

First Year Seminar 089 Prospectus Form – Revised 2/16/2009

Semester/year the First Year Seminar (FYS) will be offered: Fall Spring Year: 2009
(as Special Topics course)

Date submitted: 3/6/2009

Submitting department(s): *Germanic Languages and Literatures*

FYS Title: *German Heroes? Knights, Tricksters and Magicians*

Instructor's name: *Ruth von Bernuth*

Rank: *Assistant Professor*

Instructor's e-mail: *rvb@email.unc.edu*

A) Faculty bio:

Provide a short paragraph with a description of yourself, including academic interests and personal information. This information will be used to promote your seminar, so feel free to brag a bit and be interesting. Please limit your bio to no more than 100 words.

Born in East Germany, Ruth von Bernuth studied at the Humboldt University in Berlin, writing her doctoral dissertation on fools and folly at the time of the Reformation. Her interests include the whole early modern period, from the 15th century through the 18th, with all its energy and upheaval, and special attention to groups outside the mainstream, such as fools, of course, and Jews. Her research focuses on Old Yiddish literature and cultural exchanges between early modern Germany's Christian majority and Jewish minority and she is at her happiest rummaging through old libraries, the dustier the better.

B) Seminar description:

Provide a description that summarizes the seminar's content and goals using terms that will be familiar to high school students or that are defined within the description. We will use this description in various materials that describe your seminar. Please limit your seminar description to no more than 150 words.

Is it a hero who kills another knight to take his suit of armor? Or would it be counted as heroic if one steals all of a blind beggar's money? How about making a deal with the devil? German literature is full of such ambivalent heroes. This course seeks to explore literary heroes in European literature of the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment. We will discuss concepts of heroism and how those ideas have changed over time. In the course of the semester, we will read a sample of translated texts such as the famous Faust book of 1587 and the Yiddish Bovo-bukh. Over the semester, in addition to class discussion of materials, students will develop their own research topic and write two papers.

C) First Year Seminar criteria:

FYS are expected to address five criteria. Each criterion is more or less relevant depending upon the seminar's subject matter, but instructors should be aware of the broader goals of our FYS program. To that end, please describe how the proposed FYS addresses the five criteria listed below. For more information on the FYS program and specific resources related to these criteria, browse the Faculty tab on the FYS web site (<http://www.unc.edu/fys>).

1. FYS should be issue-oriented and advanced, covering a wide range of knowledge, and/or engaging specific issues or advanced, cutting-edge topics. However, FYS are not introductory surveys, and they cannot stipulate a prerequisite skill or course as a condition for enrollment. How will the proposed FYS meet this difficult criterion?

All topics we will discuss will be based on fictional texts, which are, due to the medieval and early modern nature of literature, often adventurous and thrilling stories. Longer and more complicated novels like the Parzival will be reduced to the relevant chapters. Based on the story we will develop broader ideas.

2. FYS should be methodologically self-conscious in the sense of focusing on how scholars pose problems, discover solutions, resolve controversies, and evaluate knowledge. How will this criterion be met?

Students will develop their own concepts of the hero. Starting from single characteristics they have to present in an oral presentation, they are asked to compare medieval, early modern and modern ideas of heroes at the end of the semester. The course will teach them to combine approaches from several different disciplines such as history, theology and literary criticism.

3. FYS should involve active learning, encourage self-directed inquiry and enable students to take responsibility for producing knowledge. Describe the expected student participation and any plans for out-of-classroom or off-campus activities.

This course will be discussion based. The students will be asked to work in small groups, to present oral reports in pairs and on their own.

There will be visits to the Wilson library (early modern prints), the Rare book collection at the Duke Library (manuscripts), Ackland museum of Art (medieval and early modern art)

4. FYS should attempt to refine students' communication skills. How will the proposed FYS encourage communication?

The course is discussion based and students have to work in pairs in order to give oral presentations. They will also be asked to give comments on the presentation.

5. FYS are the only undergraduate courses that do not require final exams, and instructors are encouraged to use multiple testing strategies and gradable components to accommodate students' diverse learning styles and varied cognitive stages. All FYS should have a minimum of three graded assignments, with at least one assignment graded and returned to students before the 8-week deadline for dropping a course. If class participation is graded, it is recommended that it not constitute more than 10% of the final grade. How will grades be assigned in this FYS?

The students are required to read the assigned texts at home and contribute in writing to the discussion board on BlackBoard. In addition to their regular postings on BlackBoard, they will also give two oral presentations, write two essays and one creative writing piece.

Assignment 1

Oral presentation and essay: Students will work in pairs and give an oral presentation on concepts of virtues in the Middle Ages such as justice, courage, mercy or generosity. They will write up the presentation into a short essay.

Assignment 2

Creative writing piece: Students will chose one of Till Eulenspiegel's short stories and write a modern version of it.

Assignment 3

Oral presentation and essay: Students will compare medieval, early modern and modern concepts of heroes. They are encouraged to use resources outside the texts that we discussed in the class such as films (f.i. Borat and Eulenspiegel). They will write up the presentation into an essay.

Grades

Participation	15%
BlackBoard	15%
Assignment 1	
Oral presentation	10 %
Essay	15%
Assignment 2	10%
Assignment 3	
Oral presentation	10 %
Essay	25%

D) General Education requirements:

All FYS are expected to meet some General Education requirements. Please answer the following questions, which are applicable to all General Education courses:

- Does the course require at least 10 pages of writing or the equivalent in intellectual labor?

