

Re-Imagining Mary Magdalene: Female Disciple, Witness, Icon

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This is the entry page to the syllabus for Religion 343b, Re-Imagining Mary Magdalene: Female Disciple, Witness, Icon. The full syllabus is available only on Blackboard and within the Tri-College network.

Course Description: Mary Magdalene: Female Disciple, Witness, Icon. This seminar will focus on a critical examination of the varied representations of Mary Magdalene as disciple, witness, and icon in religion, literature, and the arts. Images of Mary Magdalene will serve as a lens through which to examine changing conceptions of gender, sin, sexuality, spirituality, the body, and salvation. Sources include literary and artistic representations from antiquity to contemporary culture. The central question of the seminar is not "Who was Mary Magdalene," but rather how can we read the images of the Magdalene as reflections of varying religious, social, & cultural norms?

Readings in the course will focus on primary textual sources from antiquity, literary and artistic representations from the history of Christianity, and contemporary images of Mary Magdalene. Sources will include representations of Mary Magdalene in: the New Testament and non-canonical gospels, such as the Gospel of Mary and the Gospel of Philip; post-New Testament legends, sermons, and stories about the Magdalene; artistic representations in medieval and Renaissance art; and images of Mary Magdalene in contemporary literature and film. The final selection of materials will depend in part on the material covered in our major secondary source, Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen* and in part on student interest



Required Readings

These books are available for purchase in Haverford College Bookstore unless otherwise noted

- Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*
- Karen L. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle*
- Dan Burstein, ed. *Secrets of Mary Magdalene*
- Esther DeBoer, *The Mary Magdalene Cover-Up* [book should be available in HC Bookstore by 1/30/08]
- Jane Lahr, *Searching for Mary Magdalene: A Journey Through Art and Literature* [out of print and not in Bookstore, but you can order a copy online; check Amazon]
- Other readings will be available in class handouts, online, or from Magill Library Reserve
- Recommended for purchase: The Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha

Course Outline

- Introduction to the Course: Mary Magdalene in the New Testament, the History of Christianity, and Contemporary Culture
- Mary Magdalene in Ancient Religious Texts: From the Gospel of Mark through Gregory the Great
- The Repentant Magdalene as a Model for Female Saints and Sinners (Readings may include Catherine of Siena, Margery Kempe, et al.)
- Images of Mary Magdalene in Medieval and Renaissance painting and sculpture
- The Sexualized and Repentant Magdalens of England, Ireland, and Western Europe
- Mary Magdalene in Twentieth Century Literature and Film
- The Resurrection and Reconstruction of Mary Magdalene in Contemporary Scholarship and Religious Thought

Course Requirements

- Participation in class discussion and in online Discussion Board (Blackboard) (30%).
 - This is a seminar course. All students are expected to come prepared to participate in discussion, to make presentations in class, and to respond actively to others' postings, comments, and reports.
- Two seminar papers of 4-6 pages (40%). A draft of these papers should be prepared by the Tuesday evening before class and made available on Blackboard.

- Papers will be revised and turned in by the next class.
 - At least one of these should be a textual analysis and at least one should be analysis of an artistic image.
 - Students may work together for group presentations on artistic images.
- A final research paper of 12-15 pages (30%).

Syllabus of Readings

Week I: 1/23 Introduction to the Course: Images of Mary Magdalene and the Earliest Sources

- Handout: New Testament Passages in which Mary Magdalene Appears

Week II Mary Magdalene in New Testament and Other Early Christian Sources

- Handout from 1/23: New Testament Passages
- Read the NT passages in their larger literary contexts in the New Testament (NRSV): Those writing papers may select to write on the depiction of Mary Magdalene and other Disciples in Mark, Luke, **or** John; or they may compare the depiction of Mary Magdalene in 2-3 of the Gospels.
 - **The Gospel of Mark:** Focus on 5:21-43; 6:7-13; 7:24-30; 8:34-9:8; 14:3-9; 15:40-16:8 (original ending; see also the longer ending, 16:9-20)
 - **The Gospel of Luke:** Focus on 1-2; 7:36-50; 8:1-3; 10:38-42; 23:44-24:12; 24:13-53
 - **The Gospel of Matthew:** Focus on Matthew 27:55-28:20
 - **The Gospel of John:** Focus on 11-12 (Mary of Bethany and her siblings Martha and Lazarus), 13; 19:25b-20:18
- Haskins, *Mary Magdalen, pages tba*
- [Mary Rose D'Angelo, "I Have Seen the Lord!": Mary Magdalen as Visionary, Early Christian Prophecy, and the Context of John 20:14-18," *Mariam, the Magdalen, and the Mother*, ed. Deirdre Good \(2005\)](#)

Week III Mary Magdalene as Visionary in Early Christian Tradition: The Gospel of Mary

Week IV Mary Magdalene as Companion and Disciple of Jesus: The Texts from Nag Hammadi

Week V Mary Magdalene in the Writings of the Early Church "Fathers": Bridal Imagery, Eve, and the Conflation of Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany, the Unnamed Sinner of Luke 7, and others

Week VI Medieval Legends and Images of Mary Magdalene: The Golden Legend and Other Medieval Representations

Week VII Medieval Legends and Images of Mary Magdalene: The Golden Legend and Other Medieval Representations

Weeks VIII-X Images of Mary Magdalen in the Art of the Later Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and Later

Weeks XI-XIII Mary Magdalene in Twentieth Century Literature, Film, Religious Contexts

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