

## Faculty of Arts and Letters



### ROM2210 History of French Literature from the Middle Ages I 1) Epic poetry 2) courtly novels

[30h] 3 credits

This course is taught in the 1st semester

**Teacher(s):** Colette Storms  
**Language:** French  
**Level:** Second cycle

#### Aims

The students must :

- have understood the functioning of la chanson de geste (=epic poem)/ le roman courtois (= courtly novels ) in the medieval society (Production, Public transmission and reception)
- be able to chronologically place the events and their evolution;
- understand how the literary genres dealt with came out and also which factors allowed their evolution ;
- be aware of the important sources of inspiration and the main themes dealt with in La chanson de geste (=epic poems) and le roman courtois (=the courtly novel) ;
- be able to analyse an extract, to distinguish the conventional aspects from the original elements ;
- be able to make links between the different parts of the course ;
- be able to draw what the novel and La chanson de geste (=epic poems) have brought to the modernity.

#### Main themes

The course ROM 2210 will be focussed on the birth and evolution of the main narrative genres in old French at the 12th and 13th century. La chanson de geste (=epic poems) and le roman courtois (=the courtly novel) is dealt with by the professor on an alternative basis. The students will be requested to read at least one important representative work. For each genre, the conditions of production, of transmission and reception will have to be outlined for each genre ; the appearance of each genre, its evolution and its renewal and revival throughout time will be pointed out; time and space reference points (production centre) will have to be provided; the specificity of the genre and its important themes are to be identified and the main formal characteristics are to be explained.

#### Content and teaching methods

The course is ex cathedra course, with an alternation of extract analyses and discussions on the reading of some publications.

La chanson de geste (=epic) (in 2005-2006)

The course will be dealing with the epic genre, starting with the inevitable Chanson de Roland. Some points, which have been the object of disputes between mediaevalists, will be discussed ( eg. The origin problems, the oral and written transmission, the varying nature of the works,...) The course will show the importance of the main aspects of the epic world and retrace the evolution of the genre by commentating some representative works. Finally, the main esthetic and formal characteristics of the epic genre will be analysed.

Le roman courtois (=the courtly novel) (in 2006-2007)

The course will deal with the roman courtois (=the courtly novel) between 1155 and 1240, put in its historical and sociocultural context. The origin of the genre as well as the general conditions of production, transmission and reception will be mentioned. Emphasis will be put on the diversity of the genre (antiquity novel, arthurian novel in verses and cycles of proses, the movement reported to be " realist "...) and the dynamism of the genre (thematic renewal, coming up of the prose...).

**Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)**

Prerequisites : - Having been introduced to old French.

- having followed an introductory course on the history of the French medieval literature.

- being familiar with most of the basic notions of literary writing and of different literary genres.

Oral examination or written essay (15 to 20 pages) on the work that had to be read.

**Programmes in which this activity is taught**

**ISLE3DA/ME** Diplôme d'études approfondies en philosophie et lettres  
(médiévistique)

**LITT9CE** Certificat universitaire en littérature

**Other credits in programs**

**ARKE21** Première licence en histoire de l'art et archéologie (3 credits)

**ROGE12BA** Deuxième année de bachelier en langues et littératures  
modernes, orientation générale (3 credits)

**ROM21** Première licence en langues et littératures romanes (3 credits)

**ROM22** Deuxième licence en langues et littératures romanes (3 credits)