

Day-to-day schedule 2026

Hildegard von Bingen

Medieval Chant



13 - 17 July 2026

Utrecht

The Netherlands

2 ECTS

**Registration
deadline**

31 May 2026



Universiteit Utrecht



UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED
SCIENCES
UTRECHT



university of the arts utrecht

<https://utrechtsummerschool.nl/courses/art-music/hildegard-von-bingen-medieval-chant>

Course director: Dr. Hanna Rijken, cshrijken@codarts.nl / C.S.H.Rijken@Tilburguniversity.edu

For any questions regarding the organization of the Summer School, your enrollment, housing or social programme, please contact the Utrecht Summer School office: info@utrechtsummerschool.nl.

Description

Discover the inspiring music of Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179), one of the most influential women of the Middle Ages, in this one-week summer school in the heart of Utrecht. Her *Symphonia Harmoniae Caelestium Revelationum* is widely regarded as a masterpiece of Western music history.

This immersive programme invites participants to explore Hildegard's musical, theological and mystical legacy through a rich combination of academic lectures and chant workshops. Participants will work intensively with Hildegard's repertoire, from antiphons and sequences to hymns and a *Kyrie*, studied both in modern transcription and directly from the neumes. Special attention will also be given to the contemporary relevance of her texts, particularly her insights in spirituality, ecology and interconnectedness.

The course offers a balanced mix of academic lecturers on central themes in her texts and practical training. Key themes include Hildegard's mysticism, theology and spirituality; the semiology of chant; manuscripts; medieval notation; and the historical context of monastic music and liturgy.

Daily sessions are directed by leading scholars and musicians from the Netherlands and abroad, specialising in medieval chant, Hildegard studies, liturgy, mysticism and theology.

One of the highlights of the week is a final informal performance held in a medieval church in Utrecht, where participants can experience the resonance of medieval chant within an acoustic and ecclesial setting. The programme also includes an excursion to Museum Catharijneconvent to explore medieval religious art and its connection to monastic music and theology.

In addition to academic and musical training, the programme offers social activities that encourage exchange and collaboration among participants. By the end of the course, students will have gained a broad overview of Hildegard's oeuvre, medieval chant practice and the wider cultural and spiritual world of the twelfth century.

The Hildegard von Bingen Medieval Chant Summer School welcomes students, scholars and practitioners interested in vocal music, medieval chant, theology, spirituality and manuscript traditions.

Target audience

- Students of musicology, medieval studies, theology, cultural studies or religious studies interested in medieval chant and Hildegard von Bingen.
- Singers, conductors and instrumentalists interested in early music and historical performance practice.
- Clergy, theologians and practitioners interested in Hildegard's mysticism, theology and spirituality.
- Anyone with an interest in medieval culture, music and spirituality.

Aim of the course

Upon completing the course, students will:

- Have become familiar with the central aspects of Hildegard's music, theology, spirituality and the medieval context.
- Be able to interpret and analyse Hildegard's chants, both in transcription and in their original notation.
- Be able to reflect on Hildegard's oeuvre within the broader fields of medieval studies, liturgical and ritual studies, manuscript culture and cultural heritage and the relevance of her texts nowadays.
- Develop an understanding of the interaction between sacred music, mysticism, liturgy and sacred space.

Lecturers

- Dr Dinah Wouters (Utrecht University)
- Dr Rens Tienstra (Utrechts Conservatorium, Conservatorium van Amsterdam)
- Dr Kitty Bouwman (Titus Brandsma Instituut Nijmegen)
- Prof dr Hans Alma (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
- Drs Marsja Mudde
- Dr Ernst Jurgens, MD, OHP, MSc
- Dr Hanna Rijken (Tilburg University & Rotterdams Conservatorium Codarts)

Study load

6 contact hours per day, about 20 hours of preparatory self-study will be required.

Costs

- Course fee: €425.00
- Included: Course + course materials
- Housing fee: €275.00
- Housing provider: Utrecht Summer School

Additional information

As this course starts on Monday, 13 July 2026, students are welcome to check in at the Utrecht Summer School accommodation from Saturday, 11 July 2026, and onwards.

