This seminar focuses on Middle English religious prose, especially women’s mystical works produced under anti-Lollardy influences such as The Book of Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich’s Showings from the following three pragmatic perspectives: (1) persuasive strategies frequently seen in Late Middle English women’s mystical works; (2) politeness strategies in Late Middle English women’s mystical works; (3) discourse strategies employed to make a coherent sequentiality in the texts and sets of communicative practices in Late Middle English women’s mystical works.

In the first two perspectives, we will consider the ways in which some phrases and stylistic elements in Late Middle English women’s mystical texts reflect ecclesiastical or social pressures of the time that women should not teach and how the authors pursue their resolute intention of writing their works without being suspected as heretics. In the third perspective, preliminary attempts will be shown to demonstrate that there are mixed characteristics in The Book of Margery Kempe, bridging different existing genres such as mystical writing, hagiography and travel journals and leading to create a new genre of autobiography.

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