

CMLT-C 523 Medieval Literature

Performance/Identity/Community

Meets with MEST-M 502

Instructor: Rosemarie McGerr

Tuesday & Thursday, 1-2:15pm

Swain East 009

This semester, we will explore what medieval lyrics, plays, and narratives -- both courtly and devotional texts -- can reveal to us about the role of performance in constructing identity and community in medieval European cultures. We will examine such topics as the relationship of musical and dramatic performance of verbal texts to the visual arts, the representation of reading as performance, and the construction of gender and faith as performance. Our common readings will include lyrics poems by Yehuda Halevi, Hildegard von Bingen, Lombarda de Toulouse, Walther von der Vogelweide, Alfonso X, and Guillaume de Machaut; plays such as *Abraham, Aucassin and Nicolette, The N-Town Mary Play*, and *The Second Shepherds' Play*; and narratives such as *The Song of the Cid, The Romance of Silence, the Decameron, The City of Ladies*, and *The Book of Margery Kempe*. Students will prepare two class presentations on critical or theoretical readings and complete an individual research project on the role of performance in a medieval text of their choice.

CMLT-C 537 The Twentieth Century I

Wallace Stevens and the Meaning of Modernism

Instructor: Herbert Marks

Tuesday & Thursday, 7:15-9:45pm

Woodburn Hall 205

In its originality, intensity, and self-conscious daring, Wallace Stevens's lifelong effort to conceive a "supreme fiction" is representative of literary modernism at its most ambitious. Though his poetry has distinctly American intonations, it was shaped by the major currents of European thought--by art and philosophy, no less than by literature. It is thus possible to take Stevens's work as a focal point for a broader exploration of twentieth-century Modernism.

Students will have a chance to read the entirety of Stevens's published writing as well as influential work by Nietzsche and Valéry, but seminar sessions will be devoted to a limited number of texts, including the great long poems, "Notes toward a Supreme Fiction" and "The Auroras of Autumn." Other writers to be assigned will depend on the special interests and linguistic competencies of the class. If numbers permit, each student will be invited to lead a brief discussion of an author whose work he or she particularly admires, using Stevens as a foil.

Stevens's writing is difficult, and the difficulty (unlike the difficulty of, say, Eliot or Joyce) only increases on closer acquaintance. That said, no other twentieth-century poet writing in English can teach us more or (to my mind, at least) afford us more pleasure.

Requirements: one seminar presentation and a final paper.

CMLT-C 580 History & Theory of Translation

Instructor: Paul Losensky

Tuesday & Thursday, 4-5:15pm

Wells Library 851

This seminar will explore the burgeoning field of translation studies and the central role of translation in the field of comparative literature. We will first look at the history of translation, with an emphasis on the English tradition, and examine some representative translations from the Renaissance to the present. Close readings of influential, “pre-theoretical” statements on translation will provide a foundation for our study of the development of translation studies since the 1960s. Concepts such as translatability, equivalence, resistance, uncertainty, naturalization, and foreignization will be analyzed in terms of various models of language, social communication, and poetics. We will also consider how the field of translation studies engages other trends in contemporary criticism, such as structuralism, deconstruction, gender studies, and post-colonialism. Participants in this seminar are expected to play an active role in leading and participating in discussions of the readings and of their own research. They are also required to prepare written discussion questions for one or more of the readings, to write a formal proposal of a seminar project, and to present the final project orally to the class before submitting it in written form. A good knowledge of English and at least one other language is a prerequisite for this seminar.