New Chaucer Society Biennial Congress
Portland: July 23-26, 2012
Call For Papers

The Eighteenth Biennial Congress of the New Chaucer Society will take place in Portland, OR in 2012. NCS members who would like to present papers or participate on panels at the Congress should send a one-paragraph abstract to the organizer(s) at the email addresses given below the session description by JUNE 1, 2011. Please also indicate any specific audio-visual/digital needs. Session organizers will select papers and panels in consultation with the Program Chairs and reply to all submitters by June 15, 2011. After June the Program Committee will form additional sessions from among the submissions. Names of the Congress participants will be announced in an upcoming Chaucer Newsletter. Members may apply to participate in more than one session, but they may finally take part in only one. The Program Committee is composed of Patricia Ingham and Karma Lochrie (Co-Chairs), Glenn Burger, Holly Crocker, Jeffrey J. Cohen, Simon Horobin, and Warren Ginsberg with Carolyn Dinshaw (NCS President) and David Lawton (NCS Executive Director) ex officio.

The session threads were developed by the Program Committee with consideration given to suggestions that emerged from the 2010 Congress in Siena. Session threads for 2012 include: Neighbors, Ecologies, Oceans, Image, Sciences, Feminisms, Book, and Affect. In addition, there will be several “unthreaded” sessions and plenaries.

In the interest of having a more diverse array of types of sessions than in the past, the Program Committee created four formats: 1) Paper Panels (either 3 papers @ 20 minutes each or 4 papers at @ 15 minutes each); 2) Roundtables (discussions by 5-7 speakers on a topic of common interest; speakers do not deliver papers, but may speak for 5 minutes from notes); 3) Seminars (limited to 10 participants and devoted to works in progress by participants or a common text); and 4) Working Groups (extended seminars working virtually in advance of the Congress and culminating in a working group session in Portland). At least one paper will be given by a graduate student or research student. For both paper panels and roundtables, organizers will enforce time limits to allow for discussion.

The NCS Constitution requires that Congress participants (except for invited speakers from other fields) be current members with their dues paid. We encourage you to share information about the Congress with other interested people who may not be NCS members at present—graduate students, new colleagues, and others working outside the field who may find sessions related to their areas of interests. (Graduate students and research students may join NCS at a reduced membership rate.) Finally, a tight limit has been set on prior invitations to participate in any session. The overwhelming majority of participants in the Congress will be those who respond to this call.

For online access to the Portland CFP, please visit: http://chaucer.wustl.edu/congress/congress2012call.php
Thread: Neighbors  
Thread Convener: Patricia Ingham

Paper Panel: To Further a Political Theology of the Neighbor  
Organizer: George Edmonson  
(george.edmondson@dartmouth.edu)

Medieval literary studies has much to contribute to contemporary theory’s ongoing interrogation of a political structure bound by the sovereign exception. But perhaps our field is even better suited to furthering Kenneth Reinhard’s argument (advanced in The Neighbor) that the inescapable political theology of the sovereign cannot be thought apart from the equally inescapable political theology of the neighbor. Proceeding from Reinhard’s core claim that “a political theology of the neighbor cannot replace the political theology of the sovereign, but can only be supplement it, both in the sense of pointing to some structural lack…that the figure of the neighbor might compensate for and in the sense of pointing to something heterogeneous to political theology, something other than itself in its very core, that manifests and finds its phenomenology in the neighbor,” this panel invites papers that seek to extract, from out of the innumerable representations of communitarian life found in medieval writings, a political theology of the neighbor that is truly the exception to the political theology of the sovereign exception. Possible areas of inquiry might include, but are hardly limited to, the following: the absence of the higher gentry from the set of Canterbury pilgrims; the links between Canterbury Tales as staged confrontations between the unbound, open set of neighbors and the totalizing logic of the sovereign exception; scenes of neighbors at play; neighbor love as a refusal of the superegoic injunction to enjoy the transgression of the law that binds community; or an affirmative version of cupiditas as a radical form of neighbor love, a “profane science” performed for its own sake, rather than in the name of sovereign exception.

Paper Panel: Neighboring Genres  
Organizers: Ingrid Nelson (inelson@amherst.edu) and Shannon Gay (sgay@indiana.edu)

