

Faculty of Arts and Letters



ROM1524 History of French Literature from the Middle Ages

[30h] 3 credits

This course is taught in the 1st semester

Teacher(s): Colette Storms
Language: French
Level: First cycle

Aims

Students should :

- understand how *chanson de geste* / courtly romance function in mediaeval society (its production and transmission, and how it is received by the public);
- be able to place facts, events and their evolution in proper chronological perspective;
- understand in which context these literary genres were born and which factors account for their evolution;
- know the major sources of inspiration and the main themes of *chanson de geste* and courtly romance;
- be able to provide a comment on a literary excerpt and to distinguish between conventional and more original features;
- be able to see the relations between the individual chapters of the course ;
- understand why *chanson de geste* and courtly romance are a landmark on the way to modernity / modern literature.

Main themes

The subject matter of this course is the birth and development of the major narrative literary genres in Old French in the XIIth and XIIIth centuries. The lecturer will take up *chanson de geste* and courtly romance alternately every other year. Students will be required to read at least one major work of the genre. For each genre, subjects tackled will include: the context in which the works were created, transmitted and received by the public; the birth, development and renewal of the genre over time; landmarks (centres of production) and chronological reference points; specific features of the genre, main themes and formal aspects.

Content and teaching methods

The course will consist of lectures as well as analyses of literary excerpts and discussions based on the reading of a few publications.

chanson de geste (in 2007-2008)

The course will focus on the epic genre, starting from the *Chanson de Roland*. We will discuss some aspects that mediaevists have been debating about (e.g. the subject of the origins, oral and written transmission, #). The course will highlight important aspects of the epic universe and explain the evolution of the genre by means of comments on some representative works. Finally, it will analyse the main esthetic and formal features of the epic.

courtly romance (in 2006-2007)

The course will focus on courtly romance between ca 1155 and 1240 and place the genre in its historical, social and cultural context. It will touch on the genesis of the genre as well as the general production, transmission and reception context of the works. Emphasis will be put on the diversity within courtly romance (antique romance, Arthurian romance in verse and prose, so-called "realistic" trend) and on the dynamism of the genre (renewal of thematics, appearance of prose, #)

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

Prerequisites :

Students should

- have notions of Old French;
- be familiar with the main aspects of the history of medieval French literature;
- be familiar with basic notions of literary writing and literary genres.

The Baccalauréat en langues et littératures romanes normally provides the students with the necessary knowledge. However, the teacher will be more flexible with non-romanist students who enrol in the course and who do not have the same basics.

Other credits in programs

LAFR13BA	Troisième année de bachelier en langues et littératures modernes et anciennes	(3 credits)
ROGE13BA	Troisième année de bachelier en langues et littératures modernes, orientation générale	(3 credits)
ROM13BA	Troisième année de bachelier en langues et littératures françaises et romanes, orientation générale	(3 credits)