

### Territory Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

University of Victoria

Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies

**MEDI 360 Heroism and Romance in the German Epic**

Wednesday 11:30-12:300 Weekly Zoom Sessions

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**Office Hours (via zoom):** Tuesday 12:00-1:00 and Wednesday 1:00-2:00 or by appointment

### Course Description

This course provides a survey of some of the pivotal German medieval epics from the High- to the Late-Medieval period, with special focus on the two defining narrative models of the period: the *heroic*, rooted in mythology dating back to the Great Migration period, and the *chivalric*, rooted in Arthurian lore and legend. The overarching theme will be the figure of the stranger, and our guiding question throughout will be, “How do the heroic and chivalric epics navigate cross-cultural encounters and cross-cultural conflict?”

The German medieval hero is fundamentally a stranger: an orphan, migrant, outcast, abducted child, errant knight on a self-imposed exile to right past wrongs, etc. The very existence of these strangers is symptomatic of a world in crisis, and as these outsiders grow into their identities, they expose the social, cultural, and political flaws of the spaces through which they move and open up new ways for interpersonal and cross-cultural understanding. Whether or not conflict and bloodshed can be avoided and peace be secured very much depends on how heroic or chivalric values and codes are interpreted, upheld, or deployed in any given context.

Situating the epics in their historical, cultural, social, and political context, we will explore the recurrence and evolution of heroic storylines, myths, and characters; examine the development of Arthurian legend as it migrated into the German cultural space; and trace the development of narrative styles, themes, and motifs, as well as intertextual relations of the epics to each other.

### Required Texts (available in the UVic bookstore)

*The Nibelungenlied: Prose Translation* (Anonymous)

*Erec* (Hartmann von Aue)

*Parzival* (Wolfram von Eschenbach)

*Tristan* (Gottfried von Strassburg)

*Kudrun* (Anonymous) \*\*excerpts, posted on Brightspace\*\*

### Course Evaluation

Participation in weekly zoom sessions	20%
Four forum posts (5% each)	20%
Four quizzes (5% each)	20%
Bibliography	5%
Abstract	5%
Paper (5 pages)	15%
Group Project	15%

### Grade Scheme

90-100 A+	77-79 B+	65-69 C+
85-89 A	73-76 B	60-64 C
80-84 A-	70-72 B-	50-59 D
		0-49 F

## Course Rhythm

This term will be unusual and challenging for everybody, myself included. What I especially enjoy about teaching, and what I know I will miss most about online teaching are the social person-to-person interactions and the sense of community that develop in the learning space of the classroom. Regular attendance in the physical space of the classroom also provides a sense of routine that helps us to structure our learning and pace ourselves through the coursework. Virtual classrooms cannot replicate what happens in real physical spaces, but that does not mean that as remote learners you work alone, in isolation, disengaged from each other and from your instructors. It is possible to foster a sense of community and to have structuring, supporting anchors in virtual learning environments as well. To that end, the course is therefore mapped on a weekly rhythm that should help you keep in touch with each other and with me as well as support you in pacing yourselves through the course materials.

MEDI 360 is a hybrid course that combines weekly synchronous, real-time live meetings on Zoom with asynchronous work that you do individually or in smaller groups at your own time. To ensure that you stay connected and engaged throughout the term, there is a predictable weekly rhythm for what types of activities and interactions occur on which days of the week.

<b>Mondays</b>	<b>Tuesdays</b>	<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>Fridays</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Posting of study materials:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Recorded Lectures</li><li>○ Written notes</li><li>○ Study guides</li></ul></li><li>• Posting of assignments:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Forum Questions</li><li>○ Quizzes</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Virtual office hour <b>10:30-11:30</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Synchronous Zoom sessions <b>11:30-12:30</b></li><li>• Virtual office hour <b>1:00-2:00</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Posting / assignment of readings for the coming week</li><li>• Posting of tasks in preparation for zoom session the following week</li><li>• <b>Quizzes/Forums due, alternating weekly</b></li></ul>

## Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

In this course you will

- gain an understanding of German medieval cultural and literary history
- learn how to situate the German medieval heroic and chivalric epics in the wider European context and be able to explain how the German epics connect and overlap with their English and French counterparts as well as how they are distinct from them
- skills for literary analysis, cultural criticism, and research relevant for German medieval studies
- gain a nuanced understanding of how German medieval epics construct notions of gender, cultural and national identity as well as of foreignness and otherness
- learn how to interpret the significance of cross-cultural encounters within the cultural paradigms of the heroic and the chivalric, identify the causes of conflict, and evaluate the outcomes of conflict resolution in the respective epics within each paradigm
- work with different media (literature, music, film, visual arts) as you develop skills of analysis and critique
- discern the relevance of the medieval exploration of cultural identity and foreignness for grappling with some of the racial and cultural tensions, conflicts, and discourses in our own contemporary times

## **Course Requirements and Evaluation**

### Attendance/Participation (20%)

You are expected to attend the weekly zoom sessions regularly, to have done the assigned readings and assigned tasks in preparation for the weekly zoom session, and to participate actively in the zoom sessions. Your active participation factors into the attendance/participation grade. This includes contributing to discussions in break-out rooms, speaking up in class, or posting comments in the chat during a zoom meeting.

