

**Eng 219 Comparative Studies in Medieval Literature: Medieval Romance**

**Fall 2013**

**Prof. Judith Haas**

**MWF 1-1:50 – Clough 102**

**CRN 14523**

**Office Hours: MW 2-3, and by appt**

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This course examines medieval vernacular romances from the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup> century, paying attention to the context of the political struggles over marriage between the church and the aristocracy in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Topics will include the development of the Arthurian tradition and the conventions of chivalry and courtly love. While traditional gender roles abound in medieval romance, with its lance-wielding knights and ladies awaiting rescue, these narratives also provide examples of cross-dressing woman warriors and knights who require rescue from their ladies. As we read these narratives, we will pay attention to the ways in which they establish, negotiate, and sometimes subvert concepts of masculinity and femininity and challenge modern expectations about sexuality. All texts will be read in modern English translation. *This course counts towards the minor in Gender and Sexuality Studies.* **Prerequisites: English 151**

The aims of this class include (but are not limited to) the following: become familiar with the conventions and techniques of medieval romance; think critically about gender and sexual conventions of the past and present, expand your knowledge of the European Middle Ages, cultivate your ability to read and analyze literary texts

**Required Texts**

**Available at the Rhodes College Bookstore**

Chretien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances* (Penguin Classics)

Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe* (Routledge)

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Broadview Literary Texts)

*Silence* (Trans. Sarah Roche-Mahdi)

**Selections available on course Moodle site (M)**

Constance Bouchard, “Nobles and Knights”

Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*

George Duby, “Medieval Marriage”

Marie de France, selected *Lais*

Virgil, from *The Aeneid*

Mary Wack, “Lovesickness in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages”

**Requirements:**

Paper #1 (3-5 pages)	10%
Paper #2 (4-6 pages)	20%
Paper #3 (6-8 pages)	25%
Mid-term exam (50 minutes)	10%
Final exam (90 minutes)	20%
Attendance and participation	10%
Moodle posts	05%

\*\*There will be two required film screenings in the evening: Thurs 10/10 and Tues. 11/19, at 5:15pm.

The success of this seminar depends upon the active and engaged participation of everyone in the class. Make sure you come to class having carefully read the assignment and with at least one question or comment about the reading.

**Moodle posts are due by 11:00am of the class day for which they are assigned.** The point of the moodle post is to prepare you for class discussion. Therefore, **you will not get credit for late posts, and there is no “make-up” of posts.** You may choose to post a comment/observation or question about the reading itself, or you may choose to respond to or extend a comment by one of your peers. **The length of the post may vary from 2-3 sentences to a paragraph.** Your Moodle post grade will depend upon keeping up to date with your posts, not missing a post, and the quality and depth of your question/response.

**Writing Intensive:** this is a writing intensive course (F2i) which means that you will produce about 15 pages of writing over the course of the semester, and 55% of your grade will be based on formal writing. During the course of the semester, we will set aside class time to discuss specific writing issues, as they come up.

**Gender and Sexuality Studies:** this course counts as an elective towards the Gender and Sexuality Studies minor. That means that part of the work of the course will involve becoming familiar with some basic terms and concepts within the field of GSS.

**Exams** will consist of passages that you will identify and discuss briefly. The aim of the exams is to give you credit for careful and in-depth reading. Exams are designed to reward your ability to recognize and distinguish between the styles of different writers, between the types of arguments or issues that different writers address. It may be possible to pass an exam (i.e. get a C or a D) simply by memorizing certain facts about each writer; *however*, to do well on an exam (A or B), you will need to demonstrate an understanding that has substance and depth. The best way to prepare for exams is to do all the reading (making sure to read carefully, marking up your text, taking notes, writing down questions that you have) and to talk about the reading, both in class and outside of class. The more you make these readings a part of your thinking, the better you will do.

