

WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

German 3341F (cross-listed with CLC 3340F)  
MEDIEVAL LITERATURE AND CULTURE  
Course Outline  
Fall 20126

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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 France and Germany 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 translation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of the course, students are expected to have acquired a good overview of daily life in medieval Germany and western Europe; the tools to study, synthesize, and critically analyze the German cultural, scientific, and literary achievements in a European context; an enhanced ability to present clear, persuasive, and original arguments about them in oral and written course work; and an enhanced ability in a wide variety of skills in modern and medieval German: reading comprehension, oral comprehension, oral expression, and written expression.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1 term paper (2,000 words in German).....	30%
1 oral presentation (in 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.  
Hartmann von Aue. *Der Arme Heinrich*, Reclam, latest edition.  
*Nibelungenlied*. Reclam, latest edition.  
Gottfried von Strassburg. *Tristan*. Reclam, latest edition.  
*The Medieval Messenger*. Usborne Publishing, latest edition.  
Selected poetry in photocopies.

OPTIONAL TEXT:

Amt, Emily. *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe*. Routledge, 2010.

- Sept. 12/14 Introduction (course outline, books), Architecture (castles, video), Feudal System  
**Readings:** Gies I “The Castle Comes to England”, II “The Lord of the Castle”
- Sept. 19/21 Architecture, Interior Decoration (churches, monasteries, peasant and burgher houses)  
**Readings:** Gies III “The Castle as a House”, VIII “The Villagers”
- Sept. 26/28 Movie *The Name of the Rose*, heretical movements in the Middle Ages  
**[three possible topics for oral presentation due Sept. 26]**
- Oct. 3/5 Furniture, Clothing, Fashion, Food, **Reading:** Gies V “The Household”, “A Day in the Castle” **[three possible topics for essay due Oct. 3]**
- Oct. 10 **Thanksgiving**
- Oct. 12 Travel (pilgrimages, crusades, explorations)
- Oct. 17/19 video [Crusades I], Medicine (prevention, diagnosis, remedies, surgery, bloodletting, leprosy, plague) **Readings:** Hartmann von Aue, *Der Arme Heinrich*  
**Readings:** Gies V “The Household”, XI “The Castle Year”
- Oct. 24/26 Medicine, War. **Readings:** Hartmann von Aue, *Der Arme Heinrich*, Gies IX “The Making of a Knight”, X “The Castle at War”
- Oct. 31 Sexuality, Procreation
- Nov. 2 **MIDTERM**
- Nov. 7/9 Courtly Love, Love Poetry (esp. Walther von der Vogelweide)  
**Reading:** Gies IV “The Lady”
- Nov. 14/16 *Nibelungenlied* (history, music)  
**Readings:** *Nibelungenlied*, Gies VII “Hunting as a Way of Life”
- Nov. 21/23 Discussion of selected adventures of *Nibelungenlied*; **Reading:** *Nibelungenlied*
- Nov. 28/30 *Tristan* (myth, different versions), Aspects of daily life in *Tristan*, Arthurian Romances (*Erec*, *Yvain*) **Reading:** *Tristan*
- Nov. 10/12 Religious Epics (Hartmann von Aue’s *Gregorius*). Life and literature in late-medieval towns; **Reading:** *Tristan*
- Dec. 5/7 Waning of the Middle Ages (printing, discoveries, Reformation)  
**Reading:** Gies XII “The Decline of the Castle”, Format of Final Exam

**Antirequisite(s):** CLC 3340F/G, the former 3300F/G, 4451F/G.

**Prerequisite(s):** German 2215F/G

**Corequisite(s):**

**Pre-or Corequisite(s):** German 3305 or permission of the Department.

**Extra Information:** 3 Lecture hours, 0.5 course.

The **Department of Modern Languages and Literatures Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Modern Languages and Literatures courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures website at <http://www.uwo.ca/modlang/undergraduate/policies.html> . It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.