

HIS 100: Peter Abelard and His World ARH 318

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Office Hours: MW 2:15-4:05 or by appointment

Mears 305

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Course Description

Peter Abelard (1079-1142) is one of the most well-known and exciting figures from the Middle Ages. Although best remembered today for his love affair with Heloise, in his own age he was better known as a philosopher, theologian, monk, and poet. Through the lens of Abelard's turbulent life, this course will provide an introduction to issues of historical causation, argumentation, and evidence. After introductory units on historical methods, we will spend the rest of the semester studying Peter Abelard's writings and adventures. Each unit will introduce students to different primary sources and historical methodologies, including the sources and approaches of social, cultural, intellectual, and religious history.

Required Books

John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*

Peter Abelard, *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise* (Penguin Classics)

Peter Abelard, *Ethical Writings: 'Ethics' and 'Dialogue Between a Philosopher, a Christian, and a Jew'*, ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Paul Vincent Spade

Abbot Suger of St. Denis, *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*, trans. Richard Cusimano

Assignments and Grading

1. Class Participation (15%)
2. Film review (3 pages) (10%)
3. Essay #1: on Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum* (3 pages) (15%)
4. Essay #2: on Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (3 pages) (15%)
5. Presentation (10%), and 1-page write-up (5%)
6. Annotated Bibliography (8-10 pages) (30%)

Film Review

After watching the film "A Midwife's Tale," you will be asked to write a short, 3-page paper. The prompt will be handed out in class on the day of the viewing.

Short Essays

You will be asked to write two 3-page essays on Abelard. The prompts will be handed out a week in advance. Your essays should have a clear thesis statement, correctly-formatted footnotes (follow the Chicago Manual of Style), and a works cited page.

Presentation and Write-Up

Each student will have to participate in a group presentation, either on the debate over the authenticity of Abelard and Heloise's correspondence, or on the ways in which scholars have tried to apply gender theory to their letters.

The debate over the authenticity of the correspondence between Abelard and Heloise remains one of the most controversial issues in the field. For this reason, and because questions of forgery and authenticity are extremely important to the historian's craft, we will be devoting an entire week to this issue. After discussing the general problem of forgery and how this would affect our understanding of Abelard and Heloise on Friday, Oct. 2, the following week will be devoted to group presentations (3 students) on the arguments pro and contra the authenticity of Abelard's correspondence with Heloise. Two groups will go on Wednesday and two groups on Friday. Each group presentation should be approximately 15 minutes. A one-page (individual) write-up will be due in class on the day of the presentation.

The advent of gender-theory is another important issue in historical studies. After discussing gender theory on Monday, Nov. 16, students will give group presentations (3 students per group) on how individual scholars have tried to apply gender theory to understanding Heloise and Abelard. Two groups will go on Friday, Nov. 20, and two groups on Monday, Nov. 23. A one-page (individual) write-up will be due in class on the day of the presentation.

Annotated Bibliography

Your final assignment for the class will be to write an 8-10 page annotated bibliography on a topic to be chosen in consultation with the instructor. An annotated bibliography is a focused list of sources, with descriptive or evaluative notes about each source. It is a way to do research on a topic, to pick out the most important, notable, and helpful sources, and to present them to an audience with your evaluation. The annotated bibliography should be divided into two sections: one section on primary sources, the other on secondary sources. For each entry, you should provide a brief summary of the source and explain HOW and WHY the entry is relevant to your research question.

Late Policy

All the due dates are marked clearly on the syllabus. It is your job to take notice of them and to hand in the assignments on time. The late penalty is one letter grade per day. After four days the assignment will receive an automatic F. Failure to hand in any of the major assignments will result in an F in the class.

Accommodations

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, Joyce Stern, who is located on the third floor of the JRC (x3702).

Abbreviations

(E) = E-Reserve

(I) = Internet

(J) = J-Stor
(P) = Pioneerweb

Course Schedule

What is History?

- Friday, Aug. 28 Course Introduction
Arnold, Chapter 1
History Pre-Test
- Monday, Aug. 31 History: lies and truths
Arnold, Chapters 2-3
- Wednesday, Sep. 2 Sources and arguments
Arnold, Chapters 4-5
- Friday, Sep. 4 Is the past a foreign country?
Arnold, Chapter 6
- Monday, Sep. 7 A Trip to the Archives
Arnold, Chapter 7
- Monday Evening* *A Midwife's Tale Screening*
- Wednesday, Sep. 9 Doing history: A case study
Discuss a Midwife's tale

Film Review Due in class

Peter Abelard's Life according to Himself

- Friday, Sep. 11 Abelard's Autobiography
Historia Calamitatum, in *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*

Abelard's Life in its Political Context

- Monday, Sep. 14 The History of Medieval France in a Nutshell
Deeds of Louis the Fat 23-54
- Wednesday, Sep. 16 Castles and Castellans
Deeds of Louis the Fat 55-118
- Friday, Sep. 18 Suger and St. Denis
Deeds of Louis the Fat 118-59