The accommodations provided by the Utrecht Summer School are simple and comparable to standard student housing, offering students an authentic university experience. Each participant will have a private room. Participants who prefer alternative accommodations are welcome to make their own arrangements at nearby hotels, such as NH Hotels Utrecht or Van der Valk (De Biltsche Hoek). More budget-friendly options include Airbnb, Hello Stay, or Utrecht City Apartments.

Day-to-day schedule

Version 1 (25-5-2026) **Changes may still occur!**

For descriptions, explanations, and further information regarding the teachers, please see page 7 onwards. Information regarding the locations will follow in due course.

Day 1: Monday 13 July

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Plompstorengracht/ Drift/Pieterskerk</i>
9.30-11.00	Welcome & morning rehearsal		
11.00-11.15	<i>Coffee & tea break</i>		
11.15-11.45	Introduction: Hildegard of Bingen		
11.45-12.15	Rehearsal		
12.15-12.30	Vision & Miniature		
	<i>Lunch break</i>		
13.15-14.00	Hildegard's Music & Theology (I): Symphonia, Manuscripts and Musical Notation	Dr Hanna Rijken	
14.00-14.15	Neumen Lab		
14.15-14.45	Rehearsal		
14.45-15.00	<i>Coffee & tea break</i>		
15.00-16.30	Medieval Music: Gregorian Chant and Hildegard	Dr Rens Tienstra	
16.30-16.45	Final Chant		

Day 2: Tuesday 14 July

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>		<i>Plompstorengracht/ Drift/Pieterskerk</i>
9.30-11.00	Morning rehearsal		
11.00-11.15	<i>Coffee & tea break</i>		
11.15-11.45	Hildegard's Music (II): Liturgical Functionality and Musical Form		
11.45-12.15	Rehearsal		
12.15-12.30	Vision & Miniature		
	<i>Lunch break</i>		

13.15-15.00	Reading Hildegard: Prophecy, Allegory, and Music	Dr Dinah Wouters	
15.00-15.15	<i>Coffee break</i>		
15.15-15.30	Neumen Lab		
15.15-16.30	Afternoon rehearsal		
16.30-16.45	Final Chant		

Day 3 Wednesday 15 July 2026

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>		<i>Plompstorengracht/ Drift/Pieterskerk</i>
9.30-10.15	Morning rehearsal		
10.15-10.30	<i>Coffee & tea break</i>		
10.30-12.15	Singing Hildegard von Bingen's music: embodiment and modal singing technique	Drs Marsja Mudde	
12.15-12.30	Vision & Miniature		
12.30-13.15	<i>Lunch break</i>		
13.15-15.00	The female figures Caritas and Wisdom in Hildegard of Bingen	Dr Kitty Bouwman	
15.00-15.15	<i>Coffee & tea break</i>		
15.15-15.30	Neumen Lab		
15.30-16.30	Afternoon rehearsal		
16.30-16.45	Final Chant		

Day 4: Thursday 16 July 2026

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Plompstorengracht/ Drift/Pieterskerk</i>
9.30-11.00	Morning rehearsal		
11.00-11.15	<i>Coffee & tea break</i>		

11.15-12.15	Hildegard's child oblation and her songs	Dr Kitty Bouwman	
12.15-12.30	Vision & Miniature		
12.30-13.15	<i>Lunch break</i>		
13-15-14.00	Hildegard's Music (III): The Sequences of Hildegard in the Context of Medieval Theology and Music	Dr Hanna Rijken	
14.00-15.15	Afternoon rehearsal: Hildegard's sequences		
15.15-15.30	<i>Coffee & tea break</i>		
15.30-17.00	Medieval Liturgical Art		<i>Museum Catharijne Convent Utrecht</i>

Day 5: Friday 17 July 2026

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>		<i>Plompstorengracht/ Drift/Pieterskerk</i>
9.30-10.15	Morning rehearsal Viriditas		
10.15-10.30	<i>Coffee & tea break</i>		
10.30-12.15	Hildegard's Viriditas: Ecology, Health and Human Flourishing	Dr Ernst Jurgens	
12.15-12.30	Vision & Miniature		
12.30-13.15	<i>Lunch break</i>		
13.15-14.30	Hildegard, Dorothee Sölle and Ecological Crise	Prof Hans Alma & Jan Linssen	
14.30-15.00	<i>Coffee & Tea break</i>		
15.00-16.00	Afternoon rehearsal		
16.00-16.30	Final presentation/Concert: Hildegard of Bingen – Medieval Chant		
16.30-17.00	Certification Ceremony & Drinks		

Important: on the last Friday of the course, please include the return of the keys (student housing) and a small certificate ceremony.