**Papers** will require you to focus on a particular reading and build an argument or interpretation that is based on careful analysis of the text in question. I will hand out paper assignments, with a choice of topics, at least 2 weeks in advance of the due date. All the papers for this course will be based upon your reading of a text that is backed up by a clear, precise, and logical presentation of textual evidence (i.e. quoted passages). I will determine paper grades based on the depth and substance of your approach and the clarity, precision, and logic of your analysis and argumentation. It goes without saying—but I will say it anyway—you will need to carefully edit and proofread all your written work to make sure that it is free of grammatical, mechanical, or typographical errors.

**Attendance/Absence Policy:** You can miss up to three *for any reason* without risking your grade. It is up to you to choose the best use of these “free” absences, and, of course, you may choose not to miss any classes at all. Except for cases of real emergency or truly extraordinary events (i.e. you are being hospitalized for the rest of the semester), *I do not wish to know the reason for your absence.* If you choose to make use of one or all three of these absences, I will assume that you are using them wisely (unless you tell me otherwise). Further absences will affect your grade in the following way (based on a 4.0 grading scale):

- 4 absences will result in a deduction of .2 from your final grade;
- 5 absences will result in a .3 deduction from your final grade;
- 6 absences will result in a .6 deduction from your final grade
- 7 absences will result in a full point (1 full letter grade) deduction from your final grade
- 8 absences will result in an “F” for the course, no matter what your starting grade was

#### **Other Policies**

- All assigned reading and writing is due at the beginning of the class for which it is assigned, unless otherwise noted. *Always bring the assigned text to class; repeated failure to do so will cause you to be marked absent.*
- Be on time to class. Repeated lateness will cause you to be marked absent.
- Failure to complete one or more assignments or to attend class on a regular basis will result in a **failing grade for the course.**
- It is your responsibility to **keep hard and electronic copies of all your written work.** In the event that an assignment gets lost on its way to me, I will expect you to be able to produce a copy right away.
- The schedule of assignments is subject to change as needed, so **if you miss a class, make sure you check with a classmate to get notes and confirm the next assignment.** Except under extraordinary circumstances, I do not

provide class notes to students who miss class. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to catch up on what you missed from someone in the class.

- **Late assignments** will be penalized a third of a letter grade *per day*. Except in the case of documented illness or family emergency (and by prior arrangement with me), papers more than a week late will receive a failing grade. Under extremely special circumstances I may grant extensions on papers, but I will **only** consider requests made **in advance of the due date**. If you believe you have a legitimate reason to ask for an extension, you must contact me **at least two class periods before** the paper is due. Requests made for extensions on the night before or the day a paper is due will not be entertained. *Email is not an appropriate medium for requesting extensions or any other kind of dispensation.*
- **Email etiquette:** I am happy to answer quick questions over email as my time permits, but you need to make sure that you have used your own resources (like the syllabus or the college web page) first. *If there is something you need to discuss or negotiate, you need to do it in person or, failing that, over the phone.* In order to prevent email from interrupting my own work, I generally set aside one part of the day to responding to it rather than monitoring it throughout the day. I reserve the right to ignore emails that transgress these rules of etiquette.
- **Unless by prior arrangement, I do not accept work that has been, or is being, submitted for another class. Such work will receive a failing grade.**
- **Citation and Documentation:** The documentation style required for this class is MLA (Modern Language Association). Guidelines for MLA style can be found in *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Many writing handbooks used in Rhodes writing seminars (such as Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*, contain abbreviated versions of the MLA guidelines. If you do not already own one of these guides, *you will need to purchase one.*
- **Plagiarism:** failure to adequately document a source of any kind, whether or not intentional, constitutes plagiarism. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student, if convicted, will receive a grade of "F" in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Honor Council. For a reminder of how to recognize and avoid plagiarism, see the Rhodes Writing Center website: [http://www.rhodes.edu/writingcenter/group\\_b/plagiarism.html](http://www.rhodes.edu/writingcenter/group_b/plagiarism.html)

