

FREN 622: Cultural Diversity in the French Middle Ages

MEMS Seminar, Spring 2013

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Office Hours: T. 12:45-1:45 and W. 12:30-1:30 and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is **an introduction** to medieval French literature all the while focusing on French **interactions** with the Arab Islamic world from the 11th to the 13th centuries. Because a discussion of interactions and hybridity requires first a solid grounding in each literary and cultural tradition, we will spend a great deal of time studying each tradition separately (with a much heavier emphasis on the French tradition because this is a French class after all). We will do two cross-cultural analyses at the end of the course so that you may gain an understanding of what it means to conduct cross-cultural research.

We will begin by addressing theoretical and critical issues essential to studying the medieval period in general and multiculturalism in the Middle Ages in particular. We will then turn our attention to a variety of literary genres (epic, romance, lyric poetry and *lais*) in order better to understand the complex dynamics of power and seduction between the East and the West, between Islam and Christianity, as well as the cultural and literary hybridity of medieval French textuality. At the end of the semester, as we analyze medieval French texts, we will juxtapose them to medieval Arabic cultural and literary material. This comparative, cross-cultural analysis will help you grasp the process of literary and cultural transmission from the Arab Islamic world to the West. All texts will be available in either modern French or English translation, and no previous knowledge of Old French or Arabic is required.

In summary, there are two main objectives in this class: One (as the title of the course indicates) is to read and analyze medieval texts in their inherently intertextual and multicultural context; second to develop both a methodology to read medieval literary texts and to learn about the tools of research available to study the Middle Ages from a cross-cultural perspective.

Required Readings:

1. The *Song of Roland* (Lettres Gothiques); if you need to use an English translation Choose the one by Glyn Burgess.
2. *Le Conte de Floire et Blancheflor* (Champion)
3. *Aucassin et Nicolette* (Garnier-Flammarion)
4. Marie de France, *Lais* (Lettres Gothiques)
5. Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain ou le chevalier au lion* (Lettres Gothiques)

6. Jean Renart, *L'Escoufle* (Champion)
7. Husain Haddawy, trans. *Arabian Nights II* (The Story of Qamar al-Zaman and Princess Boudour and the Story of Ni`ma and Nu`am)
8. Sahar Amer, *Crossing Borders: Love between Women in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures* (U Penn Press, 2008).

Requirements:

1 Long Class Presentation (30 mns including discussion)	25%
Short paper with bibliography on long presentation (3 pages)	15%
3 short presentations (5% each)	15%
Course Synthesis (3 pages)	10%
Final Paper (10 pages for Ph.D students); or final exam (for MA students and undergraduates)	35%

Long Class Presentation: 30 minutes

This presentation is intended to include a research component and supplement the reading assigned in class. For your class presentation (sign up in the first 2 weeks of the semester), you must distribute to the class your topic (*problématique*) and discussion questions **in writing one week before the date of your presentation**. You can either distribute your topic in class or send it via email to the class through Sakai. Your class presentation will last approximately 30 minutes. You will first explain to the class your topic, how you propose to interpret the text or a passage under consideration. You will give some background on available criticism on your topic and you will raise discussion questions with your classmates. Your grade will be based on your knowledge of the subject matter, on the clarity and logic of your argument, on your engagement with the critical publications on your topic and on your ability to engage the class in thoughtful discussion.

In addition, every student must turn-in a **3 page paper summarizing and outlining your presentation no later than one week after the day you presented**. That paper must include your annotated bibliography. For Ph.D students, this means a minimum of 4 articles and/or book chapters; for MA students and undergraduates, this means a minimum of 2 articles or book chapters. Everyone is encouraged to come speak to me about their presentation at least 2 weeks ahead of the date selected.

3 Short presentations: 10 minutes each

In addition to regular class participation in discussion, everyone will do 3 short in-class presentations over the course of the semester. The dates for these presentations are fixed and you will sign up the second week of class. Two of these presentations will be based on your response to the critical readings assigned, and a modified close reading of a passage of the reading of your choosing. One of these presentations will be research-based. More specific instructions about these presentations will be given in class.

There are fabulous websites and resources for medieval studies. Some of the most important ones are:

