

BOOKWOMEN

A Two-Part Course in Feminine Literary History
summer 2026

Bookwomen I: Medieval Women "Lewd, Feeble & Frail"

Tuesdays in June: 2 pm CDT (instructor based in Chicago this month)

OR NOON PST/3 pm EST/8 pm BST (UK)

This portion of the course will explore women readers, writers, owners, and makers of books in the medieval period with an emphasis on England and English translations of texts in other languages. Figures include both poetic creations and historical figures from the Wife of Bath, Margaret Beaufort, Jane Scrope, Juliana Berners and Margery Kempe to Julian of Norwich, Margaret Paston, Hroswitha of Gandersheim and Christine de Pizan. Consulting excerpts, manuscripts, and objects from the medieval era, we will investigate what it meant to be a woman reader in the Middle Ages.

Bookwomen II: Enemies of Books

Tuesdays in August: 9:30 am PST/5:30 pm BST (UK: instructor based here)/12:30 EST

It was once written that women were the enemies of books because they ruined them while cleaning the house or chucked them into the fire. Bookwomen Part Two looks at how some women in the early 20th century organized themselves around the book, forging individual and community structures of learning well before women could attend university for formal degrees. These women looked back to medieval figures as models for an autonomous relationship to the book. Figures included in our reading will include Virginia Woolf, Belle da Costa Greene and the Hroswitha Club, the Guild of Women Binders, and Christopher St. John, author of the first Catholic lesbian novel: *Hungerheart*.

cost \$395* per course or \$695 for both

*returning students \$300/575 for both; individualized sliding scale for those in need

deadline for part 1

preregistration by May 1 (\$30 off)

regular registration by May 15

late registration by June 1 (+\$30 fee)

for part 2: pre-reg: July 1 (\$30 off); regular by July 15; late registration by Aug. 1 (+\$30 fee)

contact

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