Essay #1 Due by 4:30pm

- Monday, Sep. 21 The Investiture Controversy and the Fight for Church Reform
(E) Fassler, *Gothic Song*, 187-197

Wednesday, Sep. 23 Church Reform in France
(E) Fassler, *Gothic Song*, 197-206

Friday, Sep. 25 Abelard's Life in Light of Royal and Ecclesiastical Politics
(P) Translation of Bautier (1981)

Heloise's Love and the Authenticity Debate

Monday, Sep. 28 Medieval Conceptions of Love and Marriage
(E) Excerpts from Augustine, *On the Good of Marriage*
(E) Excerpts from Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Loving God*
(I) [Overview of Andreas Capellanus' Art of Courtly Love](#)

Wednesday, Sep. 30 Heloise's Love
Letters 1-6, in *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*

Friday, Oct. 2 The Authenticity Debate
(E) Newman, "Authority, Authenticity, and the Repression of Heloise"

Monday, Oct. 5 What is an annotated bibliography?

Wednesday, Oct. 7 Authenticity Debate **Presentations** (Contra authenticity)

Friday, Oct. 9 Authenticity Debate **Presentations** (Pro authenticity)

Abelard as Teacher and Thinker

Monday, Oct. 12 Searching and researching Abelard

Wednesday, Oct. 14 The Medieval Liberal Arts
(E) John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon* 33-38, 78-95

Friday, Oct. 16 The Triumph of Logic and the Problem of Universals
(P) Marenbon, "Logic, c. 1080-1115: A Synthesis"

-----**Fall Break (Oct. 17-25)**-----

Monday, Oct. 26 Teaching Theology in Laon and Paris
(P) Anselm of Laon, Letter to Abbot Heribrand
(I) Abelard, [Prologue to the *Sic et non*](#)

Wednesady, Oct. 28 Christian Ethics
Begin reading Abelard, *Ethics*

Friday, Oct. 30 Abelard's Ethics
Finish Abelard, *Ethics*

The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century

- Monday, Nov. 2 Scholasticism vs. Humanism
(E) Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, 17-35
- Wednesday, Nov. 4 Consciousness and Sense of Self
(E) Benton, "Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality"
(E) Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?"
- Friday, Nov. 6 Renaissance of the Twelfth Century?
(E) Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, ch. 1
(J) [Stephen Jaeger, "Pessimism in the Twelfth-Century 'Renaissance'"](#)

Abelard and the Jews

- Monday, Nov. 9 Jews in the Middle Ages
Begin reading Abelard's *Dialogue Between a Philosopher, a Christian, and a Jew*
- Wednesday, Nov. 11 Debating with Jews
Continue reading the *Dialogue*
- Friday, Nov. 13 Abelard on the Jews
Finish the *Dialogue*

Essay #2 Due by 4:30pm

Women and Gender

- Monday, Nov. 16 Women and Gender
(J) [Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis"](#)
(J) [Nancy F. Partner, "No Sex, No Gender"](#)
- Wednesday, Nov. 18 Heloise the Abbess
(E) Mary Martin McLaughlin, "Heloise the Abbess: The Expansion of the Paraclete"
- Friday, Nov. 20 **Presentations** on Gender Theory Readings of Heloise
- Monday, Nov. 23 **Presentations** on Gender Theory Readings of Abelard
- Wednesday, Nov. 25 **Class cancelled**
- Thursday, Nov. 26 **Thanksgiving**
- Friday, Nov. 27 **Thanksgiving**

Abelard's End

Monday, Nov. 30 Old Monasticism
(E) Colin Morris, "Monastic Growth and Change"

Annotated Bibliography Draft Due by 4:30pm

Wednesday, Dec. 2 New Monasticism
(E) Colin Morris, "The New Monastic Orders"
(E) Bernard of Clairvaux, *An Apologia to Abbot William*

Friday, Dec. 4 Two Councils: Sens (1140 or 1141) and Poitiers (1148)
(E) Bernard of Clairvaux, Letter 190
(E) Otto of Freising, *Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa* 82-101
(E) John of Salisbury, *Memoirs of the Papal Court* 12-30
The Letters of Abelard and Heloise 275-284

Monday, Dec. 7 Rise of Communes
(E) Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination* 7-33

Wednesday, Dec. 9 Arnold of Brescia and Social Upheaval
(E) Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione* 2.6.9-6.13
(E) Walter Map, *De nugis curialium*
(J) [Mews, "The Council of Sens \(1141\): Bernard, Abelard, and the Fear of Social Upheaval"](#)

Friday, Dec. 11 Conclusion
History Post-Test
End of Course Evaluations

Wednesday, Dec. 16 Annotated Bibliography due by 4:30pm