



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

HUMANITIES SEMINARS

Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*

Fall 2020

5 weeks, 2 hour classes

TUESDAYS 10 AM - 12 PM

OCTOBER 6, 13, 20, 27, AND NOVEMBER 3, 2020

While many medieval authors explored the topic of King Arthur (Chrétien de Troyes), all those were finally superseded by Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, the most significant Grail romance from the entire Middle Ages. Composed ca. 1205, it traces the life first of Parzival's father, Gahmuret, and then especially of Parzival himself, who is destined to become the next Grail king, but fails to ask a crucial question. This means many years of continued suffering for the world of the Grail, but ultimately the protagonist is allowed to return after he has undergone a major transformation and is ready to ascend to the Grail throne himself. Wolfram presented not only a Grail romance, but also developed innovative ideas about transcultural and trans-religious relationships. Parzival's brother Feirefiz, for example, is the product of Gahmuret and the black queen Belacane. Fundamental issues of communication, spirituality, social responsibility, knighthood, the court of King Arthur, and God are the central topics of this romance.

Required Reading:

Trans. of the original: Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival and Titurel*, trans. with notes by Cyril Edwards. Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Suggested Reading:

Sec. literature: *A Companion to Wolfram's 'Parzival'*, ed. Will Hasty (Rochester, NY: Camden House - Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1999)

Course Outline:

- October 6: Books 1 and 2
- Oct. 13: Books 3-5
- Oct. 20: Books 6-9
- Oct. 27: Books 10-12
- November 3: Books 13-16

ALBRECHT CLASSEN is University Distinguished Professor of German Studies and has published extensively on the European Middle Ages and early modern times. He edits the journals *Mediaevistik* and *Humanities Open Access*, and currently is President of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association and the Arizona Chapter of Teachers of German. He has received numerous awards and prizes for research, teaching, and service.

Text: trans. by A. T. Hatto (Penugin, 1980)