

FRANCE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

May 25 – June 11, 2009

ID 343

Course Description: This is an interdisciplinary course covering French literature, art, architecture and history of the Middle Ages as reflected in Southwestern France. The course will consist of morning classes and daily field trips while we are in Fanjeaux. Its interdisciplinary approach was chosen in order to take full advantage of the unique location of our classroom. Fanjeaux is located in the heart of Occitania, a part of France which was of vital importance in the Middle Ages. Fanjeaux was significant not only from a religious point of view--it was the heart of the Albigensian heresy and St. Dominic lived and worked here for almost ten years--but from an intellectual, artistic and political one as well. The daily field trips will take us to local sites famous for their medieval connections, from fortified towns and castles to cathedrals and museums. We shall actually visit the scene of many of the historic events discussed in class. In Paris, we will have a classroom on the move as we visit churches, museums and monuments.

Professor: Dr. Mary D. Haymann, Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Languages, Caldwell College, N.J. e-mail: mhaymann@caldwell.edu

Read and Discuss in Class: A selection of texts which represent the major areas of literary accomplishment in the Middle Ages in France: theatre, the novel and poetry. We will also read excerpts from an historical narrative of the period. These texts will help us to understand the symbolic systems unique to the culture of the Middle Ages. Our daily contact with contemporary French culture will serve as the counterpoint for grasping an idea of how French culture differs from American culture, using a cultural relativistic perspective. The cathedrals and churches as well as the museums visited will serve as illustrations of our discussions on Romanesque and Gothic art and architecture. A Course Booklet containing the texts, homework questions and reference material will be mailed to you. ***BRING THIS BOOKLET WITH YOU.***

READING LIST

I. BOOK:

BUY: Bogin, Meg. The Women Troubadours. Norton, 1980, **and bring it with you.** (You are responsible for purchasing this book. It can be found either at your local bookstore or there are used copies on the internet at a huge discount.)

II. COURSE BOOKLET: The texts listed below are included in the Course Booklet, which you shall receive by mail.

1. The Song of Roland. Translation by Charles Scott Moncrief (London, 1919). (excerpts)
2. « Le Laustic » in Lais de Marie de France. (short story)
3. « A Thirsty Deer » and « The Fox », Marie de France and « The Unicorn », Thibault de Champagne. (short poems set to music)

4. "Erec and Enide" in Arthurian Romances. Chrétien de Troyes. Penguin Classics, 1991.
5. Shirley, Janet. Trans. The Song of the Cathar Wars. Scholar Press, 1996.
(Excerpts from an historical document written during the Albigensian Crusades. The first part is by a supporter of the crusade, the second by a sympathizer of the other side, though not necessarily a defender of the heretics.)
6. « Le Miracle de Théophile » in Medieval French Plays. Trans. By R. Axton and J. Stevens. Oxford, 1971.
7. Huizinga, J. The Waning of the Middle Ages. Doubleday, 1949 (1924).
(excerpts)

III. ASSIGNMENTS: to be read and questions answered **BEFORE** the trip. These texts serve as an introduction to the subject matter covered in class and on visits. I will collect these papers during the first class and grade them.

1. The Song of Roland. *Read all information+ answer questions.*
2. The Women Troubadours by Meg Bogin: This book gives you important background for understanding the course. *Read pages 7-39 and pages 49-61 and answer the questions on the study sheet before the trip. Then read any 4 poems (pages 80-159) and indicate your favorite.*

VERY IMPORTANT

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Bring 2 notebooks:** **Notebook I** for class notes and your own notes on the readings.
2. **Notebook II** which will be a journal of all trips taken, with special notes, on places, edifices, objects in museums that have interested you. Sketches and postcards can be included.
Both these notebooks will be used as a reference source for creating your project and will be checked by the professor.
3. Ten page project, with end notes, due July 15, 2009. Please submit paper to
Dr. Mary Haymann
15 Brighton Rd.
Old Lyme, CT 06371.
Late papers are penalized. Hard copies must be mailed.
4. Final grade will be based on a.) class participation and Notebook II, the visit journal (reviewed by Dr. Haymann while in Paris and returned to the student before departure) (1/3); c.) written homework (1/3); d.) final project (1/3).

The Final Project:

Subject:

1. To be chosen the first week of class so that you can focus your attention on certain aspects of the readings that pertain to your topic and also use the field trips to look for information to enhance your subject.

2. Choose a theme that will preferably integrate two or more areas of the course. Should reflect not only reading and research but information discovered on field trips. Photos, postcards, sketches may be included.

Suggested Topics: (but not limited to)

1. Women Troubadour Poetry: choose a poetess from Meg Bogin's book. Describe her background – research town she came from, her family – and analyze the poem or poems you have read.
2. The Importance of Being Beautiful, Portraits of Women: Enide, heroine of Le Laustic (depictions of women on objects, in tapestries, etc. found in museums we visit)
3. Medieval Heroes and the Conception of Honor: Roland and Erec. Their similarities and differences (depictions of knights on objects, in tapestries, etc. found in museums we visit).
4. Customs and Habits of the Feudal World as described in the Song of Roland and the Song of the Cathar Wars and in art (stained glass windows, tapestries, miniatures).
5. The Art of War: as described in the Song of Roland and the Song of the Cathar Wars. Methods of attack, arms and armor (Cluny museum), fortifications (Montségur, Puilaurens) and towns (Carcassonne).
6. The power of the Virgin in the 12th and 13th centuries (« Miracle of Théophile », cathedrals, sculpture)
7. Church Architecture of Languedoc: compare St. Nazaire in Carcassonne with St. Cecile in Albi (architecture, decoration, and when and, perhaps, why they were built).
8. Write a play inspired by Marie de France's short story "Le Laustic".
9. Carcassonne: portrait of a city and its role in the Albigensian Crusades – architecture and history (Song of the Cathar Wars)
10. St. Dominic and how he changed Fanjeaux, yesterday and today (Cathars, founding of Prouilhe, Life of St. Dominic by Vicaire; the presence of the Dominicans in Fanjeaux today.)
11. Marriage, the conflict between love and society, as depicted in Erec and Enide and/or troubadour poetry and on objects or in tapestries.
12. Death: Francois Villon, tombs, sculpture, paintings.

QUICK CHECK LIST

Don't forget to bring the following with you.

1. Two notebooks
2. The Course Booklet
3. One book: The Women Troubadours
4. Your completed, typed assignments on The Song of Roland and The Women Troubadours.