

Medieval Studies 111

*Sex, Love, and Marriage in the Middle Ages*

Fall 2018

Tuesday and Thursday, 1330-1445

Barker Center 024

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Office: Barker 121

Office hours: Tuesday, 1130-1300 and by appointment

In this course, we will explore the many ways that passion, love, and obligation bound men and women to one another over the course of nearly two millennia, from first-century Rome to sixteenth-century Italy. In particular, we will focus on how those bonds were organized legally and institutionally, on the social roles created by such relationships, and on the connection (or lack thereof) between marriage, love, and sexual passion. Although marital and sexual relationships in the West long were viewed as properly heterosexual in nature, we also will consider how homosocial and homosexual desires have affected them throughout history.

Our journey begins in the ancient and medieval world, focusing in particular on how the development and spread of Christianity shaped ideas and ideals of male-female relationships, and how sexual attraction, desire, and the marital bond were accommodated (or rejected) within European Christian societies. We then will turn our attention to late medieval and early modern Europe, and the ways in which sex, love, and marriage both reflected older traditions and practices and were shaped by new social, intellectual, and political forces. By the end of the semester, you will have developed the skills and knowledge needed to formulate broader theses about gender, sexuality, and marriage in the millennia we have studied. You also will have gained a deeper and more sophisticated awareness of how literary, historical, and normative texts offer unique perspectives on people and their relationships in a time far removed from our own. Each week, therefore, I will ask you to bring a variety of approaches to bear on our texts, including close reading, historical interrogation, and rhetorical analysis, emphasizing the ways in which (literary) text and (historical) context interact to create meaningful cultural artifacts.

An essential point to keep in mind: this class belongs to you. Your active presence and involvement each day are essential to its success. 25% of your final grade will depend upon your participation in each week's discussions, including serving as the moderator and initiator for an individual class discussion. Since it's difficult to engage in discussions where you are not present, any more than three absences during the course of the semester will adversely (and cumulatively) affect this component of your grade. You also will be evaluated on the basis of occasional written work, responding both to particular texts and problems as well as to earlier postings by your colleagues (40%). This writing will be published on-line, as part of a blog edited and expanded over the course of the semester. Finally, you will be working collectively



over the course of the semester on a project of intellectual and cultural adaptation—namely, creating the pitch package (including logline, synopsis, season arc, character sketches, and episode synopses) for a television series (fictional or non-fictional) that brings the fascinating world of medieval sex, love, and marriage to a modern audience. More information about this larger project (whose process and product will be worth 35% of your final grade) will be provided in the first few weeks of class.

## Readings

*Queenship and Sanctity: The Lives of Mathilda and the Epitaph of Adelheid*, trans. Sean Gilsdorf (Catholic University of America Press, 2004)

Abelard and Heloïse, *The Letters and Other Writings*, trans. William Levitan (Hackett, 2007)

*The Lays of Marie de France*, trans. Edward Gallagher (Hackett, 2010)

Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. J.J. Parry (Columbia University Press, 1990)

William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. T.W. Craik (Oxford University Press, 2008)

Other readings are available on the course Canvas site

## Syllabus

### Week 1 (4-6 September) "Better to Marry than to Burn"

The *Laudatio Turiae*, in *The So-Called 'Laudatio Turiae': Introduction, Text, Translation, Commentary*, ed. Erik Wistrand (Göteborg, 1976), 19-31 (Canvas)

Emily Hemelrijk, "Masculinity and Femininity in the 'Laudatio Turiae'," *Classical Quarterly* 54/1 (2004): 185-97 (Canvas)

Paul, First letter to the Corinthians 5-7 (Canvas)

### Week 2 (11-13 September) "Marriage Is of Some Good"

St. Jerome, letters 38 (to Marcella) and 128 (to Pacatula) (Canvas)

Augustine of Hippo, "The Excellence of Marriage," in *Marriage and Virginity*, ed. Edmund Hill and John Rotelle (New York, 1999), 33-61 (Canvas)

David Hunter, "Resistance to the Virginal Ideal in Late Fourth-Century Rome: The Case of Jovinian," *Theological Studies* 48 (1987): 45-64 (Canvas)

**25 September: Blog issue #1**



Weeks 3-4 (18-27 September)  
"Ruled by Conjugal Chastity"

Pope Nicholas I, Letter 99 (*Responses to the Questions of the Bulgars*), cc. 2-3, 28-29, 39, 48-51, 63-64, 70.  
Online at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/866nicholas-bulgar.asp> (Canvas)

