ENGLISH 9122: The Gawain-Poet and the Middle English Alliterative Revival  
Tuesdays, 9:30-12:30  
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Course Description:

The fourteenth century saw an astonishing revival of alliterative verse, a poetic form which flourished in Anglo-Saxon England but had all but disappeared from the written record by 1300. The undisputed jewel of this revival is BL MS Cotton Nero A.x, an unassuming manuscript which contains Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Cleanness (or Purity) and Patience. These four poems, probably by the same poet, will form the core of this course. We will explore each individually, the collection as a literary whole and the manuscript as the unique witness to the texts. In the second term, as students work on major research projects, we will place the collection firmly within the intellectual and poetic traditions of the revival by exploring contemporary works such as The Awntyrs of Arthure and The Parliament of the Thre Ages.

Texts:


Schedule:

Sept. 9 Getting to know you, getting to know the manuscript

Sept. 16 Pearl
Read: Pearl 1-540  

Sept. 23 Pearl
Read: Pearl 541-1212  

Sept. 30 Pearl
Macrae-Gibson, O.D. “Pearl: The Link-Words and the Thematic Structure.” Neophilologus 52 (1968): 54-64. (ProQuest)  

Translation Test 1
Oct. 7  
*Cleanness*
Read: *Cleanness* 1-1148  

Oct. 14  
*Cleanness*
Read: *Cleanness* 1149-1812  
Doob, Penelope. “Nebuchadnezzar and the Conventions of Madness.” In *Nebuchadnezzar’s Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1974) 81-7.  
Frantzen, Allen J. “The Discourse of Sodomy in *Cleanness.*” *PMLA* 111 (1996): 451-64. (JStor)

Oct. 21  
*Patience*
Read: *Patience* 1-530 (i.e. the whole poem)  

Oct. 28  
*Patience*

Translation Test 2

Nov. 4  
*Sir Gawain*
Read: *Sir Gawain* 1-1125  

Nov. 11  
*Sir Gawain*
Read: *Sir Gawain* 1126-2530  
Stevens, Martin. “Laughter and Game in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.*” *Speculum* 47 (1972): 65-78. (JStor)

Nov. 18  
*Sir Gawain*
Nov. 25  Unity of the poems (?)

Dec. 2  Unity of the poems (?)
Read:  TBD by class interest

Dec. 9  **Paper 1 due**

Exam period  We won’t have an exam

Jan. 6  *Awntyrs off Arthure*
Read:  *The Awntyrs off Arthure*  
2ndary source TBD

Jan. 13  *Awntyrs off Arthure*
Read:  *The Awntyrs off Arthure*  
2ndary source TBD

Jan. 20  *Parliament of the Thre Ages*
Read:  *Parliament of the Thre Ages*  
2ndary source TBD

Jan. 27  *Three Dead Kings*
Read:  *Three Dead Kings*  
2ndary source TBD

Feb. 3  *Saint Erkenwald*
Read:  *Saint Erkenwald*  
2ndary source TBD

Feb. 10  Research Paper Seminars
Statements of intent / interest

Feb. 17  Conference week

Feb. 24  Research Paper Seminars: Early Notes and Drafts

Mar. 3  Research Paper Seminars: Early Notes and Drafts

Mar. 10  No Tutorial: Individual Meetings throughout week
Mar. 17 Research Paper Seminars: Peer Review of Drafts
Mar 24 Research Paper Seminars: Peer Review of Drafts
Mar. 31 Research Paper Seminars: Peer Review of Drafts
April 7 No tutorial, unless we’re behind. I’ll be around for individual meetings.
April 14 **Paper 2 due.**

**Grade Breakdown:**

First term seminar leader: 6%

Paper 1 (15 pages, 4500 words) 25%

Translation tests (2 in first term) 5%

Second term seminar leader: 6%

Research Papers Drafts (1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd}) 5%

Peer review commentary 6%

Paper 2 (23 pages, 7000 words) 40%

Seminar contribution 7%

**Statement on Academic Offences:**
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)