

UC Berkeley
Online

Spring 2021
MWF 10-11am

English 110: Love in the Middle Ages

Instructor: Spencer Strub
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Office hours by appointment



New York, Morgan Library MS M.245 fol. 11r

Course Description

Set aside the stereotypes: there's more to medieval love than gallant knights and fair maidens. In this course, we'll traverse the many ways one could write about love before 1400. Some medieval authors cultivated divine love, while others told dirty jokes; some celebrated marriage, while others derided it; some regulated gender expression, while others subverted its norms—and sometimes the same author did all these things at once.

We will focus on works written in France and England during the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. In twelfth-century Paris, a particular idea of romantic love came into being; by the fourteenth century, this idea—what we now call “courtly love”—had become the subject of satire and debate across Europe. Because these two moments in the history of love emerge from broader cross-cultural exchange, we will attend to their antecedents in medieval Arabic and Hebrew love literature, as well as the classical and scriptural sources all three traditions shared. As we explore these texts, we will uncover medieval ideas about love, sexual ethics, and gender, but we will also pose transhistorical questions about consent, agency, and desire. In order to do so, we must ask how literary forms from the lyric to the epic condition our understanding of love and its consequences. The class will end with a sustained engagement with Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, one of the great works of love-literature of any era.

Readings in Middle English will be read in the original; all other readings will be in modern English translation. No previous experience with medieval literature is necessary or expected. This course satisfies the pre-1800 requirement for the English major.

Course Format and Attendance

This class will meet synchronously via Zoom three times a week. We meet on “Berkeley time,” starting 10 minutes after the hour. Recorded lectures will occasionally substitute for synchronous meetings. Check bCourses often: each week, I will update our course landing page with detailed directions on the week’s reading, assignments, and links to recordings and supplementary materials.

All class meetings will be recorded and posted on bCourses, but participation is part of your grade. If you are frequently unable to attend class because of work, family obligations, or time-zone issues, I understand—but let me know ASAP so we can arrange alternative opportunities to participate.

Required Texts

Please purchase or rent the following books:

- *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, trans. Radice (Penguin, 2004), ISBN: 9780140448993
- Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler (Penguin, 1991), ISBN: 9780140445213
- Marie de France, *Lais*, trans. Waters (Broadview, 2018), ISBN: 9781554810826
- Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, ed. Barney (Norton, 2006), ISBN: 9780393927559

Because most of these works are in translation, the specific edition is important. If you own another edition and would like to use it, please clear it with me first. The texts above will also be available via the course e-reserves. All other readings will be posted to bCourses.

Assignments for the Course

- **Writing exercises – 10% each** Three short exercises in research and analysis.
- **Essay 1 – 25%** A short (4 pp.) critical essay.
- **Essay 2 – 35%** A longer (6-8 pp.) literary-critical essay.
- **Short discussion posts – 5%** Very short reading responses, due by the end of the day Thursday on weeks without other writing due.
- **Participation and attendance – 5%**

Prompts and rubrics for written assignments will be posted well in advance. All work should be submitted via bCourses. Late work will lose a third of a letter grade each calendar day. I am profligate with extensions; email me *before the deadline* to ask for an extension if you need it.

Availability

- Don’t hesitate to email me. I will do my best to answer promptly: within 24 hours during the week, 48 during weekends and holidays. Please check your own email often.
- Office hours will be held via Zoom. Sign up on bCourses by following these directions:
 1. Navigate to the **Calendar** tab.
 2. Click **Find Appointment** on the righthand side of the page. You will be prompted to select a course. Choose this one; a list of available appointments should then appear. Feel free to email me to find another time if necessary. Don’t be shy! I want to talk to you!
- Finally: remote instruction is a trial-and-error process. Tell me if something isn’t working.

Academic Integrity

All papers, problem sets, quizzes and tests you submit in this class should be your own original work. All outside research should be properly attributed. **Academic dishonesty could result in a**

failing grade in the course. If you *ever* have any questions about attribution, citation, or plagiarism, please don't hesitate to ask me! I am always happy to answer those questions.

