**Newberry Library**

**Winter/Spring 2021**

**Joan of Arc: Genius, Saint, or Common-Sense Virtuoso**

**Syllabus**

*The life and work of Joan of Arc (Jan 6, 1412-May 30, 1431) has intrigued historians, artists, and citizens for centuries. Who was this person who, at age 17, persuaded a dyspeptic prince and a hardened military commander to allow her to lead an army of jaded “French” soldiers to drive the “English” from Orleans—thereby turning the tide of what we know as the Hundred Years War? How did this barely-schooled youth withstand months of inquisition by learned clergy on fine points of theology—baffling them enough to almost survive? Was she a saint inspired by voices from God, a witch in league with Satan, a genius, or, as she argued, a person unafraid to use common sense?*

**Background:** *For 500 years, questions such as these percolated quietly among the people, as officials of church and state did their best to ignore her. In the 19th and 20th centuries, as early records were discovered and made available to scholars, everything changed. Suddenly the life of Joan of Arc emerged as one of the most thoroughly documented lives of the Middle Ages. The re-surfaced story inspired artists who saw in her life and work a symbol of the struggles of their own time—and persuaded the monsignor in Orleans to press the Church to advance her for sainthood.*

Arc of the Course

In this seminar, we will follow renowned French historian Regine Pernoud (*Joan of Arc: By Herself and Her Witnesses)* into an understanding of the stunning historical record*,* then consider the remarkable events through the eyes of some of the 19th and 20th centuries most provocative playwrights [George Bernard Shaw (*Saint Joan*), Jean Anouilh (*The Lark*), and Maxwell Anderson (*Joan of Lorraine*)], as well as acclaimed film director Carl Theodor Dreyer (*The Passion of Joan of Arc*) and graphic artist Maurice Boutet de Monvel (*The Story of Joan of Arc*.) Underlying the discussions will be what we will come to understand to be the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, cultural, psychological qualities that allowed the Maid of Lorraine to think, act, and speak as she did? As we draw the seminar to close, we will play with question of what we, should we be playwrights or scriptwriters, would emphasize from this remarkable life for the benefit of audience of our contemporaries. The course will combine discussion with lecture and dramatic reading.

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**Week I, Feb 18**: The Context for the Coming of Jeanne. Setup of the Seminar. Review of the elemental facts, as offered in selections from Pernoud’s *Joan of Arc: By Herself and Her Witnesses* and Shaw’s Preface to *Saint Joan*. Focus will be on general historical and social overview of the time and place—15th Century France—with conversation about the nature of authority, especially as seen in assumptions and practices such as feudalism; the walled city; the Divine Right of Kings; the “One, True, Holy Apostolic Church;” and established assumptions about place, nationhood, and gender roles. We will prepare to read Shaw and discuss doing readings of scenes as a “cast.”

Reading Assignment for Week 2, February 25.

*Saint Joan* by George Bernard Shaw, Scenes I-V (pp. 59-120)

*Joan of Arc* by Pernoud, from “Orleans:” (70-2; 81; 85-6; 90; 96-7; 101)

Consult maps at <http://www.susannedumbleton.com>

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**Week 2, Feb 25**: The Human Jeanne. *Saint Joan* by Shaw. As we read Shaw, we will consider the rise of *La Pucelle* as political and military phenomenon as well as curious visionary. We will discuss ideas about leadership, loyalty and the source of inspiration—as well as the nature of other individuals in the play. Comparing Shaw with the historical text, we will discuss the concept of creative license.

Reading Assignment for Week 3, March 4.

 *Saint Joan* by Shaw, Scene VI (121-49); Epilogue 150-64); and from the Preface (3-52)

*Joan of Arc* by Pernoud, from “Trial of Condemnation” (165-6; 169-72; 172-9, 179; 181)

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**Week 3, March 4**: The Political Jeanne. *Saint Joan* by Shaw (cont’). In enacting the trial, execution, and aftermath, we will discuss Shaw’s sense of the nature of Joan’s belief about self and about God, about the right to challenge religious and secular authority, and about the issue of a woman wearing clothing presumed to be male attire. We will consider issues in Shaw’s time (1924) that undergird the emphasis he places brings to the essential elements of the historical events.

Reading Assignment for Week 4, March 11.

*The Lark* by Jean Anouilh

*Joan of Arc* by Pernoud, from “Relapse” (186-8; 194-6; 220-4).

