

The University of Western Ontario  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

German 3300F (cross-listed with CLC 2236F)  
LITERATURE AND CULTURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES  
Fall 2009

Instructor: Melitta Adamson  
Lecture: Tuesday 12:30-2:30pm, UC 205  
Tutorial: Thursday 1:30-2:30pm, UC 205

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND COURSE AIMS:

In the course the term 'literature' will be used in a broad sense, and will include all types of textual production. The emphasis will be on the literature and living conditions in medieval Europe, in particular Germany, France, and the British Isles. The course will focus on the period around 1200 AD when courtly society gave rise to a courtly literature in German that was more concerned with the love between man and woman than the love of God; and on the period around 1350, when the urban bourgeoisie began to play a major role in the cultural and literary life of such towns as Würzburg and Nuremberg. Although Latin was the language of the church and the universities, the vernacular was important in the Christianisation of Europe, in courtly literature (love poetry, verse epics), and in late-medieval popular literature. Representative examples of the vernacular texts will be read in modern German translation, and will include love songs by Walther von der Vogelweide, one heroic epic (*Nibelungenlied*), and two courtly epics (*Der Arme Heinrich*; *Tristan*), as well as excerpts from a variety of legal, medical, culinary, and historical texts in modern German or English translation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of the course, students are expected to have a good overview of various aspects of daily life in medieval Europe, and of different types of literary production in medieval German, Latin, and other languages. They will have written a substantial research paper on one or more literary texts in German, presented their findings on a daily life topic in class, actively contributed to class discussions, and have written two major exams synthesizing and critically analyzing the cultural and literary content of the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1 term paper in German (2,000 words).....	30%
1 oral presentation German.....	15%
Class Participation.....	10%
1 Midterm Exam.....	15%
1 Final Exam.....	30%

TEXTS:

Gies, Joseph and Francis. *Life in Medieval Castle*. Harper and Row, latest edition.  
*Nibelungenlied*. Reclam, latest edition.  
Gottfried von Strassburg. *Tristan*. Reclam, latest edition.  
*The Medieval Messenger*. Usborne Publishing, latest edition.  
Selectd poetry in photocopies.

OPTIONAL TEXT:

Amt, Emily. *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe*. Routledge, 1994.

- Sept. 10 Introduction, course outline, books
- Sept. 15/17 Architecture (castles, video), Feudal System  
**Readings:** Gies I “The Castle Comes to England”, II “The Lord of the Castle”
- Sept. 22/24 Architecture, Interior Decoration (churches, monasteries, peasant and burgher houses) **Readings:** Gies III “The Castle as a House”, VIII “The Villagers”  
**[three possible topics for oral presentation due Sept. 24]**
- Sept.29/Oct.1 Movie *The Name of the Rose*, **Reading:** Gies V “The Household”  
**[three possible topics for essay due Oct. 1]**
- Oct. 6/8 Furniture, Clothing, Fashion, Food  
**Reading:** Gies VI “A Day in the Castle”
- Oct. 13/15 Food, Travel (pilgrimages, crusades, explorations, video [Crusades I])  
**Readings:** Gies V “The Household”, XI “The Castle Year”
- Oct. 20/22 Medicine (prevention, diagnosis, remedies, surgery, bloodletting, leprosy, plague) War. **Readings:** Hartmann von Aue, *Der Arme Heinrich*; Gies IX “The Making of a Knight”, X “The Castle at War”
- Oct. 27 Sexuality, Procreation, Courtly Love  
**Reading:** Gies IV “The Lady”
- Oct. 29 **MIDTERM**
- Nov. 3/5 Love Poetry (esp. Walther von der Vogelweide), *Nibelungenlied* (history, music)  
**Readings:** *Nibelungenlied*, Gies VII “Hunting as a Way of Life”
- Nov. 10/12 Discussion of selected adventures of *Nibelungenlied*; *Tristan* (myth, different versions) **Reading:** *Tristan*
- Nov. 17/19 Aspects of daily life in *Tristan*, Arthurian Romances (*Erec*, *Yvain*), Religious Epics (Hartman von Aue’s *Gregorius*). **Reading:** *Tristan*
- Nov. 24/26 Life and literature in late-medieval towns, esp. in southern Germany
- Dec. 1/3 Waning of the Middle Ages (printing, discoveries, Reformation)  
**Reading:** Gies XII “The Decline of the Castle”, **ESSAY DUE DECEMBER 3**
- Dec. 8 Course Review, Format of the Final Exam

**Prerequisite:** German 2250E or the former German 263 or 290, or permission of the Department  
**Antirequisite:** none

**Please Note:** You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites (or have special permission from your Dean to waive the prerequisite) and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. If you are not eligible for the course, you may be removed from it at any time, and it will be deleted from your record. In addition, you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

**Plagiarism:** Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). The University of Western Ontario uses plagiarism checking software. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

### **Absenteeism**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

*UWO's Policy on Accommodation for Medical*

*Illness* (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>)

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading