, devotional lives, symbolism and sacramentality in daily life, and worship and the arts. It will explore various facets of the spirituality of Bernard of Clairvaux, Aelred of Rievaulx, Thomas Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, Anselm, Abelard, Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, Catherine of Siena, St. Francis, and others. One key theme of the course will be the development of the skill of identifying core spiritual dynamics. In addition, the course will allow students to read a wide variety of primary sources; to improve their historical research and writing skills; to discuss readings in seminar-level style; and to observe a variety of teaching methodologies that can be applied in ministry.

Class Schedule (Subject to change as necessary):

February 2  Introduction
February 9  Theological Foundations of Medieval Spirituality
February 16  The Topography of the Spiritual Realms
February 23  READING WEEK: NO CLASS
March 1  Piercing the Veil: Visionaries and their Visions
March 8  Mystics and the Interior Pilgrimage
March 15  The Monastic Spectrum
March 22  Sacred Journeys, Holy Ground: an Exploration of External Pilgrimage
March 29  READING WEEK: NO CLASS
April  5  On the Via Dolorosa: The Importance of the Crucifixion
April 12  A Feast for the Eyes: Fasting, Feasting, and the Medieval Mass
April 19  Symbolism and the Quotidian Presence
April 26  Worship in the Cathedral
May  3  The Medieval Devotional Life

Course Requirements:

Required Texts:
3. Aelred of Rievaulx, *A Mirror of Charity* (Cistercian Publications) 978-0879077174 (This is being substituted for *Medieval Popular Religion* since the latter is out of print.)

1. Reading (20%) - 1200 pages total (including pages assigned for class, research for paper, and required textbooks) Annotated bibliography - please indicate total # of pages. Include only readings that are taken from primary and secondary sources of/about Medieval Spirituality. Due on final day for written work.
Grading method for the reading: the research paper grade for the course will be the research paper grade. If 100% of the reading has been completed, the research paper grade will be the grade for the course. Otherwise, the proportion of reading not done will be deducted from the final grade for the course, at the following rate:

100 %  (ex: A to A = no change)
75-99%  (ex: A to A- = 1/3 grade drop)
50-74%  (ex: A to B+ = 2/3 grade drop)
25-49%  (ex: A to B = 1 grade drop)
Below 25 %  (ex: A to B- = 1 1/3 grade drop)

2. Analysis: Research Paper (60%) - (12-15 pages) - Write a research paper on a topic related to Medieval Spirituality. Make a strong historical argument, ground it in primary sources, interact critically with secondary sources, organize it clearly, and write it with excellence in style. [Please see handout on Guidelines for Writing a Church History Paper, posted on student portal, for further instructions]. Due on April 27.
3. **Application** (20%) - Spend 10 hours (in addition to the time you normally spend) invested intentionally in spiritual disciplines, time alone with God, etc. Keep a log that lists times and gives a general description of how time is spent; total the hours. Write a 3-page paper analyzing your experience in light of scripture and giving recommendations for your future ministry. Both the log and the 3-page paper need to be handed in. (Please consult professor if you would like to substitute an academic research paper for this assignment). Due on final day for written work.

   Suggestions for use of the time:
   a. Write a Rule of Life
   b. Participate in the Pierce Center Soul Care retreat or take a silent day retreat at a local monastery, beautiful church, or on a lake or mountain, or in the woods.
   c. Memorize a passage from the Scriptures
   d. Compose poetry, music, lyrics, hymns, etc. to the Lord
   e. Journal conversations with the Lord
   f. Incorporate fasting with prayer
   g. Write a reflection paper analysing the key dynamics at the core of your spirituality. 
   h...

4. Class attendance may be taken into account, with one point per unexcused absence being deducted from the final grade for the course.

Note: Grade will be determined as follows: If the other two assignments have been completed fully and satisfactorily, then the grade of the Research Paper will be the grade for the semester. If the application assignment has not been completed, the class grade will be reduced by one-third of a grade (for example, from A to A-). If the Reading has not been completed, the grade will be reduced additionally, according to the method described above in the Reading section.

- Grading scale for the research paper is the one indicated in the academic catalog guidelines for Gordon-Conwell:
  "Grade A is given for meeting with conspicuous excellence the demands which can fairly be made in relation to the requirements of the course. These demands would normally include unusual accuracy in fact, completeness in detail, perfection in form of work, independence of method, grasp of the subject as a whole and constructive imagination.
  Grade B is given for exceeding the minimum of satisfactory attainment and for meeting certain aspects of the course with excellence.
  Grade C is given for attaining satisfactory familiarity with the course and for demonstrating at least some ability to use this knowledge in a satisfactory manner.
  Grade D is a passing mark but indicates unsatisfactory control over the material.
  Grade F declares that the course has been failed."

- Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offense at GCTS. Please follow guidelines at http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html.

- Extensions must be requested by assignment due dates, from the professor for the research paper, and from the Registrar for the application and reading assignments. Penalties may be applied in absence of extenuating circumstances (illness, death in family).
• No audio, photographic, or video electronic recordings or transmissions (including email, games, social networking, etc.) may be made in class without the consent of the professor.