### Forum Posts and Quizzes (5% each, total 40%)

The quizzes and forums are intended to help you keep up with the readings and reflect on the materials that we are covering. They are also an opportunity for you to get regular feedback from me and to track your own progress on an almost weekly basis.

The quizzes are short-answer take-home exams, mostly content based and focused on the readings and lectures/course notes. In the quizzes you demonstrate that you have done the readings and reviewed the lectures/course notes.

The forums are an opportunity for you to reflect on the overarching topics covered in a two-week period and to demonstrate critical thinking and analysis skills.

Forums and quizzes are worth 5% each, they alternate weekly (i.e. every two weeks you have quiz and every other two weeks you have a forum), they are always due no later than **Friday 4pm**, and there will not be any extensions or make-up options, unless there are extenuating reasons or need for an accommodation. For the due dates of the forums and quizzes, please consult the syllabus and course calendar on Brightspace.

### Bibliography (5%)

The purpose of the bibliography is for you to develop some research skills in German medieval studies and to get started on your research paper. We will have library workshop during the zoom session on **October 21** to familiarize you with tools for research in German Studies. Using these library search tools, you are required to compile between **5-7 secondary sources**. You are also required to submit the **first draft your paper abstract along with the bibliography**. In the draft abstract you will formulate your first set of research question that will guide your library search. It is understood that your research questions will change as you work on your research, which will very likely result in more library research and a modification of the bibliography. Do not feel obliged to use all the sources listed in your original bibliography. The purpose of this assignment is to develop research skills and to get started on the research project.

The bibliography, along with the first draft of the abstract, is due on **November 4**, and you must use **MLA Citation Style** to reference your sources.

### Abstract (5%)

The abstract is a two-paragraph outline of your research paper. It should contain the title, the research question(s), a thesis statement, and an outline of your arguments. You will submit three versions of the abstract: the first draft (**Nov. 4**), the second draft (**Nov. 21**), and the final version attached to your research paper (**Dec. 18**). Only the final version will be marked. The purpose of the drafts is to help you stay connected with your research, reflect on your work, and revise your thesis and core arguments accordingly. They are also an opportunity for me to give you feedback and help you track your progress without the pressure of having a graded assignment. That said: *Your final abstract will only be graded if you also submitted the previous two drafts on time!*

### Research Paper (15%)

On October 21, I will post topics for the final research project, due on **December 18, no later than 4pm** (Pacific Time). You may choose a different topic, but in that case you must first discuss it with me and get approval for it. The research paper is **5 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt. font, NO extra line breaks between paragraphs**. Please use **MLA citation style** for in-text citations and attach a works cited list and the final version of the abstract with the paper.

Along with the paper topics, I will also post detailed instructions and a rubric for the final paper.

### Group Project (15%)

The objective of the group project is to develop a visual map of the course theme – the figure of the stranger and cross-cultural encounters/conflicts – in relation to one of the epics covered in class, covering either an entire epic or a particular episode or narrative within the epic. I will distribute suggested topics and a detailed rubric on **September 30** and we will devote the zoom session to getting set up for the group projects.

A group project is an exciting opportunity to collaborate with classmates, to learn from each other, and to think together creatively about the course material. However, group projects also challenge you to be responsible, communicative, and accountable with and towards each other. In a remote learning setting where you cannot informally check in with each other during class or easily meet over coffee or in the library, working as a group will require a bit more effort and commitment than usual.

To facilitate your group work, you may use my virtual office hours as regular time slots for doing your group work, by checking in as a group and then working together in a separate breakout room. The advantage of using this opportunity is that you can reach out and get some immediate feedback from me, since I am present anyway during the office hour.

If the time slot of my virtual office hours does not work for you, you can also set up your own zoom meetings via Brightspace.

The group project are all due on the last day of classes, **December 2 by 4pm**.

### **Course Policies**

The following section highlights particular policies established by the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies and the University of Victoria. Please refer to the [University Calendar](#) for more details on these and other university policies.

#### **University Policy on Human Rights, Equity, and Fairness**

According to the [Policy on Human Rights, Equity, and Fairness](#), the “University promotes a safe, respectful and supportive learning and working environment for all members of the university community. The University fosters an environment characterized by fairness, openness, equity, and respect for the dignity and diversity of its members. The University strives to be a place that is free of discrimination and harassment, injustice and violence. The strength and vibrancy of the University is found in the diverse life experiences, backgrounds and worldviews of all its members.”

