

## Reading and Interpretation in Medieval French Literature

Course Description: This course introduces undergraduate students to key works of literature in the Middle Ages, and addresses fundamental questions of reading and interpretation. How did medieval readers engage with written texts? How did this engagement figure into the writing process?

Aims and Objectives: At the end of the course, students will have a firm grasp of concepts of reading, interpretation, and writing in medieval France. Students will also develop close reading and textual analysis abilities, as well as discursive writing skills. The course is offered in translation.

### Requirements/Grading:

Paper in lieu of Final - 40%

Papers - 30%

Oral Presentation - 10%

Class Participation - 20%

### Required Texts:

-Horace, *Ars poetica* (excerpts in reader)

-Augustine, *Confessions* (excerpts in reader)

-*Song of Roland*

-Abelard, *Historia calamitatum* (excerpts in reader)

-Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria nova* (excerpts in reader)

-Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot, The Knight of the Cart*

-Béroul, *Tristan and Isolde*

-Marie de France, *Lays*

-Jean de Meun and Guillaume de Lorris, *The Romance of the Rose*

-McWebb, Christine, ed. *Debating the Roman de la rose* (excerpts in reader)

-Abbé Prévost, *Manon Lescaut* (excerpts in reader)

-Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*

### Course Schedule:

#### Unit I: Reading

sessions 1 and 2

Horace, *Ars poetica*

Augustine, *Confessions*

sessions 3 and 4

*Song of Roland*

#### Unit II: Interpretation

sessions 5 and 6

Abelard, *Historia calamitatum*

Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*

sessions 7 and 8

Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot, The Knight of the Cart*

sessions 9 and 10

Bérroul, *Tristan and Isolde*

Unit III: Adaptation and Authorship

Session 11

Medieval *auctoritas*

Sessions 12, 13 and 14

Marie de France, *Lays*: Prologue, Laustic, Chaitivel, Chevrefoil

Sessions 15, 16 and 17

*The Romance of the Rose*

Session 18

Christin de Pizan and the debate of the *Romance of the Rose*

Unit IV: Romanticism and its Aftermath

Session 19

*Manon Lescaut*

Session 20

Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*