Course description and teachers



Medieval Music: Gregorian Chant and Hildegard

This lecture offers an introduction to the world of Western Plain Chant - the musical tradition from which Hildegard of Bingen emerged. By situating Hildegard within the broader context of medieval church music, the lecture aims to deepen participants' understanding of Hildegard's place in the history of chant.

Biography: Rens Tienstra

Rens Tienstra (PhD, MA, MMus) is a composer, conductor, musicologist, and programmer. He teaches Music Theory and Composition at Utrecht Conservatoire and Gregorian Chant at Amsterdam Conservatoire. Tienstra is an expert in the field of Gregorian chant – particularly the liturgical chant of the Low Countries – and contemporary music. His publications to date include ten books, studies of Gregorian chant, performance editions, and a handbook on chant conducting. Tienstra's articles, studies, and reviews have been published in national and international journals. www.renstienstra.nl



Reading Hildegard: Prophecy, Allegory, and Music

This session explores the literary and visionary world of Hildegard of Bingen through the lens of prophecy, allegory, and music. As part of the session, participants will engage in a close reading of several selected texts, including Hildegard's famous letter on music.

Biography: Dinah Wouters

Dinah Wouters is an assistant professor in religious studies at Utrecht University and is currently also working as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Groningen and the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome. Her research centers on the intersections between literature, religion, and the production of knowledge in the medieval and early modern periods, with a focus on Latin literature. She earned her PhD in literary studies at Ghent University with a study on the vision books of Hildegard of Bingen. The resulting book, entitled *Allegorical Form and Theory in Hildegard of Bingen's Books of Visions*, was published in 2022. The book demonstrates that Hildegard's use of allegory is not mystical but shares an affinity with early scholastic language philosophy.



Singing Hildegard von Bingen’s music: embodiment and modal singing technique

This workshop explores embodied approaches to singing the music of Hildegard von Bingen through modal vocal technique and medieval learning practices. Drawing on oral transmission, hand movements, listening exercises, technical work, and physical activation, participants will develop an embodied understanding of modal principles and their relationship to notation, cheironomy, vocal production, text imagery, and interpretation.

Biography: Marsja Mudde

Marsja Mudde is a singer, teacher, and researcher who specialises in medieval vocal repertoires, with a particular focus on the music of Hildegard von Bingen. Her work explores modal singing technique, embodiment, and interdisciplinary informed interpretation, integrating modal, historical, textual, spiritual, and performative perspectives. She co-authored, with dr Rebecca Stewart, the chapter “Hoewel ik noch notatie, noch zingen geleerd had” in the book *Zicht op Hildegard: Leven, visioenen, geneeskunst, muziek* (ed. Hans Wilbrink, 2020).



The Female Figures Caritas and Wisdom in Hildegard of Bingen

God created the world out of love (*creatio ex caritate*). Divine love has been present in creatures since eternity. Hildegard includes all creatures in the relationship with God's love: Caritas is represented as a female figure embracing the world. Caritas is the inexhaustible source from which all creatures spring forth like "sources of strength." Female Wisdom is God's partner and implementer of the work of creation. She circles around, encompassing everything in one path. In an original manner, Hildegard adds the female figures Caritas and Wisdom to God, thus making theology more inclusive. These figures show an ecological view on creation in which everything is connected and dependent on each other.