Accessibility, Campus Resources, and Content

This class is intended to be as welcoming and inclusive as possible. If you have a disability or think you may have a disability, contact the Disabled Students' Program (dsp.berkeley.edu) to request an official accommodation if you have not already done so. If there are other concerns you need to share, please inform me as soon as they arise and I will do my best to accommodate them.

If you experience food or housing insecurity during the course of the semester, contact the Basic Needs Center (basicneeds.berkeley.edu). Other resources can be found on our bCourses site.

Finally, a content note: this course will necessarily deal with upsetting material. Please don't hesitate to reach out if any issues arise.

Course Schedule

Please complete readings by the start of class on the day indicated.

Schedule and readings are subject to change: each week's schedule will be posted on bCourses.

Jan. 20	Introduction to the course
Jan. 22	Religious love: <i>Song of Songs</i> , Paul, and Ibn Sina
Jan. 25	Love lyrics of al-Andalus
Jan. 27	Troubadour, trobairitz, and trouvère lyrics
Jan. 29	Abelard, Letter 1 (<i>Historia calamitatum</i>)
Feb. 1	Heloise and Abelard, Letters 2 and 3
Feb. 3	Heloise and Abelard, Letters 4 and 5
Feb. 5	Begin Chrétien, <i>The Knight of the Cart</i> Exercise 1 due
Feb. 8	Chrétien, <i>The Knight of the Cart</i>
Feb. 10	Chrétien, <i>The Knight of the Cart</i>
Feb. 12	Begin Chrétien, <i>The Knight with the Lion</i>
Feb. 15	No class – Presidents' Day
Feb. 17	Chrétien, <i>The Knight with the Lion</i>
Feb. 19	Chrétien, <i>The Knight with the Lion</i>
Feb. 22	Marie de France, "Prologue" and "Guigemar"
Feb. 24	Marie, "Equitan," "Le Fresne"
Feb. 26	Marie, "Bisclavret," "Lanval" Exercise 2 due
Mar. 1	Marie, "Deus Amanz," "Yonec," "Laüstic"
Mar. 3	Marie, "Milun," "Chaitivel"
Mar. 5	Marie, "Chevrefoil," "Guilhelüec et Guilliadun, ou Eliduc"

- Mar. 8 Andreas Capellanus, selections from *De amore*
 Mar. 10 Selections from *Roman de la rose* and Alan of Lille, *De planctu naturae*
 Mar. 12 Selections from *Ancrene Wisse*
- Mar. 15 *Arabian Nights*, Prologue, begin story of Qamar and Budur
 Mar. 17 *Arabian Nights*, story of Qamar and Budur
 Mar. 19 *Arabian Nights*, story of Qamar and Budur
Essay 1 due
- Mar. 22-26 **Spring Break**
- Mar. 29 Christine de Pizan, *The God of Love's Letter*
 Mar. 31 Middle English practice: love lyrics and religious writing
 Apr. 2 Introduction to Chaucer and *Troilus and Criseyde*
- Apr. 5 *Troilus and Criseyde* 1
 Apr. 7 *Troilus and Criseyde* 1
 Apr. 9 *Troilus and Criseyde* 2
- Apr. 12 *Troilus and Criseyde* 2
 Apr. 14 *Troilus and Criseyde* 3
 Apr. 16 *Troilus and Criseyde* 3
Exercise 3 due
- Apr. 19 *Troilus and Criseyde* 4
 Apr. 21 *Troilus and Criseyde* 4
 Apr. 23 *Troilus and Criseyde* 5
- Apr. 26 *Troilus and Criseyde* 5
 Apr. 28 Henryson, *Testament of Cresseid*
 Apr. 30 Finish Henryson; conclusions
- May 3-7 **RRR Week**
- May 7 **Essay 2 due**