FRENCH (FREN)

FREN 216a / ENGL 154a / HUMS 134a / LITR 194a, The Multicultural Middle Ages
Ardis Butterfield and Marcel Elias
Introduction to medieval English literature and culture in its European and Mediterranean context, before it became monolingual, canonical, or author-bound. Genres include travel writing, epic, dream visions, mysticism, the lyric, and autobiography, from the Crusades to the Hundred Years War, from the troubadours to Dante, from the Chanson de Roland to Chaucer. Formerly ENGL 189. WR, HU

* FREN 423a / HUMS 403a / LITR 410a, Interpretations: Simone Weil
Greg Ellermann
Intensive study of the life and work of Simone Weil, one of the twentieth century’s most important thinkers. We read the iconic works that shaped Weil’s posthumous reputation as “the patron saint of all outsiders,” including the mystical aphorisms Gravity and Grace and the utopian program for a new Europe The Need for Roots. But we also examine in detail the lesser-known writings Weil published in her lifetime—writings that powerfully intervene in some of the most pressing debates of her day. Reading Weil alongside contemporaries such as Trotsky, Heidegger, Arendt, Levinas, and Césaire, we see how her thought engages key philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic problems of the twentieth century: the relation between dictatorship and democracy; empire and the critique of colonialism; the ethics of attention and affliction; modern science, technology, and the human point of view; the responsibility of the writer in times of war; beauty and the possibility of transcendence; the practice of philosophy as a way of life. HU