Hildegard's Child Oblation and Her Songs

In the Middle Ages, child oblation was an accepted and widespread practice in Benedictine monasteries. Many children from noble families were given away by their parents to a monastery to ensure the salvation of their family. Hildegard of Bingen was one of these children. At the age of fourteen years, her parents gave her away to the Benedictine monastery on Mount Disibod and dedicated her to God as a living sacrifice. In this monastery, she was subjected to the yoke of the Rule of Benedict and lived in an atmosphere of strict discipline. In Benedictine monasteries, child oblates received singing lessons so that they could participate in the liturgy, which took up a large part of day and night. Given Hildegard's great talent for music, her gifts must certainly have been called upon in the liturgy of the monastery church. This lecture is about Hildegard's oblation and the influence of Benedictine liturgy on Hildegard's songs.

Biography: Kitty Bouwman

Dr Kitty Bouwman is a theologian and spiritual counsellor. She is affiliated with the Titus Brandsma Institute in Nijmegen and the Ruusbroecgenootschap in Antwerp. She wrote the book entitled *Creation out of love, the figures of Caritas and Wisdom in Hildegard of Bingen*.



Hildegard's Viriditas: Ecology, Health and Human Flourishing

This talk re-examines *viriditas* in the work of Hildegard of Bingen as a concept of dynamic, relational vitality, placing it in dialogue with contemporary understandings of the human as a holobiont and with theories of biological regulation. It argues that life and health are not static states but emerge from ongoing co-regulation between organism and environment, offering a theological perspective on ecological integrity and sustainability.

Biography: Ernst Jurgens

Ernst Jurgens is a clinical occupational health physician (OHP). Trained in Systems Biology (MSc, University of Amsterdam) and Medicine (MD, Vrije Universiteit Medical Center), he has been a registered specialist in Occupational Medicine since 2001 and a certified trainer since 2018. He lectures at University Medical Center Utrecht and chairs the Planetary Health Committee of the Dutch Society of Occupational Medicine (NVAB). He led the 2022 NVAB post-COVID guidelines and contributes to the Federation of Medical Specialists ME/CFS guideline revision.



Hildegard, Dorothee Sölle and Ecological Crisis

This lecture explores the contemporary relevance of Hildegard von Bingen's thinking on 'viriditas' in the context of the ecological crisis. We will relate her thinking to that of the theologian Dorothee Sölle (1929-2003), who wrote on mysticism and resistance. The lecture will be accompanied by contemporary spiritual songs.

Biography: Hans Alma

Hans Alma is professor of spiritual care and religious humanism at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the role of imagination in people's search for meaning as well as on the development of religious humanism in relation to actual societal and ecological questions.

Biography: Jan Linssen

Jan Linssen worked as teacher in drama and advisor in drama-education. He is singer and works with groups in mantra singing and dance.



Hildegard's Music and Theology:

(I): *Symphonia*, Manuscripts, and Musical Notation

(II): Liturgical Functionality and Musical Form

(III): Her Sequences in the Context of Medieval Theology and Music

These three short lectures explore the music and theology of Hildegard of Bingen in greater depth. What is the *Symphonia*, and how is it structured? Which manuscripts preserve Hildegard's music? Facsimile editions of the manuscripts will be examined and musical notation will be studied, including neumatic notation and square notation. The course will also focus on the musical forms found in Hildegard's oeuvre and their liturgical function in Benedictine monasticism. On Thursday, special attention will be given to Hildegard's sequences. These chants will be compared with other twelfth-century sequences in order to gain a deeper understanding of Hildegard's unique musical and theological language and compositional style.

Biography: Hanna Rijken

Dr Hanna Rijken, musician and theologian, is an academic researcher in Theology & the Arts (Music) at Tilburg University and a lecturer in Liturgical Studies and Church Music at the Rotterdam Conservatorium (Codarts). She studied Church Music, Choral Conducting, and Flute at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and specialised in Medieval Chant during her Master's in Choral Conducting in Tilburg. She also studied Theology at Utrecht University, Research Master Liturgical and Ritual Studies at Tilburg University and at the PThU in Amsterdam. Her PhD thesis was published by VU University Press Amsterdam (2020). She contributed a chapter on the music of Hildegard to the book *Zicht op Hildegard*. She conducts the Vrouwenschola Hildegard (2007) connected to the Vocaal Theologen Ensemble.

LOCATIONS

Drift/Plompetoengracht/Pieterskerk

