

IS104: Medieval Literatures and Cultures: Forms of Love

Seminar leaders: Giulia Clabassi, Tracy Colony, Sinem Kiliç, David Hayes (Coordinator), Geoff Lehman, Katalin Makkai, Sasha Shapiro

Course coordinator: David Hayes (d.hayes@berlin.bard.edu)

Course times: Tuesday/Thursday 10:45-12:15 (Groups A, B, C); 14:00-15:30 (Groups D, E, F, G)

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. Note that section 14.3.1.4 of the Student Handbook specifies that the submission of work from AI platforms is considered cheating.

Accommodations

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

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. Absences may be excused with a doctor’s note or evidence of a bureaucratic appointment. For each unexcused absence beyond two, .1 will be deducted from the final grade.

At Bard College Berlin, missing more than 30% of classes can result in a failing grade, 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 the lecture hall.

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. Otherwise, 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

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.

Essay: In this core course, 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. ChatGPT or other AI tools may not be used under any circumstances.

Exam: This course has a final exam. The exam will require you to write short essays in response to specific questions. You may use your books and hand-written notes during the exam. The use of electronic devices of all kinds is prohibited. If you have a disability accommodation that allows for extra time on exams, please be sure to inform your seminar leader beforehand.

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: Extensions may be granted by the individual seminar leaders. Otherwise, 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%; Midterm essay (2000 words): 30%; Final exam: 40%

Schedule

Sources of Medieval Literature and Culture

Week 1

Jan 27 Plato, *Symposium*, original pgs. 233-254
Jan 29 Plato, *Symposium*, original pgs. 255-274

Week 2

Feb 3 "Plato's *Symposium* and Introduction to the Course," lecture (David Hayes):
Lecture Hall 10:45 and 14:00. **Reading assignment: Plato, *Symposium*, original pgs. 275-286**

Feb 5 The Song of Songs (also known as The Song of Solomon)

Week 3

Feb 10 Gospel of John 1-11
Feb 12 Gospel of John 12-21

Week 4

Feb 17 1 Corinthians

Literature of Al-Andalus and Islamic Philosophy of Love

Feb 19 Ibn Sina (930-1037) "A Treatise on Love"

Week 5

Feb 24 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"
Feb 26 Al-Ghazālī, selection from *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (1058-1111): *Love, Longing, Intimacy and Contentment*, chapters 2-3

Medieval Music of Love

Week 6

Mar 3 "Love Songs of al-Andalus and the Troubadours," lecture (Geoff Lehman):
Lecture Hall 10:45 and 14:00. **Reading assignment: Love songs of al-Andalus**

Mar 5 Love songs of al-Andalus

Week 7

Mar 10 Early Troubadours: Guillaume IX (William of Aquitaine) (1071-1127) and Marcabru (fl. 1130-1148)

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

Guillaume (William of Aquitaine):

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.

Marcabru:

#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. original p. 35 “L’autrier jost’ un sebisa”/“Under a hedge the other day”

= #14

Second translation. original 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 12 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 original p. 70 = “Quan lo rius de la fontana”/“When, from the spring...” =
#19

Second translation original 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 = original 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 original 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.

Week 8

Mar 17 Troubairitz: La Comtessa (Beatritz) de Dia (fl. c. 1175)

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

#33 “It will be mine to sing...”

I, original p. 83: “I thrive on youth and joy...”

Second translation original p. 85 = #33 “Of things I’d rather keep in silence...”)

The musical notation for “A chanter” is in the Reader.

Your seminar leader may also give a listening assignment.

Mar 19 Troubairitz: Na Castelloza (fl. early 13th c.) and Bieiris de Romans (early 13th c.?)

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

Na Castelloza:

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

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

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

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

Bieiris de Romans:

“Lady Maria, in you merit and distinction...” (trans. Bogin)

Week 9

Mar 24 Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179): #1 “O vis eternitatis” (“Responsory for the Creator”), #25 “Karitas habundat” (“Antiphon for Divine Love”),
#57 “O dulcissime amator” (“Symphony of Virgins”)

Your seminar leader may also give a listening assignment.

Mar 26 Modern Rock-Pop music session (your seminar leader will provide an assignment)

Midterm essay due: Friday, March 27, by 11:59pm

Spring break Monday 3/30-Monday 4/6

A 12th Century Love Story

Week 10

Apr 7 *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, “The Calamities of Peter Abelard” (c. 1132)
Apr 9 *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, First and Second Letters

Week 11

Apr 14 *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Letters

Love in the Cloister

Apr 16 Aelred of Rivalta, *Spiritual Friendship*, Prologue and Book One (1164-67)

Late 12th Century Love Literature

Week 12

Apr 21 Marie de France (fl. 1160-1215), “Lanval” and “Yonec”
Apr 23 Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide* (c. 1170), Course Reader pgs. 416-435 (up to “Here ends the first movement.”)

Week 13

Apr 28 Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, Course Reader pgs. 435-472 (up to “Now they had confirmed their love . . .”)
Apr 30 Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, Course Reader pgs. 472-490

Dante: A Synthesis of Traditions

Week 14

May 5 Dante, *Vita Nuova* (1293), I-XXI (pgs. 3-42)
May 7 “Dante’s *Vita Nuova*” (Tracy Colony): **Lecture Hall 10:45 and 14:00** **Reading assignment:** Dante, *Vita Nuova* XXII-XLII (pgs. 43-84)

Completion Week: May 11-15

Wednesday May 14, 2pm: Final Exam for all sections