

IS104: Medieval Literatures and Cultures: Forms of Love

Instructors: Tracy Colony, David Hayes (Coordinator), Geoff Lehman, Katalin Makkai, Andrea Ottone, Hans Stauffacher

Course Description

In this course, we trace the development of the concept of love from its roots in diverse intellectual traditions to its cultural prominence in the European Middle Ages. Perhaps in no other time or place has a single concept held as much cultural power. Yet the meaning of love was sharply contested: both the cloister and aristocratic court claimed love as its domain. Moreover, the secular and religious meanings of love were capable of a rich interplay. Focusing upon this interplay, the course traces the journey of a specific form of love (*fin'amor* or so-called “courtly love”) from Muslim-ruled, multicultural al-Andalus to Occitania (Provence) to Northern France in the 12th century. Although the Medieval world seems alien to us, and in many ways has come to stand for what we now reject, its images and ideals of love formed, as C.S. Lewis says, “the background of European literature for eight hundred years” and can still be felt in the love lives of ordinary people today.

Requirements

Course Readings

Required books (you must have your own copy of the specific edition with this ISBN)

* Course Reader

* Dante, *Vita Nuova*. Trans. Mark Musa. Oxford University Press, 2008.

ISBN-13: 978-0199540655

Library and Book Purchase Policies

Students are expected to purchase the required books. Students on financial aid can request to loan required books from the library. All other readings will be in the course reader. **Attending class without the relevant text, in a printed form, will negatively affect your participation grade.**

Class preparation

Preparing for class means reading thoughtfully and engaging with the text. It is good practice to underline and take notes in the texts themselves as you read. When the text is a story, master the names of the characters and the plot before the seminar begins. Ask yourself, “What is this text’s idea or vision of love? What do I think about this idea or vision?”

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, **two absences will not affect the participation grade or require documentation.** If serious circumstances require further absences, you must consult your seminar leader.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

We will be using the Zoom application for online lectures. **During any online session, as a courtesy to your lecturer, please have your camera on.**

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPRING 2022: Some students may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. You should consult your seminar leader for remote participation or make-up options.

Use of Electronics

To facilitate a focused and engaging seminar discussion, the use of electronic devices during class time is only allowed for disability accommodation. Using electronics in class will negatively affect your seminar grade. If you have a disability accommodation please inform your instructor at the beginning of the rotation.

Writing Assignments and Assessment

Over the course of the term you will participate in **two** seminar groups, each led by a different seminar leader. In each of these “rotations” you will submit an essay and be graded for your participation.

Participation: Students should arrive to each class on time and prepared. Being prepared means

- (1) having completed the assigned reading (in the specific editions indicated)
- (2) bringing to class a **non-electronic copy** of the assigned reading, and
- (3) being ready to initiate and to contribute to discussion.

Engagement in class discussion should be regular as well as productive; quantity alone will not favorably affect the participation grade.

Essays: **In this core class, like *Plato’s Republic and Its Interlocutors*, our focus is upon our direct encounter with primary texts. Please avoid the use of secondary material in your writing.** However, if

you do use secondary sources whether electronic or printed, you must provide clear citations to avoid plagiarism.

Writing Exercises: Individual seminar leaders may also assign short writing tasks or give reading quizzes. Grades for these tasks will be included in class participation for that rotation.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers: The instructors of this course have agreed on the following policy. Extensions may be granted by the individual seminar leaders, but the request must be made at least 24 hours before the essay deadline. Late essays will be marked down one-third of a letter grade (e.g., from A- to B+) for every 24 hours they are late, down to a maximum grade of a C.

Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours. Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown: Seminar participation grade: 30% (15% per rotation); Midterm Essay (2000 words): 30%; Final Essay (3000 words): 40%

Schedule

Sources of Medieval Literatures and Cultures

- Week 1: Feb 1 Plato, from *Symposium*, 172a-180c, 189c-193e
Feb 3 Plato, from *Symposium*, 198a-end
Week 2: Feb 8 Ovid, from *Metamorphoses*
Feb 10 Gospel of John 1-11
Week 3: Feb 15 Gospel of John 12-21
Feb 17 1 Corinthians

From al-Andalus to Occitania (Provence)

- Week 4: Feb 22 Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (930-1037) "Treatise on Love"
Feb 24 Ibn Hazm (994-1064), selection from *The Ring of the Dove*
Week 5: Mar 1 Lecture: Love songs of al-Andalus (Geoff Lehman) Start time 7:30pm on zoom.
Mar 3 Love songs of al-Andalus
Week 6: Mar 8 **Federal Holiday**
Mar 10 al-Ghazālī, selection from *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (1058-1111)
Week 7: Mar 15 Lecture on al-Ghazālī, selection from *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (Sophia Vasalou, University of Birmingham) Start time 7:30pm on zoom
Mar 17 Early Troubadours of Occitania: William of Aquitaine (1071-1127) & Marcabru (fl. 1130-1148)

Midterm essay due: Saturday, March 19, by 11:59pm.
Seminar rotation change

A 12th Century Love Story

Week 8: Mar 22 *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, Letter 1 (*Historia Calamitatum*) (c. 1132)

Mar 24 *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, Letters 2-3

Week 9: Mar 29 *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, Letters 4-5

Love Songs of Men and Women

Week 9: Mar 31 Troubadours: Jaufre Rudel (fl. 1130-1150) and Bernard de Ventadorn (1152-1195?)

Week 10: Apr 5 Troubadours: Comtessa de Dia (fl. c. 1175) and Na Castelloza (fl. early 13th c.)

Apr 7 Modern Rock-Pop music session (seminar leader's selections)

April 11 -18 Spring Break

Late 12th Century Love Literature

Week 11: Apr 19 Marie de France (fl. 1160-1215), "Lanval" and "Yonec"

Apr 21 Andreas Capellanus, selection from *De Amor* [*The Art of Courtly Love*] (c. 1185)

Week 12: Apr 26 Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide* (c. 1170), pgs. 37-71

Apr 28 Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, pgs. 72-97

Week 13: May 3 Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, pgs. 98-122

May 5 A Later Troubadour: Arnaut Daniel (fl. 1180-1200)

Dante: A Synthesis of Traditions

Week 14: May 10 Dante: *Vita Nuova* (1293), I-XXI (pgs. 3-42)

May 12 Dante: *Vita Nuova* XXII-XXLII (pgs. 43-84)

May 16-20 Completion Week

Final essay due: Friday, May 20, by 11:59pm