Michael Sheehan, "The Bishop of Rome to a Barbarian King on the Rituals of Marriage," in *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies*, ed. James K. Farge (Toronto, 1996), 278-91 (Canvas)

"Lothar II's Divorce," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Peterborough, 1993), 412-418 (Canvas)

Stuart Airlie, "Private Bodies and the Body Politic in the Divorce Case of Lothar II," *Past and Present* 161 (1998): 3-38 (Canvas)

Anonymous, the "Older" and "Later" *Lives of Mathilda*, in *Queenship and Sanctity*

Phyllis Jestice, "Prestige Marriage," in *Imperial Ladies of the Ottonian Dynasty: Women and Rule in Tenth-Century Germany* (Springer, 2018), 43-70.

Week 5 (2-4 October)  
"I've a Lover, But Who Is She?"

Troubadour lyrics in *From Dawn to Dawn*, trans. A.S. Kline (Canvas)

Ruth Harvey, "Courtly Culture in Medieval Occitania," in *The Troubadours: An Introduction*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8-27 (Canvas)

Frederic Cheyette, "Love and Fidelity," in *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours* (Cornell University Press, 2001), 233-247 (Canvas)

Week 6 (9-11 October)  
"Some Sweet Semblance of Yourself"

Abelard and Heloise, *Letters and Other Writings* (selections)

Barbara Newman, "Authority, Authenticity, and the Repression of Heloise," in *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia, 1995), 46-75 (Canvas)

Katherine Kong, "Writing the Subjunctive into the Indicative: Commanding Performances in the Letters of Abelard and Heloise," in *Lettering the Self in Medieval and Early Modern France* (Woodbridge, 2010), 55-108 (Canvas)

**16 October: Blog issue #2**



Week 7 (16-18 October)

"So, What Is Love?"

Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love* (selections)

R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago, 1991), ch. 5-6 (Canvas)

Week 8 (23-25 October)

"A Lady of Valor, Wisdom, Beauty"

Marie de France, "Preface", "Equitan", "Lanval", "Laüstic", and "Chaitivel"

Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France: A Critical Companion* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), ch. 5 (Canvas)

K. Sarah-Jane Murray, "Marie de France, Ethicist: Questioning Courtly Love in *Laüstic*," *Modern Philology* 109/1 (2011): 1-16 (Canvas)

Week 9 (30 October-1 November)

"They Exchanged Hearts between Them"

Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein*, trans. Richard Lawson in *Arthurian Romances, Tales, and Lyric Poetry: The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue* (Penn State Press, 2001), 235-322 (Canvas)

James Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* (The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 51-100 (Canvas)

**6 November: Blog issue #3**

Week 10 (6-8 November)

"Man Shal Yeldē to His Wyf Hire Dette"

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Wife of Bath's Tale* (Canvas)

Lee Patterson, "'Experience woot wel it is noght so': Marriage and the Pursuit of Happiness in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*," in *The Wife of Bath*, ed. Peter Beidler (Bedford/St. Martins, 1996), 133-154 (Canvas)

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Merchant's Tale* (Canvas)