- The Internet Medieval Sourcebook < <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html> >
- The Labyrinth (medieval bibliography) <http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/>
- The Online Medieval Bibliography < <http://www.the-orb.net> >
- TEAMS (Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages):
<http://www.teamsmedieval.org/>
- General resource with multiple useful links on Old French language and literature
<http://www.medievalstudies.uconn.edu/oldfrenchresources.htm>
- *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia* < <http://webcat.lib.unc.edu/record=b4322048~S1>>
- Menocal, Maria Rosa, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells, eds. *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Al-Andalus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- *The Encyclopedia of Islam*: online; Davis Reference holds the 11 volume print 2nd edition, call number DS37 .E523.
This *Encyclopedia* has long been the definitive publication covering the whole scope of Islamic religion, life, and culture. This online version includes all of the 2nd edition and will incorporate new entries from the ongoing 3rd edition, as they are published. The Encyclopaedia highlights famous individual Muslims, tribes and dynasties, the sciences and the arts, institutions and organizations, and the history and geography of Islamic countries. The geographical scope includes the early Islamic empire, the Ottoman Empire, Islamic areas such as Iran, Central, Asia, and Indonesia, and Islam in other countries.
- *The Encyclopedia of the Quran*
- The Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East has its own site with interesting links on various aspects of the crusades (which we will not be studying this semester, but on which there is going to be an important conference in November to which I encourage to go):
<http://people.westminstercollege.edu/faculty/mmarkowski/ssclehome.html>
- For a book that deals in a fascinating way with the connections between the Crusades and the present-day conflicts in Jerusalem and the Middle East, see Karen Armstrong, *Holy War* (3rd ed, Anchor Books, 2001)

If you have NO background in medieval studies, you may want to read parts of Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale*. If you have some basic knowledge, you may prefer to look at Georges Duby (any title) or Jacques Le Goff (*Un autre moyen age*). The basic point is that you

should work on gaining some basic background on the Middle Ages during that first week of the semester. Another useful place to look would be to browse some of the websites recommended in the syllabus.

- W. Jan. 9 Introductions
 General introduction to medieval studies and the French Middle Ages
- W. Jan. 15 Early epic encounters: *The Song of Roland*, v. 1-2417 (laisse 1-177)
 1. The Oxford text, literature and ideology, the historical event, history vs. epic, authorship and date, artistry, orality
 2. Early epic encounters: Roland and Olivier: 2 types of heroism
- Readings:**
1. *The Song of Roland*, Gaston Paris, “La chanson de Roland et la nationalité française”
 2. R.H. Bloch, “842: The First Document and the Birth of Medieval Studies”
 3. Urban II call to Crusade at Council of Clermont (1095): 5 versions
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2-5vers.html>
 4. Look at the online reproduction of the Roland Oxford manuscript (Bodleian, MS Digby 23); you may click “View All” to navigate the manuscript by folio:
<http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=bodleian&manuscript=msdigby23b>
- W. Jan. 23 Early epic encounters and the Saracen Other: *The Song of Roland* v. 2418-fin (laisse 178-fin)
 1. Saracens and Franks: Opposition or mirror opposites?
 2. Women in the epic: Aude and Bramimonde
- Readings:**
1. *The Song of Roland*, review passages as needed for your presentations and class discussion
 2. Deborah S. Reisinger, “The Other and the Same: The Ambiguous Role of the Saracen in the Song of Roland,” *RLA* 9 (1997): 94-97.
 3. Sharon Kinoshita, “ ‘Pagans are Wrong and Christians are Right’: from Parias to Crusade in the *Chanson de Roland*” (Chapter 1 in her *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature*)

**Short class presentations: Response to Sharon Kinoshita, to
Deborah Reisinger**

W. Jan. 30 Invention of European Courtly Love and conventions: lyric poetry,
Andreas Capellanus

Readings:

1. Selections of troubadours poems: Guillaume IX, Jaufre Rudel, Bernart de Ventadorn, Marcabru (pdf file)
2. Andreas Capellanus: *De amore* (selections)
3. Gaston Paris: “Le Conte de la Charette” (selections)
4. Paul Zumthor, “La circularité du chant courtois”
5. Georges Duby, “A propos de l’amour que l’on dit courtois”
6. R. Howard Bloch, “Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love”
7. E. Jane Burns, “The Man Behind the Lady”
8. Georges Duby, “Le mariage dans le haut Moyen Age”

W. Feb. 6 French Courtly love: the trobairitz and women trouvères

Readings:

1. Trobairitz poetry: Lisez tous les poems, mais faites particulièrement attention aux poèmes par: La comtesse de Dia (# 2, 3); Na Castelloza (# 5, 6, 7), Biétris de Roman (# 10); Azalais de Porcairagues (# 11); Maria de Ventadorn and Gui d’Ussel (# 12); Guilielma de Rosers and Landranc Cigala (# 22)
2. Matilda Bruckner, “Fictions of the Female Voice: the Women Troubadours” in *Speculum* 67, no. 4 (Oct. 1992): 865-891 (available online via UNC library)
3. Eglal Doss-Quinby (ed), *Songs of the women trouvères* [electronic resource available via UNC Libraries]

Short class presentations: Analysis of a poem by a troubadour or a trobairitz or a woman trouvère

W. Feb 13th Class cancelled

W. Feb 20th Courtly Love and French romance: Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain*
1. Les Prologues de Chrétien : Techniques et théories de la lecture

2. Le Prologue d'*Yvain* en particulier (v. 1 - 580); Etre vs. Paraître ; Keu, Calogrenant et Yvain ; Guenièvre
2. Les femmes: Guenièvre, Lunette, Laudine; amour courtois et chevalerie ; amour vs. Mariage ;
3. L'aventure chevaleresque : Quel est le point commun de toutes les aventures d'Yvain (Faire une liste de toutes ses aventures)?