#### **Classroom Conduct and Course Responsibilities**

With regard to the learning environment, the [University Calendar’s Policy on Creating a](#)

[Respectful and Positive Learning Environment](#) states that UVic “is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and productive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to experience, and the responsibility to help create, such an environment. In any course, the instructor has the primary responsibility for creating a respectful and productive learning environment in a manner consistent with other university policies and regulations.” All members of the course are to recognize that the instructor has the responsibility to teach the material on the syllabus, to keep the class meetings on track, and to facilitate a positive space for discussion and learning.

In terms of expectations for students, the University Calendar’s [Attendance Policy](#) states that “[a]n instructor may refuse a student admission to a lecture, laboratory, online course discussion or learning activity, tutorial or other learning activity set out in the course outline because of lateness, misconduct, inattention or failure to meet the responsibilities of the course set out in the course outline.” Aside from the course’s academic requirements, the responsibilities of this course may include but are not restricted to: using electronic devices appropriately, listening to students and the instructor without interrupting them or diminishing their personal background or experiences, remaining on topic when engaged in class discussion, and communicating respectfully with each other and your instructor (in person or in e-mail) on topics related to the course.

Students engaging in misconduct or failing to meet their course responsibilities can expect a communication from the instructor that outlines the concerning behaviour, explains how such behaviour is disrupting the learning environment, and requests that the student refrain from further disruptive behaviour. Should such instances of misconduct continue, the student will receive a formal request to meet with the Department Chair in order to seek remediation between the parties. If necessary, further procedures to resolve the situation can be found in the [Policy on Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations](#).

Please keep in mind the overlapping policy on [Online Student Conduct](#) specifies standards of behaviour in the online environment.

### **Information on Campus Supports for Student Wellbeing**

A note to remind you to take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. Resources include:

[Counselling Services](#) - Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students.

[Health Services](#) - University Health Services (UHS) provides a full-service primary health clinic for students and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives.

[Centre for Accessible Learning \(CAL\)](#) - Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the CAL as soon as possible. CAL staff members are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations.

The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course. Please note that your instructor cannot provide CAL-type accommodations without CAL documentation.

### **Add/Drop Deadlines**

It is the student's responsibility to attend to ADD/DROP dates as published in the Calendar and the Undergraduate Registration Guide and Timetable. You will not necessarily be dropped automatically from a class that you do not attend.

### **Communication**

The most efficient way to talk to me is during my scheduled online office hours and/or by appointment. If you decide to communicate by email, please be advised that I can be expected to check and answer UVic emails from Monday to Friday between 9.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Please keep this in mind when awaiting a response, especially on weekends. When emailing me, please identify yourself and your course, use a proper form of address and clearly state your question or request.

### **Absences and Incomplete Work**

Regular attendance, completion of participation check-in activities, and the punctual submission of work are important and mandatory components of completing the course successfully. The standard late penalty for submitting work late is 5% per day in this course. Please communicate with me regarding an extension in a timely manner.

### **A Note on Pronouns**

As a Department, we acknowledge and support each student's right to and preference for their own personalized pronouns in our courses.

### **Concessions and Documentation**

**These policies normally apply during a pandemic-free environment. In the interest of public safety and the proper use of medical services, students are not required to produce documentation for short-term absences. Please inform your instructors of your absences and your possible date of return (if known) so that we can work together to keep your learning on track.**

For significant periods of absence or lengthy extensions, these policies may apply: Students may ask for an academic concession, such as the rescheduling of an exam or an extension for an assignment, upon providing proper documentation of a personal or medical affliction or of a time conflict. Proper documentation would include a doctor's note or a memo from Counseling Services, or a memo from a coach, employer or faculty member. It must be dated before or close to the time of the missed work or classes.

### **Withdrawals and Deferrals**

Students who miss more than six classes for documented medical or personal reasons may still be asked to apply for a backdated withdrawal. Even when the reasons for failing to meet course requirements are valid, it is neither academically sound nor fair to others in the course to allow students missing significant amounts of work to continue in the course and receive credit. Students who miss substantial amounts of class and assignments without documentation will be asked to withdraw, as they will receive an N at the end of the semester. Students are to familiarize themselves with the [withdrawal dates in the academic calendar](#).

Students may only apply for a course deferral if a) they have serious and documented medical or personal reasons for not completing some of the end-of-term requirements and b) they have already completed practically all the course requirements at the time of their application. In situations in which a student cannot complete the course requirements and a deferral is not a viable option, he or she must have completed 80% of the course requirements for an AEG (aegrotat) grade to be assigned.

### **A Note on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

You must inform yourself about the university regulations (see the [UVic Policy on Academic Integrity in the University Calendar](#)). Students are required to abide by all academic regulations set as set out in the University calendar, including standards of academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity (e.g. cheating and plagiarism) are considered serious and may result in significant penalties.

### **Unauthorized Use of an Editor**

An editor is an individual or service, other than the instructor or supervisory committee, who manipulates, revises, corrects or alters a student's written or non-written work. The use of an editor, whether paid or unpaid, is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization. If you have questions, please ask! The main principle: do your own work according the guidelines, and all will be well.

### **Commitment to Inclusivity and Diversity**

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe learning and working environment for all of its members.