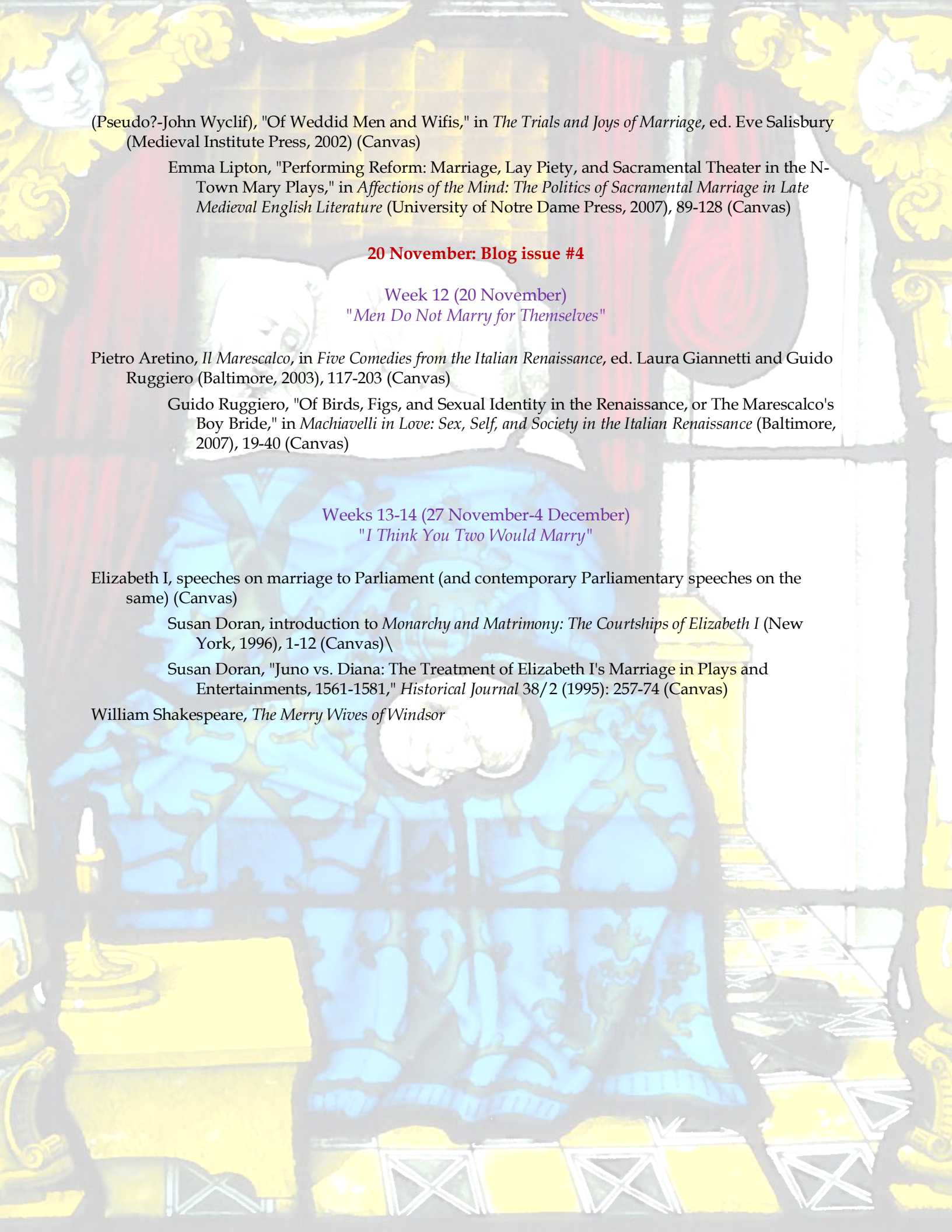
Richard Neuse, "Marriage and the Question of Allegory in the 'Merchant's Tale'," *Chaucer Review* 24/2 (1989): 115-131 (Canvas)

Week 11 (13-15 November)

"Eche to Helpe Other in Clennesse and Holy Lif"

N-Town Cycle, play no. 10 ("The Marriage of Mary and Joseph"), in *The N-Town Plays*, ed. Douglas Sugano (Medieval Institute Press, 2007) (Canvas)





(Pseudo?-John Wyclif), "Of Weddid Men and Wifis," in *The Trials and Joys of Marriage*, ed. Eve Salisbury (Medieval Institute Press, 2002) (Canvas)

Emma Lipton, "Performing Reform: Marriage, Lay Piety, and Sacramental Theater in the N-Town Mary Plays," in *Affections of the Mind: The Politics of Sacramental Marriage in Late Medieval English Literature* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 89-128 (Canvas)

#### 20 November: Blog issue #4

##### Week 12 (20 November)

##### "Men Do Not Marry for Themselves"

Pietro Aretino, *Il Marescalco*, in *Five Comedies from the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore, 2003), 117-203 (Canvas)

Guido Ruggiero, "Of Birds, Figs, and Sexual Identity in the Renaissance, or The Marescalco's Boy Bride," in *Machiavelli in Love: Sex, Self, and Society in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 2007), 19-40 (Canvas)

##### Weeks 13-14 (27 November-4 December)

##### "I Think You Two Would Marry"

Elizabeth I, speeches on marriage to Parliament (and contemporary Parliamentary speeches on the same) (Canvas)

Susan Doran, introduction to *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (New York, 1996), 1-12 (Canvas)\

Susan Doran, "Juno vs. Diana: The Treatment of Elizabeth I's Marriage in Plays and Entertainments, 1561-1581," *Historical Journal* 38/2 (1995): 257-74 (Canvas)

William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*