Readings:

1. *Yvain*, vv. 1-5805
2. Prologue of Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*, et de *Lancelot*
3. Roberta Kruegger, "Love, Honor and the Exchange of Women in *Yvain*: Some Remarks on the Female Reader"

W. Feb. 27

Courtly Love and French romance: Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain*

1. L'aventure chevaleresque et l'amour courtois
2. Relation Yvain-femme(s) vs. Yvain-lion vs. Yvain-Gauvain

Readings:

1. *Yvain*, vv. 5806-end
2. Evelyn Vitz, "Tales with Guts: A 'Rasic' Aesthetic in French Medieval Storytelling" *The Drama Review*, vol. 52, no. 4 (Winter 2008), 145-173.
3. All students: Choose a brief passage from *Yvain* and either individually or in groups of 2-3, prepare a performance for the class. Be prepared to explain how you are incorporating the concept of "rasaesthetics" that Vitz describes. You may find inspiration in some of these performances: Performing Medieval Narrative -- search for *Yvain* under original works.

<http://www.nyu.edu/projects/mednar/>

W. March 6

Manuscripts and medieval philology: Class session at the Wilson Library Rare Book Collection. Meet at the Wilson Library directly (2nd floor)

Readings:

1. Mary Speer, "Editing Old French Texts"
2. S. Nichols, "Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture"
3. Marie de France, *Esope*, manuscripts and interpretations.

W. March 13

Spring Break!

W. March 20

Courtly Love and Marie de France's *Lais*

Readings:

1. Lire les *Lais*
2. Prologue and epilogue of *Esope*
3. Michelle Freeman, "Marie de France's Poetics of Silence: The Implications for a Feminine *Translatio*" *PMLA*, Vol. 99, No. 5 (Oct., 1984), pp. 860-883.
4. Sharon Kinoshita, "Cherchez la femme: Feminist Criticism and Marie de France's Lai de *Lanval*"
5. Monica Green, "From 'Diseases of Women' to 'Secrets of Women': The Transformation of Gynecological Literature in the Later Middle Ages." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30.1 (2000): 5-39.

Short class presentations: on any lai of Marie de France

W. March 27

Cross-Cultural Encounters: Islamic Contributions to Western Civilization

Readings:

1. Sahar Amer, *Crossing Borders: Love between Women in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures*, chapters 1 and 2
2. Maria Rosa Menocal, chapters 1 ("The Myth of Westernness") and 2 ("Rethinking the Background") in her *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History* (in recommended list of background books)
3. Ibn Munqidh, "An Appreciation of the Frankish Character"
4. Tom Burman, "Tafsir and Translation: Traditional Arabic Quran Exegesis and the Latin Qurans of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo." *Speculum*, Vol. 73, No. 3. (Jul., 1998), pp. 703-732. (available electronically via the UNC website)
5. Watch documentary film at MRC "Mirrors of Paradise" (V 5209), 55 mns.

Short class presentations

W. April 3

Courtly Love in the Arabic tradition

Readings:

1. Selections of Hispano-Arabic poetry; *Majnun Layla*; Ibn Zaydun and Wallada
2. Ibn Hazm, Selections *Tauq al-Hamama*
3. *Aucassin et Nicolette* and Nizami's *Majnun Layla*
4. Nizami. *The Story of Layla and Majnun*. Trans. R. Gelke. Boulder: Shambhala, 1978.
5. Ali Ashgar Seyed-Gohrab. *Layli nd Majnun: Love, Madness and Mystic Longing in Nizami's Epic Romance* (Bill, 2003).

W. April 10

Le Conte de Floire et Blancheflor and *The Thousand and One Nights* (The Story of *Ni`ma and Nu`am*)

Readings:

1. General Prologue of *The Thousand and One Nights*
2. *The Story of Ni`ma and Nu`am* (*Arabian Nights II*, pp. 247-262)

Short class presentations

W. April 17

The Escoufle and *The Thousand and One Nights* (The Story of *Qamar al-Zaman and Princess Boudour*)

Readings:

1. Jean Renart, *L'Escoufle*
2. *The Story of Qamar al-Zaman and Princess Boudour*
3. Sahar Amer, chapters 4 and 5, *Crossing Borders: Love between Women in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures*

W. April 24

1. Finish discussion of Jean Renart and *Story of Qamar al-Zaman and Princess Boudour*

2. Conclusions; evaluations

Final Paper due or Final Exam: Saturday, May 4th 4-7 pm

