English 511: Material Middle English

"Of hem that writen ous tofore/ The bokes duelle"

At the opening of his *Confessio Amantis*, John Gower reflects on the role of old books in informing the present, and the future. Gower is thinking in part about the contents of those old books - the stories, histories, and exempla that informed his work - but he is also, like many medieval poets, highly conscious of the impact that a manuscript culture, with all the variation in transmission that implies, has for his poetic project. Chaucer reflects similar concerns, chiding his scribe Adam, for example, for failing to copy *Troilus and Criseyd*e faithfully. As for Thomas Malory, his favourite phrase is "as the French book saith," a tic that reflects his mining of French romance for the details of his *Morte Darthur*, and that also reflects a question that has puzzled scholars for years: how did a "knight prisoner" actually access all the physical books he would have needed in the writing of his *Morte*?

In this course, we will explore texts by Gower, Chaucer, and Malory, in the context of their manuscript (and in some cases early print) history. We will make use of facsimiles to relocate texts we encounter today in modern scholarly editions, into their many "original" contexts (and we will have to think through what, exactly, "original" might mean). Seminar participants will receive hands-on training in late Middle English palaeography and codicology. Our theoretical lens will be book-historical, as we read examples of materially-inflected criticism of Middle English texts. The course will include a visit to Rare Books and Special Collections.

The objectives of this course are that, by its conclusion, participants will

- Be familiar with the way medieval books are constructed
- Be able to recognize the major western book hands
- Be familiar with the conventions of manuscript description and cataloguing
- Be able to transcribe and read late Middle English manuscripts
- Know how to access medieval manuscripts both online and in person
- Understand how the study of Middle English manuscripts contributes to the study of the texts they contain

January

    *Palaeography Boot Camp*

3      Late Antique through Uncial

        Making manuscripts: materials, construction

10     Insular and Caroline Scripts, Anglo-Saxon Scripts

https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/10.1484/J.VIATOR.1.100573

Transcription Practice (for work in pairs): the opening of the Prologue

- London, British Library, Royal MS 18 C xxii, fol. 1r (http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=40755)
- Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fairfax 3, fol. 1r (https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/7957989a-cb2b-406a-b778-cffbe3a0e076)
- Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 609, fol. 1r (https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/52656f49-28c6-47ea-a713-d58a43ad8522)
- Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 693, fol. 1r (https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/249f4ed7-924c-4312-8b56-d813286dfef2)

February

7          *Confessio Amantis*, from Book I

          Opening through 7 Deadly Sins (1 - 760)
          Florent (1407 - 1882)
          Three Questions (3067 - 3402)

Ardis Butterfield, "Articulating the Author: Gower and the French Vernacular Codex," *Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 80 - 96

https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/stable/3509018

Sonja Drimmer, "Gower *in Humilitatio*," in *The Art of Allusion: Illuminators and the Making of English Literature 1403 - 1476* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), pp. 84 - 113. NB: This is a new book, and I have yet to receive my copy (and the Library has yet to order it). IF I get it in time, I will make the chapter available. If not, then we will read the piece by Ardis Butterfield, above, instead

Transcription Practice (for work in pairs):

- London, British Library, Harley 3869, fol. 18r (http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_3869; menu to correct folio)(opening of I)
- San Marino, Huntington EL 26 A 17, fols. 6v - 7r (http://dpg.lib.berkeley.edu/webdb/dsheh/heh_brf?CallNumber=EL+26+A+17) (I.203 onwards)
- Oxford, Balliol College 354, pp. 364 - 365 (http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=balliol&manuscript=ms354)(Tale of Three Questions)
- Yale, Beinecke Library, Takamiya 32, fols. 5v - 8v (https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4187397)(Tale of Three Questions)

MMM 1: London, British Library, Harley 3869

14     Reading Week: NO CLASS

21         *Confessio Amantis*, from Books II and III

> Acis and Galatea (II. 97 - 220)
> Constance (II.587 - 1603)
> Canacee (III.143 - 360)
> Pyramus and Thisbe (III.1331 - 1494)

Roberta Magnani and Diane Watt, "On the Edge: Chaucer and Gower's Queer Glosses," *postmedieval* 9 (2018): 269 - 88

