

# THE JAMES VARDAMAN CHAIR LECTURE

## *Finding Her Voice* FEMALE PREACHING IN PREMODERN EUROPE



*featuring*

**Dr. Carolyn Muessig**

Chair of Christian Thought  
University of Calgary

Decrying the role of women as teachers, the canon lawyer Raymond of Peñafort (d. 1275) lamented that “a woman taught one time and the whole world was overthrown.” The perception of female voices as charming and deceptive instruments that led men into sin abound in medieval warnings against the dangers of women teaching. The same criticism effortlessly connected itself to discussions of women as preachers. Biblical verses like 1 Timothy 2: 12 — ‘But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over the man; but to be in silence’ — were invoked to underline emphatically that women were not permitted to preach. Yet, despite ubiquitous and negative discourses on women’s alleged pedagogical and pastoral inabilities, there were women who did preach in the premodern world. This presentation interrogates the evidence of women’s speech in sermons and preach acts. It focuses primarily on sermons composed by women and how they portray the female voice in a context of preaching and teaching. In so doing, this presentation aims to demonstrate how women carved out alternative models of female pedagogy that enabled them to voice their teachings, embodying biblical narratives with the spoken word.

**AUG  
29**

**ARMSTRONG BROWNING LIBRARY  
HANKAMER TREASURE ROOM,  
MAIN FLOOR**

**3:30 PM  
5:00 PM**

LEARN MORE

