

Examiner's guidelines for the 3 day take home exam for HIS2124/4124 Autumn 2019

Exam question:

How should we assess the contribution of women to political and intellectual culture in early medieval Britain (c. 400-1000)?

The exam question relates to a variety of content from across the entire course. Students are expected to include discussion from at least one primary source. Of particular relevance would be the following:

The Ecclesiastical History of the English People; The Greater Chronicle; Bede's Letter to Egbert, ed. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2008).

Rudolf's *Life of Leoba* (provided by the Fordham Medieval Sourcebook)

The Letters of Boniface (provided by the Fordham Medieval Sourcebook).

The question given above reflects one of the themes of the course, which has been discussed from different perspectives throughout the semester. The essay could be developed in several directions but should include discussion of some of the following issues: the significance of monastic houses in the period in the creation of intellectual culture, the importance and development of double monasteries headed by an abbess in the early Anglo-Saxon period, the role of women in book production, the role of women in the Anglo-Saxon missions in Germany, the depiction of women in literary sources from the period such as *Beowulf*. Although the essay could be developed with differing emphases, their work should demonstrate their wider understanding of the period and region studied.

An A or B essay will be well-written, with a clear structure and good writing style, references will also be made consistently. This essay must present a good knowledge of the period covered in the course and should be organized analytically rather than narratively. It should also engage with or draw inspiration from critical readings from the course. The author should put forward a nuanced and consistent argument throughout the paper. A good essay (C) will address some features of women's contributions in the period within a reasonably cohesive organisational structure. The arguments in this essay may be less detailed or show a less full understanding of the period than in A or B paper. A satisfactory essay (D) will show some knowledge of early medieval Britain, including relevant primary sources, but will lack a convincing and cohesive argument. A sufficient essay (E) will show evidence of some, but less-than-satisfactory knowledge of the period and topic and lack a strong analytical structure.