> https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/article/10.1057%2Fs41280-018-0096-0

Transcription Practice (for work in pairs):

- London, British Library Stowe 950, fol. 20v (http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=7235) (end of I, opening of II)
- New York, Columbia University Library, Plimpton 265, fol. 192 (http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/ds/columbia/images/NNC-RBML.0009024A.jpg) (end of Acis and Galatea)
- Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, Folger V.b.29, p. 47 (https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/s/89dq78) (from the story of Constance)

MMM 2: Yale, Beinecke Library, Osborn fa1

28         *Confessio Amantis*, from Books VII and VIII

> The Education of Alexander (VII.1 - 202)
> The Signs of the Zodiac (VII.955 - 1280)
> King, Wine, Women, and Truth (VII.1783 - 1984)
> Supplication to the conclusion (VIII.2217 - 3172 and revisions)

> *In Praise of Peace*

Sebastian Sobecki, "*Ecce patet tensus*: The Trentham Manuscript, *In Praise of Peace*, and John Gower's Autograph Hand," *Speculum* 90.4 (2015): 925 - 59

> https://www-journals-uchicago-edu.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/doi/10.1017/S0038713415002316

Transcription Practice (for work in pairs):

- London, British Library Egerton 1991, fol. 194r (http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/ illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=10957)(end of VII, beginning of VIII)
- London, British Library Harley 3490, fol. 196v (http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/ illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=21680)(end of VII, beginning of VIII)
- London, British Library Harley 3869, fols. 356v - 357r (http://www.bl.uk/ manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=harley_ms_3869_fs001r; menu to correct folio) (end of *Confessio*)
- Cambridge, Trinity College R.3.2, fols. 147r - 147v (http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/R_3_2/manuscript.php? fullpage=1&startingpage=1; menu to correct folio) (end of *Confessio*)

MMM 3: Cambridge, Trinity College R.3.2

March

     Geoffrey Chaucer

7    *Adam Scriveyn*

    *Canterbury Tales*

      *The General Prologue*

Linne R. Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," *Speculum* 81.1 (2006): 97 - 138

    https://www.jstor.org/stable/20463608

Lawrence Warner, "Adam," in *Chaucer's Scribes: London Textual Production, 1384 - 1432* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 13 - 29

    https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/10.1017/9781108673433.002

Transcription Practice (for work in pairs): the beginning of the *General Prologue*

- Cologny, Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cod. Bodmer 48, fol. 1r (https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/fmb/cb-0048/1r)
- London, British Library, Harley 1758, fol. 1br (http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/ Viewer.aspx?ref=harley_ms_1758_fs001r; menu to correct folio)
- London, British Library, Lansdowne 851, fol. 2r (http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/ illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=4076)
- Manchester, John Rylands Library, Rylands English 113, fol. 6r (https:// luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/7yf690)

MMM 4: Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 392D (the Hengwrt Chaucer)

MMM 5: San Marino, Huntington EL 26.C.9 (the Ellesmere Chaucer)

14      *Canterbury Tales*

        *Miller's Tale, Reeve's Tale, Cook's Tale*

Daniel Wakelin, "When Scribes Won't Write: Gaps in Middle English Books," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 36 (2014): 249 - 78

        http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/article/558386

Transcription Practice (for work in pairs): coping with the *Cook's Tale*

- Cambridge, Trinity College R.3.3, fols. 25v - 26r (http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/R_3_3/manuscript.php?fullpage=1&startingpage=1; menu to correct folio)
- Cambridge, Trinity College R.3.15, fol. 73v (http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/R_3_15/manuscript.php?fullpage=1&startingpage=1; menu to correct folio)
- London, British Library, Royal 17 D xv, fol. 66v (http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_17_d_xv_fs001r; menu to correct folio)
- Oxford, Christ Church 152, fol. 58v (https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/1c3956e2-16b2-4607-af4b-c03178242159)

MMM 6: London, British Library, Harley 7334

MMM 7: Oxford, Corpus Christi College 198

21      *Canterbury Tales*

        *Man of Law's Tale, Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, Sir Thopas, Retraction*