Optional but recommended: View *The Lark* [*https://archive.org/details/HallmarkHallofFameTheLark*](https://archive.org/details/HallmarkHallofFameTheLark)

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**Week 4, March 11**: The Eclectic Jeanne. *The Lark* by Anouilh. In this play written shortly after the angst of occupied France during the second World War, we will consider the idea of Joan-- as imaginatively conceived rather than drawn straight from historical transcripts--as a heroine of common sense and a representation of the integrity of country folk. We will wonder to what extent this play is distinctively French—both about Joan and about the English—especially as portrayed in the character and dialogue of Warwick.

Reading Assignment for Week 5, March 18

*The Story of Joan of Arc* by Maurice Boutet de Monvelon web or from a library.

*Joan of Arc* by Pernoud, from “Death” (228-34)

View *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (film) by Dreyer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxJSGMKSyRE>

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**Week 5, March 18**: The Romanticized Jeanne / Demonized Prosecutors. In considering the beautifully illustrated book by Maurice Boutet de Monvel and the powerful film by Danish film director Carl Theodor Dreyer, we will debate extreme views about the nature of Joan and her situation, then and ask what are current ideas about individual conscience vs submission to ecclesiastical authority? (What would Pope Francis say, for example?)

Reading Assignment for Week 6, March 25:

*Joan of Lorraine* by Maxwell Anderson

*Joan of Arc* by Pernoud, from “Rehabilitation” (258-63 and 264-69)

Review the depictions of Joan of Arc in art at <http://www.susannedumbleton.com>

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**Week 6, March 25**: The Ubiquitous Jeanne. *Joan of Lorraine* plus *s*ummary and concluding discussion. We will consider the nature of idealism and pragmatism as seen in Anderson’s play-within-a-play and return to the question of the genius / sanctity of Joan of Arc: what are the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, cultural, psychological qualities that allowed her to think, act, and speak as she did? If we were writing a play about Joan of Arc within the context of the contemporary age, what might we choose as its theme? Its emphasis?

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**Required Readings: (Available independently or through Newberry Library Bookstore)**

Anderson, Maxwell, *Joan of Lorraine: A Play in Two Acts.* Dramatists Play Service, 1946, ISBN 0-

8222-0593-9

Anouilh, Jean. *The Lark.* Dramatists Play Service, 1998. ISBN-10:082220634X.

Pernoud, Regine. *Joan of Arc By Herself and Her Witnesses.* Trans. Edward Hyams. New York:

Scarborough House 1992 (first published 1969.), ISBN-10: 081 2812603

Shaw, George Bernard. *Saint Joan. Penguin Classics, 2001. ISBN-10: 0140437916*.

Selections from *Joan of Arc, La Pucelle,* translated and annotated by Craig Taylor, New York: Manchester University Press, 2006. Provided by instructor.

**Required Viewing:**

Dreyer, Carl Theodor. *The Passion of Joan of Arc.* This is a silent film, with captions in French. Unless your French is very strong, I urge viewing with English subtitles, as the words, though few, are critical. It is available for purchase through The Criterion Collection. Cat. No. CC2865D. ISPN 978-68143-415-5.

**Other Readings/Films/Videos/Music That May be of Interest:**

Boutet de Monvel, Maurice, *The Story of Joan of Arc.* Dover Children’s Classics, ISBN 10

048647061, or, on web at class website link to French edition: <https://ia800204.us.archive.org/2/items/jeannedarc00boutuoft/jeannedarc00boutuoft.pdf>

Brecht, Berthold. *Saint Joan of the Stockyards.* Modern Plays, 1932.

Castor, Helen. *Joan of Arc: A History.* Harper Collins, 2016. ISBN-10:0062384406.

Gordon, Mary. *Joan of Arc.* Penguin, 2000.

Harrison, Kathryn. *Joan of Arc: A Life Transfigured.* New York: Random House, 2015. ISBN-10: 0767932498.

Taylor, Craig. *Joan of Arc: La Pucelle.* Translated and Annotated. Manchester University Press, 2006.

Tchaikovsky. *The Maiden of Orleans.*

Twain, Mark: *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc.* Project Guttenberg.

Wagenknecht, Edward, ed. Joan of Arc: *An Anthology of History and Literature*. Creative Age Press, 1948. (Collection of stories, poems, essays by some of 19th and 20th century luminaries from across Europe and U.S.)

Warner, Marina. *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism.* Oxford University Press, 1981, revised with new preface, 2013.

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Zoom Meeting ID: 9656 6199 5511

PASSWORD: 923047

ZOOM LINK: <https://newberry.zoom.us/j/96561995511>

February-March 2021