Yes: two essays (3 and 5 pages) and one creative writing (2 pages)

- For science, math, and performance courses, where little writing is typically assigned, does the course require the intellectual equivalent of at least 10 pages of writing outside of class?
- Does the course involve regular discussions?
Yes
- For science and math courses, where regular discussions may not be appropriate, does the course require students to apply their acquired knowledge to challenging problems?

E) Approaches:

Please answer the relevant questions if the proposed FYS fulfills an Approach. Proportion of course content is estimated by counting the number of class sessions or weekly themes devoted to the subjects considered. A FYS can fulfill only one Approach.

Physical and Life Sciences (PL):

- Does the course focus on scientific content and scientific method?

Social and Behavioral Sciences, non-historical (SS)

- Does the course focus on the scientific study of individual or collective behavior?
- Does the course draw on established quantitative and/or qualitative methods of analysis?

Social and Behavioral Sciences, historical analysis (HS)

- Does the course focus on the past and change over time, rather than the contemporary world?
- Does the course place human behavior in social or cultural contexts?

Visual and Performing Arts (VP)

- Does the course emphasize aesthetic content (e.g., art, architecture, music, drama, design, performance studies, film) that is nonliterary?
- Does at least 2/3 of the course content involve analysis of, or creative expression within, the visual and performing arts?

Philosophical and Moral Reasoning (PH)

- Does the course address the social dimensions of philosophical reasoning?
- If yes, does at least 1/5 of the course content address questions of morality and values?
- Does the course focus on understanding and critically assessing the truth, adequacy, defensibility, or value of the ideas being explored?

Literary Arts

- Does at least 2/3 of the course content involve the reading/analysis/creation of literary texts?

Yes

- If the course covers literature in foreign languages, the syllabus should indicate the language of instruction.

Language of instruction (and readings) is English.

F) Connections:

Please answer the relevant questions if the proposed FYS fulfills one or more Connections. Please note that proportion of course content is estimated by counting the number of class sessions or weekly themes devoted to the subjects considered.

U.S. Diversity

- On what form(s) of diversity does the course focus?
- Does the course give systematic attention to multiple social groups (at least two U.S. subcultures)?

Global Issues

- Does the course feature transnational or transregional relationships, issues, or dynamics?

Yes

- Does at least 2/3 of the course content focus on transnational content?

Yes

The World before 1750

- Would the course meet the criteria for the Historical Analysis category? (This is required.)

I would say that my course would fulfill the requirements for Historical Analysis, since I focus on heroism as a concept of human behaviour. However, it probably more closely fits the Literary Arts category.

- Does at least 2/3 of the course content focus on the period before 1750?

Yes

North Atlantic World

- How does the course introduce students to the history, geography, or culture of North America or Europe?
- Does at least 2/3 of the course content focus on a North Atlantic region?

Beyond the North Atlantic

- How does the course introduce students to the history, geography, or culture of a particular region outside the North Atlantic?
- Does at least 2/3 of the course content focus on a region or regions beyond the North Atlantic?

Experiential Education:

- If the course is proposed under the rubric of undergraduate research, is original student research at the heart of the course?
- How does the research process influence the allocation of instructional time?
- If the course is proposed for EE under one of the other rubrics (field work, service-learning, engaged creative process), does the course meet the minimum hours requirement specific to the category?
 - Field Work (at least 30 hours)
 - Service Learning (at least 30 hours)
 - Performing Arts (at least 30 hours)

G) Syllabus: Please provide a digital copy of a syllabus for this course.

Ruth von Bernuth
Office: 432 Dey Hall
Office Phone: 919-843-8863
Email: rvb@email.unc.edu

Tentative Syllabus

Course Description: Is it a hero who kills another knight to take his suit of armor? Or would it be counted as heroic if one steals all of a blind beggar's money? How about making a deal with the devil? The German literature is full of such ambivalent heroes. This course seeks to explore literary heroes in European literature of the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment. We will discuss concepts of heroism and how those ideas have changed over time. In the course of the semester, we will read a sample of translated texts such as the famous Faust book of 1587 and the Yiddish Bovo-bukh. Over the semester, in addition to class discussion of materials, students will develop their own research topic and write two papers.

Course Layout and Assignments: *German heroes? Knights, tricksters and magicians* aims to engage students in discussions about medieval and early modern German literature, culture, and history and to encourage them to think and re-think the significance of literary production beyond the confines of the written word. Students are required to read the assigned texts at home and contribute in writing to the discussion board on BlackBoard. In addition to their regular postings on BlackBoard, students will also give two oral presentations, write two essays and one creative writing piece (total of 10 pages).

Assignment 1

Oral presentation and 3-page essay: Students will work in pairs and give an oral presentation on concepts of virtues in the Middle Ages such as justice, courage, mercy or generosity. They will write up the presentation into a short essay.

Assignment 2

Creative writing piece (2 pages): Students will chose one of Till Eulenspiegel's short stories and write a modern version of it.

Assignment 3

Oral presentation and 5-page essay: Students will compare medieval, early modern and modern concepts of heroes. They are encouraged to use resources outside the texts that we discussed in the class such as films (f.i. Borat and Eulenspiegel). They will write up the presentation into an essay.

Grades

Participation	15%
BlackBoard	15%
Assignment 1	
Oral presentation	10 %
Essay	15%
Assignment 2	10%
Assignment 3	
Oral presentation	10 %
Essay	25%