Rhiannon Purdie, "The Implications of Manuscript Layout in Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 41.3 (2005): 263 - 74

        https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/10.1093/fmls/cqi020

Alexandra Gillespie, "Are the *Canterbury Tales* a Book?" *Exemplaria* 30.1 (2018): 66 - 83

        https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/doi/full/10.1080/10412573.2018.1436282

Transcription Practice (for work in pairs):

- New Haven, Beinecke Library, Takamiya 32, fols. 70rv (beginning of *Wife of Bath's Prologue*) ([https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4187397](https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4187397); scroll to correct folio)
- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 392D, fols. 213v - 214r (beginning of *Sir Thopas*) ([http://hdl.handle.net/10107/4628556](http://hdl.handle.net/10107/4628556); use side menu to locate folios, then collapse side menu for full view)
- San Marino, Huntington EL 26 C 9, fol. 151v (beginning of *Sir Thopas*) ([https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/id/2667](https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/id/2667))
- London, British Library, Harley 1758, fol. 212v (the *Retraction*) ([http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=19613](http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=19613))

MMM 8: Cambridge, Trinity College R.3.19

Sir Thomas Malory

28      *Morte Darthur*

Caxton and Winchester, pp. 814 - 19
Early Arthur, pp. 3 - 112
The Roman Wars, pp. 113 - 51
Gareth, pp. 177 - 227

P.J.C. Field, "Malory's Own Marginalia," *Medium Aevum* 70.2 (2001): 226 - 39

[http://ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=5929702&site=ehost-live&scope=site](http://ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=5929702&site=ehost-live&scope=site)

Kevin Whetter, "Malory, Hardyng, and the Winchester Manuscript: Some Preliminary Conclusions," *Arthuriana* 22.4 (2012): 167 - 89

[https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/stable/43485994](https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/stable/43485994)

Transcription practice (for work in pairs):

- Manchester, John Rylands Library, Caxton, leaf 7 (opening of Preface) ([https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/k3cth7](https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/k3cth7))
- London, British Library, Additional 59678, fol. 9r (first leaf of Winchester MS; not first leaf of text) ([http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_59678_fs001r](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_59678_fs001r); menu to correct folio)
- London, British Library, Additional 59678, fol. 71r (opening of Roman Wars) ([http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_59678_fs001r](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_59678_fs001r); menu to correct folio)
- Manchester, John Rylands Library, Caxton, leaf 166 (opening of Roman Wars) ([https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/k3cth7](https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/k3cth7); menu to correct leaf)

April

4       *Morte Darthur*

        The Grail, pp. 496 - 587
        The Morte, pp. 588 - 698

Transcription practice (for work in pairs):

- London, British Library, Additional 59678, fol. 351v (early in the Grail section) (http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_59678_fs001r; menu to correct folio)
- Manchester, John Rylands Library, de Worde, leaf 445 (beginning of the Grail section) (https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/3c0297; menu to correct folio)
- London, British Library, Additional 59678, fol. 449r (beginning of the Morte section) (http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_59678_fs001r; menu to correct folio)
- Manchester, John Rylands Library, de Worde, leaf 577 (beginning of the Morte section) (https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/3c0297; menu to correct folio)

Marco Nievergelt, "Writing the "Hoole Book" of King Arthur: The Inscription of the Textual Subject in Malory's *Morte Darthur*," *Modern Philology* 113.4 (2016): 460 - 81

        https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/10.1086/685098

Assignments

Meet My Manuscript: 20%

You will be assigned a manuscript of one of the texts we are reading (either Chaucer or Gower; there is only one Malory manuscript, so we won't be drawing on it for this particular exercise). Your responsibility is to introduce the manuscript to your colleagues. There are two main parts to the exercise.

First, you should describe the manuscript. You might pay attention to its physical characteristics; its decoration; its script; its production and provenance history if known; and its current location and accessibility (this last could include your thoughts on the digital surrogate with which you'll be working).

Second, you should present some observations or questions you might have about the way the manuscript intersects with your reading of the text it contains. Some manuscripts will be "canonical," in the sense that they have been used by scholarly editors in the process of establishing the text. Others might be manuscripts that have been deemed unimportant, or uninteresting, or corrupt; despite (or indeed perhaps *because* of) that designation, they may offer new ways into the text.

You are not required to hand in any material related to this assignment. You should plan on speaking for about 15 minutes.

