

ECU's Programs in GREAT BOOKS,
MEDIÉVAL AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES and
WOMEN'S STUDIES*

are pleased to welcome

Dr. Julia Simms Holderness
(Michigan State & Harvard Universities)

**“QUESTIONING A FEMINIST CLASSIC:
A NEW LOOK AT CHRISTINE DE PIZAN'S
BOOK OF THE CITY OF LADIES (1405)”**



British Library, ms. Harley 4431, fol. 323r

**4PM, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH
BATE 1026**

*This event is also generously co-sponsored by the Departments of English and Philosophy. Contact: A. Terjanian, TerjanianA@ecu.edu.

Individuals requesting accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should contact the Department for Disability Support Services at least 48 hours prior to the event at (252) 737-1016 (Voice/TTY).

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Christine de Pizan’s *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405) has become a feminist classic, and it is easy to see why. Writing more than six centuries ago, Christine argues for women’s potential as thinkers, leaders, warriors, and visionaries; more ambitious than Virginia Woolf, she offers women a whole city of their own. Her book is part utopia, part revisionist history, and all entertainment. Recent scholarship has explored the author’s feminism in depth, with one notable exception – its possible motivations. Christine’s defense of women does not extend to actual social reform, so why did she bother to write it? Is it all a dream? To find an answer, we will take a closer look at Christine’s work as well as some of her major influences, Augustine and Boethius.

Julia Simms Holderness trained at Yale, the University of Geneva, the École Normale Supérieure (Paris), and Johns Hopkins. She has published numerous articles on medieval and Renaissance literature and culture, and is currently completing a book on Christine de Pizan’s idea of consoling memory. She teaches at Michigan State University, and is currently a Visiting Scholar at Harvard.

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