

New VLPA Summer Quarter course, 5 credits:

Medieval Literature and Culture: The Age of Cathedrals

GERMAN 298 A/CHID 270 B/C LIT 251 A/ENGL 210 B

Summer Quarter 2015 A-term

MWF 12:30-2:20

Dr. Britta Simon

Course Description:

What are the origins of King Arthur and the Holy Grail and why are modern audiences still fascinated by stories about guilt, love, and redemption? Why did medieval audiences consider plagiarism a sign of erudition? How does a blueprint of a church represent the earth? Why do we blush in the presence of the person we fall in love with? This course will examine medieval sources to help answer these and other interesting questions. It provides an introduction to the European Middle Ages, focusing on the time from 500 to 1300 CE. We will listen to medieval music, examine Romanesque and Gothic architecture, and explore how the Middle Ages created new forms of literature, music, and the arts. And we will read Wolfram of Eschenbach's Parzival, the famous medieval courtly epic featuring knights from King Arthur's court and the quest for the Holy Grail. The course will help you understand the relationship between medieval and modern concepts and ideas and modern popular culture's take on the Middle Ages as depicted in Monty Python's "Holy Grail" and Terry Gilliam's movie "The Fisher King".

All readings are in English. No prior knowledge of modern German or medieval European history and literature is required.