Reading Responses: 30% total

For all three of these Reading Response assignments, I will collect your notes at the end of the relevant class. These are at their root, participation assignments, and they will be graded accordingly. That is, I expect your notes to show signs of serious thought, and I hope that having worked through some issues ahead of time, you will be able to contribute meaningfully to class discussion. I am NOT expecting polished, connected prose in the written submissions, not fully fleshed-out comments in seminar.

  Reading Response 1: Middle

You will be assigned a section of one of the Middle English works we are reading. You should come to class with no more than one written page of notes or questions that highlight things of interest about the primary text. You should plan on speaking in the first instance for no more than 5 minutes, though of course I hope that further discussion will follow as all members of the seminar work through the materials.

  Reading Response 2: Modern

You will be assigned responsibility for one of the critical readings on the syllabus. You should come to class with no more than one written page of notes that highlight questions or thoughts you had about the reading. You should plan on speaking in the

first instance for no more than 5 minutes, though of course I hope that further discussion will follow as all members of the seminar work through the materials.

Reading Response 3: Medley

On this day, your job is to think about how the primary and secondary texts speak to each other. As usual, you will bring no more than one written page of notes, observations, queries - whatever - to class with your thoughts. You should plan on speaking in the first instance for no more than 5 minutes, though of course I hope that further discussion will follow as all members of the seminar work through the materials.

Final Paper: 50% total

Your final paper for this course will be underpinned by the work traditionally associated with a research paper, but the final product is to be the materials necessary for a 20-minute conference paper. You will hand in an 8 - 10 page script, written with an awareness of a listening/ observing audience; an accompanying visual presentation (Powerpoint, Keynote, or similar); and a list of the 10 - 15 critical works you consulted while preparing the paper, with brief (no more than 3 sentences each) annotations for each.

Fully digitized *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts (some are fragments or excerpts):

BL Harley 1758: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_1758

BL Harley 7334: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_7334

BL Royal 17 D v: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_17_D_XV

Cologny, Fondation Martin Bodmer, Bodmer 48: https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/fmb/cb-0048

Manchester, Chetham's 6709: https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/s7nq47

Manchester, John Rylands 113: https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/k25401

Manchester, John Rylands 63: https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/95fo2g

NLW Peniarth 392D: https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/the-hengwrt-chaucer/; for proper viewer, see http://hdl.handle.net/10107/4628556

Oxford Bodleian Hatton donat. 1: https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/6f5c2c85-fde6-49d9-b208-c51635670f89

Oxford Christ Church 152: https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/34f8370b-15d7-435e-8a83-ad6803dd05cd

Oxford Corpus Christi 198: http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=corpus&manuscript=ms198

Philadelphia, Rosenbach 1084/2: http://bibliophilly.library.upenn.edu/viewer.php?id=MS%201084/2#page/1/mode/2up

San Marino, Huntington EL 26 C 9: https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/id/2359

Trinity College Cambridge R.3.15: http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/viewpage.php?index=1366

Trinity College Cambridge R.3.19: http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/viewpage.php?index=1370

Trinity College Cambridge R.3.3: http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/viewpage.php?index=1384

University of Texas Austin 143: https://norman.hrc.utexas.edu/pubmnem/details.cfm?id=143

University of Texas Austin 46: https://norman.hrc.utexas.edu/pubmnem/details.cfm?id=46

Yale, Beinecke Takamiya 22: https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4428066

Yale, Beinecke Takamiya 24: https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4336440

Yale, Beinecke Takamiya 32: https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4187397


Fully digitized *Confessio Amantis* manuscripts (some are excerpts):

Balliol Oxford 354: http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=balliol&manuscript=ms354 (excerpts)

BL Harley 3869: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_3869

Yale, Osborn fa1: http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3445309

Yale, Takamiya 32: https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4187397 (excerpts start 158r)

Trinity College Cambridge R.3.2: http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/viewpage.php?index=1372

Malory digitizations:

London, British Library Additional 59678 (the Winchester MS): http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_59678

The Malory Project (Winchester and Caxton): http://www.maloryproject.com/index.php

Manchester, John Rylands Library, Caxton: https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/263ho2

Manchester, John Rylands Library, de Worde: https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/s63u3z