

IS104: Medieval Literatures and Cultures: Forms of Love

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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.

All sessions marked as a lecture on the schedule will take place in hybrid or online formats. Information regarding these sessions will be communicated in advance. Since we will be using the Zoom application for online lectures, it is necessary to have this app. on your devices. During any online session, it is strongly encouraged to have your camera on. If you cannot attend class because of a covid related issue, an alternative will be made available. For the most up-to-date information on covid related policies, please refer to the covid information on the BCB website.

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: Jan 31 Plato, *Symposium*, pgs. 233-254
Feb 2 Plato, *Symposium*, pgs. 254-end

Week 2: Feb 7 Song of Songs
Feb 9 Ovid, selections from *Metamorphoses* ("Daphne," "Narcissus and Echo," "Pomona and Vertumnus," "Iphis and Anaxarete")

Week 3: Feb 14 Gospel of John 1-11
Feb 16 Gospel of John 12-21

Week 4: Feb 21 1 Corinthians

From al-Andalus to Occitania (Provence)

Feb 23 Ibn Sina (930-1037) "A Treatise on Love"

Week 5: Feb 28 Ibn Hazm (994-1064), selections from *The Ring of the Dove*:
"Author's Preface," "The Signs Of Love," "On Falling In Love At First Sight,"
"On Falling In Love After Long Association," "Of Compliance," "Of Opposition,"
"Of The Reproacher," "Of The Helpful Brother," "Of Union"
Mar 2 Love songs of al-Andalus

Week 6: Mar 7 Al-Ghazālī, selection from *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (1058-1111): *Love, Longing, Intimacy and Contentment*, chapters 2-3
Mar 9 Early Troubadours: Guillaume IX (William of Aquitaine) (1071-1127)

Suggested selection (your seminar leader may make a different selection):

4 "I shall make a *vers*..."

#6 "Now when we see the meadows..."

#7 "I shall make a new song..."

#8 "I begin, rejoicing already..."

#9 "In the sweetness of this new season..."

Second translation: "Farai un vers pos mi sonelh"/"I'll make a vers while I'm asleep here" = #4

Second translation: "Ab la dolchor del temps novel"/"In the new season / when the woods burgeon" = #6

Your seminar leader may also give a listening assignment.

Week 7: Mar 14 Early Troubadours: Marcabru (fl. 1130-1148)

Suggested selection (your seminar leader may make a different selection):

#10 "By the fountain in the orchard..."

#14 "The other day, beside a row of hedges..."

#16 "I say he's a wise man..."

p. 65 "Pus mos cortages s'as clartits" "Since my courage is clarified"

Second translation. p. 35 "L'autrier jost' un sebisa"/"Under a hedge the other day" = #14

Second translation. p. 57 "Per savi'l tenc ses doptansa"/"No doubt at all" = #16

The musical notation for "L'autrier jost" is in the Reader.

Your seminar leader may also give a listening assignment.

Mar 16: Lecture (TBA): The Music of the Troubadours

Midterm essay due: Saturday, March 18, by 11:59pm.

Seminar rotation change

A 12th Century Love Story

Week 8: Mar 21 "The Calamities of Peter Abelard" (c. 1132)

Mar 23 *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, First and Second Letters

Week 9: Mar 28 *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Letters

Troubadours and Troubairitz

Mar 30 Troubadours: Jaufré Rudel (fl. 1130-1150) and Bernard de Ventadorn (1152-1195?)

Suggested selection (your seminar leader may make a different selection):

Jaufré Rudel:

#19 "When the waters of the spring"

#20 "When days are long in May"

Second translation p. 70 = "Quan lo rius de la fontana"/"When, from the spring..." = #19

Second translation p. 68 = "Lanquan li jorn lonc en mai"/"When the days are long in May" = #20

Third translation: "A love afar" (W.D. Snodgrass) = #20 = p. 68

The musical notation for "Lanquan li jorn" is in the Reader.

Your seminar leader may also give a listening assignment.

Bernard de Ventadorn:

#22 "My heart is so full of joy"

#26 "When I see the lark moving"

Second translation p. 76 = "Can vei la lauzeta mover"

The musical notation for "Can vei la lauzeta mover" is in the Reader.

Your seminar leader may also give a listening assignment.

April 3 – 7 Spring Break

Week 10: Apr 11 Troubadour: La Comtesse (Beatriz) de Dia (fl. c. 1175) and Na Castelloza (fl. early 13th c.)

Suggested selection (your seminar leader may make a different selection):

Comtesse de Dia:

#33 "It will be mine to sing..."

I, p. 83: "I thrive on youth and joy..."

Second translation p. 85 = #33 "Of things I'd rather keep in silence..."

The musical notation for "A chanter" is in the Reader.

Na Castelloza:

p. 172 "Friend, if I found you charming..."

p. 175 "I should never have any desire to sing..."

p. 178 "A great while you will have stayed away..."

p. 181 "Whatever joy may come to me from love..."

Your seminar leader may give a listening assignment.

Apr 13 Modern Rock-Pop music session (seminar leader's selections)

Late 12th Century Love Literature

Week 11: Apr 18 Marie de France (fl. 1160-1215), "Lanval" and "Yonec"

Apr 20 Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide* (c. 1170), pgs. 37-71

Week 12: Apr 25 Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, pgs. 72-97

Apr 27 Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide* (no new reading): Lecture (Katalin Makkai)

Week 13: May 2 Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, pgs. 98-122

May 4 A Later Troubadour: Arnaut Daniel (fl. 1180-1200)

Suggested selection (your seminar leader may make a different selection):

#38 "The rough wind"

#39 "To this sweet and pretty air"

#40 "The firm desire that enters"

Second translation: "The Bitter Air" = #38

Second translation: "En cest sonnet coind' a leri"/ "On this gay and slender tune" = #39

Your seminar leader may also give a listening assignment.

Dante: A Synthesis of Traditions

Week 14: May 9 Dante: *Vita Nuova* (1293), I-XXI (pgs. 3-42)

May 11 Dante: *Vita Nuova* XXII-XLII (pgs. 43-84)

May 16-20 Completion Week

Final essay due: Friday, May 19, by 11:59pm