

English 461-04:

Medieval Queens and Noble Women

Fall 2011

Dr. Clermont-Ferrand

Wednesdays 7-9:45 pm

Medieval Queens and Noble Women surveys medieval texts written by and about women, from love lyrics and romances to religious treatises and devotional works. These texts share some key concerns that will direct our focus: the representation of women, gender, and sexuality; the conflict between and possible resolution of religious ideals and the secular life; the problem of women's self-definition in a culture in which definitions of creativity and authority commonly excluded women. By tracing these concerns across a range of canonical and non-canonical works, this course aims not only to illuminate the complex role of women in medieval literature and thought but also to demonstrate the vital importance of medieval writings by and about women to our own age, in which women's roles and concepts of gender continue to attract debate. To further explore this debate, some of the texts we will read are: Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, *Tristan and Iseult*, Froissart's *Chronicle*, the *lais* of Marie de France, Chaucer's *Boke of the Duchess* and *Troilus and Criseyde*.

