**Hildegard of Bingen – Essay Questions**

**Arts One, Seeing and Knowing, Fall 2016**

1. Discuss the way Hildegard represents herself in her writings. Using evidence from the text to support your position, give possible reasons for why she represents herself as she does.
2. Find examples in the text that support or undermine the claim that Hildegard ushers in a new form of Christian mysticism that is both more visionary and more feminine.

1. Compare the way Hildegard represents herself in her writing with the manner in which she is represented in Margarethe von Trotta’s 2010 biopic film *Vision: From the Life of Hildegard von Bingen*. Be sure to provide evidence from both the film and the book to support your argument.
2. Hildegard is arguably the most influential female of the 12th century and was respected by the most powerful men of her time. Does it make sense to consider her as an early feminist? Be sure to base your argument on evidence from the text and explain the way you’re using the word “feminist” as part of your argument.

1. Hildegard is often referred to as a mystic thinker, but she also focuses in part on the value of reason. What role does reason play in the pursuit of knowledge in her work?
2. Hildegard’s writing is rich with visual imagery, and she also provides detailed explanations of what these images mean. What, if anything would be lost if the text didn’t have the images and just had the ideas she discusses about Christianity?
3. Find one or two of the original illustrations accompanying Hildegard’s writings. Do a close reading of the text of the vision that corresponds to that/those illustration9s), and discuss what the illustration adds to (or if it detracts from) the textual description. Include the illustration, or at least a link to it, in your essay.
4. Hildegard also employs stories in her explanations of her visions and of their meaning. Choose one of her stories and do a close analysis of it in the context of what else she says in the text.