#### Resources for writing papers and documenting sources:

"A Guide to Effective Paper Writing" (distributed to all Rhodes students), also available on-line:

<http://www.rhodes.edu/9076.asp>

The Writing Center (Barret Library) <http://www.rhodes.edu/4680.asp>

#### Schedule of Assignments (subject to adjustment as needed)

W 8/21	Introductions
F 8/23	Topics: A Quick and Dirty History of the Middle Ages Readings: Karras, "Sex and the Middle Ages;" Bouchard, "Nobles and Knights" <b>M</b>
M 8/26	Topics: Love and Sex in the Roman World Reading: Books 1-4 of Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i> <b>M</b> "Roman Love" handout
W 8/28	Topics: Lovesickness and Courtly Love Readings: Andreas Capellanus, from <i>The Art of Courtly Love</i> Wack, "Lovesickness in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages"
F 8/30	Topics: Chastity and self-denial Readings: selected poems Karras, pp34-44 (from "The Sexuality of Chastity")
M 9/2	Labor Day

- W 9/4            Topics: Chivalry and Romance  
 Readings:        Bouchard, “Chivalry and Nobility” **M**  
                       Marie de France, “Prologue” and “Lanval” **M**
- F 9/6            Marie de France , “Laustic,” “Le Fresne,” “Bisclavret” **M**
- M 9/9            Topics: Sexual Politics and the Politics of Marriage  
 Readings:        Duby, “Medieval Marriage” **M**  
                       Karras, “Sex and Marriage”  
                       Chretien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide* pp 37-42
- W 9/11           Chretien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide* pp 37-50
- F 9/13           Go over first paper assignment  
*Erec and Enide* pp51-71
- M 9/16           *Erec and Enide* pp71-104
- W 9/18           *Erec and Enide* pp105-122
- F 9/20           *Erec and Enide* cont’d  
 Discuss papers/writing
- M 9/23           Karras, “Men Outside of Marriage”
- W 9/25           Chretien de Troyes, *The Knight and the Lion/Yvain* pp 295-326
- F 9/27           *Yvain*, pp 326-355
- M 9/30           *Yvain* pp 355-380
- W 10/2           *Yvain* cont’d
- F 10/4            **Paper #1 due outside my office by 1pm**
- M 10/7           Karras, “Women Outside of Marriage”
- W 10/9           Midterm exam
- Thurs. 10/10 5:15: Film screening (*Unforgiven*, 1998) – Bring your own dinner; location TBA**
- F 10/11           Chivalric masculinity meets the Hollywood western  
 Discuss *Unforgiven* in class
- M 10/14           Fall Break
- W 10/16           Chretien de Troyes, *Lancelot/The Knight of the Cart* pp 207-246
- F 10/18           *Lancelot*, pp 246-272
- M 10/21           *Lancelot* pp 272-294

- W 10/23 Chretien de Troyes, *Perceval*
- F 10/25 *Perceval*
- M 10/28 *Perceval*
- W 10/30 *Perceval*
- F 11/1 *The Romance of Silence* pp 3-63
- M 11/4 **Paper #2 Due**  
**Reading TBA**
- W 11/6 *Silence* pp 103-143  
Bullough, "Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change in the Middle Ages"
- F 11/8 *Silence* pp143-153
- M 11/11 *Silence* pp153-315
- W 11/13 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
- F 11/15 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
- M 11/18 TBA/catch-up
- Tues 11/19, 5:15 pm: Film screening of *King Arthur* (2004) – Bring your own dinner; location TBA**
- W 11/20 Making King Arthur "real": discuss film
- F 11/22 Boccaccio, from *The Decameron*
- M 11/25 Chaucer, "The Miller's Tale"
- W 11/27 Thanksgiving
- F 11/29 Thanksgiving
- M 12/2 TBA
- W 12/4 **Paper #3 Due** Wrap-up and Review

**Final Exam: Saturday, December 7, 8:30 am.**