LF483: Critical Encounters with the *Song of Roland* (RIL)

Assignment Background and Rationale

The *Song of Roland* is a foundational text for the French literary canon and for French narratives of nationhood. It is also a text which has become unbearable for many readers today. In this assignment, you will practice research and information literacy skills while becoming familiar with a number of the most significant recent, and less-recent, critical conversations about the *Roland* as these relate to our course's primary investigation of the relationships between literature and politics.

Assignment Learning Objectives

The objectives of this assignment are to

- gain familiarity with a series of historical interpretive and ideological perspectives on the *Song of Roland* as a medieval epic.
- enrich the precision of your ability to identify, reflect on, evaluate, and apply information within and surrounding the text.
- improve your competency preparing accurate citations; summarizing and synthesizing arguments; shaping research questions; and identifying, locating, and evaluating sources.

Assignment Instructions

1. Read the articles/chapters by Auerbach, Kinoshita, and Taylor, plus 2 more of the sources provided. All are available for download under the Content header on Blackboard. These three required readings are on Perusall, also.

2. Create annotated bibliography entries for each of the 5 you have selected, drawing on your experience in WR100, WR120, or WR150. Your annotations should be approximately 150 words long.

3. Write out a research question you have about the Song of Roland.

4. Using library finding aids and online databases of full-text articles, identify 3 new sources that might help you with your (hypothetical) research project. These might be journal articles, books, museum catalogs, Websites, archived media broadcasts, podcasts, etc.

5. Create annotated bibliography entries for those 3 sources, taking care to provide accurate and complete information. Your annotations should again be about 150 words long, this time including at least one sentence that explains why and how this source is useful or relevant to your ability to answer the research question you have posed.

**Your bibliography should follow the conventions of either MLA or *Chicago Manual of Style* formatting. My preference is for *Chicago*, which is worth learning. Both are acceptable, however whichever you choose should be applied consistently throughout your assignment. Please *do not* use APA or MHRA.

Assignment Due Dates(s) and Deliverables

Assignment Milestone	Timing & Deadlines	Brief Description of Assignment Milestone	Deliverables & How to submit them
Have read texts by Auerbach, Kinoshita, Taylor	February 18th, in class	Read and annotate required critical texts on Persuall; come to class prepared to discuss.	Persuall annotations of critical/secondary sources, as per in-app guidelines
Use class hour to work on unit assignments	February 23rd, Asynchronous workshop	Breakout rooms will be available for students who wish to make use of the class hour for peer-to-peer workshopping	Not applicable
Have finished reading Song of Roland.	February 25th, in class	In class discussion of laisses 177-298, with emphasis on Ganelon's trial	Perusall annotations of primary text, as per in-app guidelines
Submit Critical Encounters + Performance & analysis unit assignments	February 28th, 11:59pm	Completion and delivery of: -video recording -WIN close reading of selected passage -RIL annotated bibliography: 5 sources provided by Prof K, plus 3 you have located independently.	Upload to Dropbox, using stable request link on Announcements page of our Blackboard site.

Assignment: Additional Resources
There are useful handouts and Web links for you on Blackboard; Consult the "Resources for Writers and Scholars" folder under the "Resources" tab.

Prof K TIP: The best research questions tend to begin "how" or "why." As a reminder, we aim to ask questions that it is possible to answer, whether descriptively or analytically, using information that can, at least in theory, be obtained and evaluated to within reasonable degrees of doubt given the amount of time and page-space we have to work with. It is difficult or impossible to shape meaningful inquiry, even imagined, around Yes/No questions, questions whose answers are structurally unknowable (eg, the intentions of dead people), or too vast. If you are even remotely tempted to begin your paper "Since the dawn of time..." -- take that as a warning sign. If the best way to answer your question would be via confessional séances with the author--that's also a warning sign. Answering a pointed question with documented care has more impact than vague summaries or imaginings.