ENG 4120F: Works of the *Gawain*-Poet

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.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course the successful student will:

1) be familar with the works of the *Gawain*-poet
2) be familiar with the critical issues surrounding the "Alliterative Revival"
3) be able to work within that critical tradition, in the original langauge of the poems
4) produce a substantial piece of original scholarship, following the conventions of the field in terms of tone, argument, method and apparatus

Texts:

The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript. 5th ed. Ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007.

The Cotton Nero A.x Project. http://gawain.ucalgary.ca/

Schedule:

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

Sept. 16   *Pearl*
                 Read: *Pearl* 1-540
                        Moorman, Charles. "The Role of the Narrator in *Pearl*." *Modern
                        Philology* 53.2 (1955): 73-81. (JStor)

Sept. 23   *Pearl*
                 Read: *Pearl* 541-1212
                        Wood, Ann D. "The *Pearl*-Dreamer and the 'Hyne' in the Vineyard
                        Parable." *Philological Quarterly* 52 (1973): 9-19. (JStor)
                 Sem.: Parables, Lapidaries

Sept. 30   *Pearl*
            Read: Olmert, Michael. "Game-Playing, Moral Purpose, and Structure of *Pearl*.
                  The Chaucer Review 21.3 (1987): 383-403. (JStor)
                Macrae-Gibson, O.D. "*Pearl*: The Link-Words and the Thematic
                  Structure." *Neophilologus* 52 (1968): 54-64. (ProQuest)
                Duggan, H.N. "Meter, Stanza, Vocabulary, Dialect." In *A Companion to
                  the* Gawain-*Poet*." Ed. Derek Brewer and Jonathan Gibson
                  (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 221-42.
            Sem.   Numerology, Dream Visions
            Translation Test 1

Oct. 7   *Cleanness*
            Read: *Cleanness* 1-1148
                Coley, David. "Remembering Lot's Wife / Lot's Wife Remembering:
                  Trauma, Witness, and Representation in *Cleanness*." *Exemplaria*
                  24.4 (2012): 342-63. (EBSCOhost)
            Sem.: Alliterative Meter, Medieval Sodom

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)
            Sem.: *Exempla*

Oct. 21   *Patience*
            Read: *Patience* 1-530 (i.e. the whole poem)
                Moorman, Charles. "The Role of the Narrator in *Patience*." *Modern
                  Philology* 61 (1963): 90-95. (JStor)
                Benson, C. David. "The Impatient Reader of *Patience*." In *Text and
                  Matter*. Ed. Robert J. Blanche, *et al.* (Troy, NY: Whitson, 1991),
                  147-61.
            Sem.: Jonah iconography / exegesis, Alliterative storms

Oct. 28   *Patience*
            Read: Anderson, J.J. "Rhetorical Strategies in *Cleanness* and *Patience*." *Leeds
                    Studies in English* n.s. 29 (1998): 9-17. (PAO Collection)
            Sem.: Biblical translation
            Translation Test 2

Nov. 4   *Sir Gawain*
            Read: *Sir Gawain* 1-1125
                      Silverstein, Theodore. "*Sir Gawain*, Dear Brutus, and Britain's Fortunate
                         Founding." *Modern Philology* 62 (1965): 189-206. (JStor)
            Sem.: The *Brut* tradition, geography of the poem

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)
            Sem.: Confession, Gawain's reputation

Nov. 18   *Sir Gawain*
            Read: Heng, Geraldine. "Feminine Knots and the Other in *SGGK*." *PMLA* 106
                         (1991): 500-514. (JStor)
                      Morgan, Gerald. "Medieval Misogyny and Gawain's Outburst against
                         Women." *Modern Language Review* 97 (2002): 265-87. (JStor)
            Sem.: Order of the Garter, Morgan le Faye

Nov. 25   Unity of the poems (?)
            Read: Hilmo, Maidie, "The Power of Images in the Auchinleck, Vernon, Pearl,
                         and Two Piers Plowman Manuscripts." In *Opening up Middle
                         English manuscripts*. Ed. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Ithaca: Cornell
                         UP, 2012), 153-206.
                      Watson, Nicholas. "The *Gawain*-Poet as a Vernacular Theologian." In *A
                         Companion to the* Gawain-*Poet*." Ed. Derek Brewer and Jonathan
                         Gibson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 293-313.
            Sem.: manuscript illuminations, authorship questions

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

Dec. 9   **Paper 1 due**

Grade Breakdown:

Seminar 'leader':   15%

Translations Tests (2 x 10%)   20%

Seminar Contribution   15%

Research paper 1 (15 pp, 4500 words)   50%

Tests
The translation tests are designed simply to do what is claims. All texts will be read in the original language and you need to know it.

Paper
The research paper must be presented in MLA style. The paper is due in hard copy (and electronically) on the date assigned. Late essays will lose 3% per day (including weekends). Essays must be submitted to Turnitin on or before the due date. Late papers may be submitted to the drop box outside the English Dept. Papers stamped "received after 4:00pm" (3:30 on Fridays) will be considered submitted on the following day (so get them in before the collection times).

Seminar Presentations
The student will lead class discussion on a predetermined topic for approximately 10-15 minutes of the class. Some research will be necessary. This is a starting point for discussion, not polished research paper. A brief written statement (approx. 2 pages) will outline your goals in the presentation and will be considered in the grade which will reflect preparedness and competence with the material.

Class Participation
Attendance is expected and more than a single unexcused absence will result in the loss of 1% per class missed. The participation grade will reflect your preparedness and your competence in in-class recitation and translation. Even if you've read the texts, sitting silently will not get you a high participation grade.

Academic Accommodation
Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed texts, exams and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home faculty and provide documentation. I will not and indeed cannot grant accommodation without notification from Academic Counseling. See: www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf

Plagiarism
Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). Plagiarism checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking (i.e. Turnitin). Students will be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Prerequisites
Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded and that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) that they have taken. If the student does not have the requisites for a course, the University reserves the right to remove the student from the course and to delete it from the student's record. This decision may not be appealed. A student will receive no adjustment to his or her fees in the event that he or she is dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Information for students
Departmental and university policies related to course work, grades, plagiarism, appeals, etc. are available on the English Department website. Please see:
http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergrd/info.html