MSCP 80500/HIST 70400/WSCP 81000

Bastards, Kingship, and Kinship in Medieval Europe

W, 2:00-4:00pm
Prof. Sara McDougall
office hours: Wed. 1-2 and by appointment.
email: smcdougall@gc.cuny.edu

Course description:
This course will investigate ideas of illegitimate birth in medieval Europe and particularly their role in dynastic succession. Throughout the Middle Ages some children were classified as less worthy than others: less worthy to inherit royal or noble title, and less worthy to inherit property more generally. In this class we will critically examine the history of when people in medieval Europe began to identify other people as "bastards," what they meant when they did so, and when calling a child a bastard meant his or her exclusion from succession or an inheritance. We will make use of a wide rage of primary sources available in the original and in translation, sources including chronicles, legal texts, theological writings, vernacular literature, and images.

Learning objectives:
By the end of the semester, students will be able to:
· discuss, write about, and teach about ideas of illegitimacy, family, and kingship as found in a range of medieval sources.
· analyze the relations of different kinds of medieval sources to each other;
· analyze a variety of historical, critical, and theoretical approaches to medieval studies, and incorporate such approaches into their own critical/scholarly writing.

Course requirements:
· Reading the course material and participating in class discussions.
· Two oral presentations, one on a critical or theoretical approach, and one on a primary text.
· A seminar paper (15 pages) incorporating historical, critical, and/or theoretical frames and investigating questions related to the course material. The essay is due Dec. 9, during our final class meeting. A prospectus of the essay is due October 28. An updated version, with bibliography, is due November 25; this should include a clear argument and an overview of the theoretical approaches and sources that will inform the essay's argument.

Texts:
· All assigned readings will be posted on blackboard as pdfs or available as e-books from the library website.

Schedule of readings: [subject to revision]
Sep. 2 Introductions

Sep. 9 The Family of Christ
Matthew 1:1
Selections from the Protoevangelium of James

Conrad Leyser, "From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother: Royal Genealogy and Marian Devotion in the Ninth-century West" in Motherhood, Religion and Society in Medieval Europe, 400-1400 eds. Conrad Leyser and Lesley Smith (Ashgate 2011) 21-38


Sep. 16 Kin and Kingship in the Early Middle Ages
Selected genealogies, excerpts from chronicles and annals

Ian Wood, "Genealogy Defined by Women" in Gender in the Early Medieval World


Sep. 23 no classes.

Sep. 30 Illegitimacy in the Legal Tradition
Selections from Roman Law, Lombard Law, canon law

Laura Wertheimer, "Continuity and Change in Constructions of Illegitimacy between the Second and Eighth Centuries" Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques 33:3 (Fall 2007) 369-393


Oct. 7 Illegitimacy and Kingship: William the Conqueror and Empress Matilda
Selections from chronicles

Oct. 14 Illegitimacy, Inheritance, and Charters
charters

Oct. 21 Capetian Kingship and Illegitimacy: Philip I and Philip II

Oct. 28 Prospectus due.
Nov 4 Illegitimacy, Family, and Inheritance in Medieval Literature

Nov. 11 Illegitimacy in Iberia, Mixed marriages and concubinage

Nov. 18 Popes and Bastards: from Alexander III to Innocent III

Nov. 25 Revised prospectus and bibliography due.

Dec. 2 Illegitimacy, Kingship, and the Crusader States

Dec. 9 Final papers due in class.