

**MEDIEVAL STUDIES 302**  
(3 credits)  
**European Literature of the 14th to the 16th centuries**

Term 2: Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-2:00 pm

Room: Buchanan B208

Asst. Prof. Juliet O'Brien, Department of French, Hispanic, and Italian Studies

juliet.obrien@ubc.ca

Criticism: From False Semblance to Praise of Folly

Criticism pervades pre-modern European literature: across a range of kinds of writing, high and low, scholarly and popular, serious and light-hearted—even scathingly satirical. From a long continuing tradition of exegesis and commentary, through didactic works, to incorporation within works such as the *Roman de la Rose* and “quarrels” about and around them, we will see a subversive side to questioning and debate. It explores themes of social and religious critique, attacks hypocrisy and corruption, and develops ideas of privacy and identity, freedom of conscience and expression, and the figure of the public intellectual.

In this course we will explore various aspects of later Medieval literature through the theme of criticism, as expressed in a number of texts written in the Continental vernaculars and in Latin, and having an influence throughout Europe. While our principal focus will be the study of literary works, we will also explore the historical landscape in which these landmarks are situated; the cultural background against which their dramatic actions are staged; and their relationship to an integrated creative and intellectual environment—including visual and plastic arts, music, ideas, and the sciences.

Supplementary readings for term papers will include: the Old French *fabliaux*; Boccaccio, *Decameron*; Christine de Pisan and the *querelle de la Rose*; Alain Chartier, *La Belle Dame sans merci* and its *querelle*; the European Reynard tradition; Chaucer; Wycliffe; *Till Eulenspiegel*; Thomas More, *Utopia*; Rabelais; and Shakespeare.

The course is taught in English. All readings are provided in the original languages and in English translation. The term paper may be written in English or another language according to preference or program requirements.

**Required reading:**

Course website: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/mdvl302>

Guillaume de Lorris & Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose* (OUP World's Classics, trans. Horgan)  
*Renard the Fox* (UCLA, trans. Terry)

Christine de Pisan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (Penguin, trans. Brown-Grant)

Fernando de Rojas, *Celestina* (Penguin, trans. Bush)

Erasmus, *Praise of Folly* (Norton, trans. Adams)

**Requirements:** An essay of 4-5 pages due at midterm; a research project (essay of 7-8 pages) due at the end of term; class participation and regular short writing on the course blog; a final exam.

**There is no pre-requisite for this course.** MDVL 301 - Literature of the Middle Ages to 1300 - will be offered in the first semester, preceding MDVL 302. The two courses may, however, be taken separately.