How do genre and community imagine each other? Genre in vernacular medieval literature is fluid, encompassing literary models from diverse places. Generic hybridity creates an imagined geography of the medieval world that resists the “border policing” that Wai Chee Dimock identifies as a hallmark of modern generic labeling. Medieval modes of textual transmission, from performance to the material form of the medieval miscellany, create diverse communities of generic neighbors. Medieval literature thus expresses what Derrida calls the “essential disruption” in the “law of genre,” both prescriptive and descriptive, that has informed modern literary criticism. Chaucer was especially interested in the genres, forms, and “kinds” of literature from other countries, which he knew from his own travels and from his extensive reading. This panel invites papers that consider the neighboring genres and modes of Chaucer and his contemporaries. Questions to consider might include, but are not limited to: What neighbors do we find in the genres of medieval literature? How do they help us understand the circulation of literature in the Middle Ages? How do medieval articulations of genre recognize the concept of neighborliness? How do texts create communities of generic neighbors? Do generic tensions or affinities reflect cultural or political realities? Is modern genre theory a neighbor or a stranger to medieval Cristen.” This session on neighbors invites papers on the medieval parish and its people. Topics to consider include (but are not limited to) parochial neighbors and neighborliness; boundaries and the relationship between parish and neighborhood; representations of the parish and parishioners; the relationship between the living and the dead; charity and the corporal works of mercy; the representation of parishioners and even-Cristen in handbooks for lay and/or clerical readers; membership in lay networks such as guilds and fraternities; public and private aspects of penance; the negotiation of individual and communal identity in the parish.

Paper Panel: Neighbors and even-Cristen: the Medieval Parish  
Organizer: Ellen K. Rentz (erentz@cmc.edu)

Medieval lay people were obliged to love not only God and their neighbor, but also their “even-
literature? In medieval texts, do good generic fences make good neighbors?

**Roundtable: Neighbors and the Law**
Organizer: Candace Barrington  
(barringtonc@ccsu.edu)

This roundtable—5-7 participants presenting very short position statements—will explore the ways the law and representations of the law imagined, regulated, and normalized neighbor-to-neighbor relations. In the explorations of the legal dynamics of “neighbor,” participants are encouraged to consider the term’s multiple valences of value (friends, family, foe), geography (local, regional, national, international), and language (English, Latin, French).

**Paper Panel: Flesh, Not Body**
Organizer: George Edmonson  
(george.edmonson@dartmouth.edu)

The body—*Corpus Christi*, the social body, the corporate body, embodiment, incarnation, the body of the text, unruly bodies, “my joly body”—has long been at the center of medieval studies. Increasingly, though, our assumptions about the body are being challenged by a philosophical tradition, culminating, most recently, in the work of Roberto Esposito, in which the metaphor of the social body is itself a potential threat to community. For Esposito, the community-as-body invariably gives rise to a “paradigm of immunization” wherein members of the community not only seek to exempt themselves from the demands of community but where the social body seeks to immunize itself against the very “pathogens” that might fortify it in the long run. The upshot here is not that community should simply do away with immunity. On the contrary, “with the risk of conflict inscribed at the very heart of community, consisting as it does in interaction...immunization doesn’t precede or follow the moment of community but appears simultaneously as its ‘intimate essence’.” The challenge, rather, is to envision modes of immunization capable of immunizing the community against the excesses of its own immune response. One of the categories through which Esposito tries to think such an affirmative immunization is that of the *flesh*: “flesh, because it is intrinsic to the same body from which it seems to escape (and which therefore expels it). Existence without life is flesh that does not coincide with the body; it is that part or zone of the body, the body’s membrane, that isn’t one with the body, that exceeds its boundaries or is subtracted from the body’s enclosing.” Taking the Cook’s *mormal* as its guiding image, this panel invites papers that seek to locate, within the Middle English corpus, a flesh-politic heretofore overlooked in favor of more traditional ideas of medieval *communitas*. Possible areas of inquiry might include the following: flesh as an expansion of the category of the neighbor or a provocation to neighbor love; the imperative to neighbor love as a mode of affirmative immunization; dying flesh—rot, disease, infections, plague—as essential to the long-term health of the communal body; the flesh of saints as pathogenic; the medieval origins of modernity’s immunitarian paradigm; the medieval as the “flesh” of modernity.

**Paper Panel: Chaucer with Langland**
Organizer: George Edmonson  
(george.edmonson@dartmouth.edu)

To read Chaucer with Langland in the way that Lacan reads Kant with Sade—as textual neighbors, at once proximate and strange, their non-reciprocity bringing out the repressed underside in each—is to perform an act of comparison in which, as Kenneth Reinhard puts it, “texts are not so much grouped into ‘families’ defined by similarity and difference, as into ‘neighborhoods’ determined by accidental contiguity, genealogical isolation, and ethical encounter.” This panel invites papers that seek to read Chaucer and Langland as part of a textual neighborhood that might go by many names—London, Middle English poetry, the canon, Ricardian England, writers whose manuscripts were copied by John Marchaut—but that is defined, ultimately, by the non-reciprocity of those included within it. Papers dealing with any aspect of the strange proximity of Chaucer and Langland are welcome, although special consideration will be given to papers that “neighbor” the two poets precisely around their treatments of the figure of the neighbor or the complexities of the neighbor relation. Another fruitful line of inquiry might concern the possible
differences between an open neighborhood of manuscripts and a bounded marketplace of print.

**Seminar: Romance and the Neighbor/Stranger**  
*Organizer: Tom Prendergast  
(prendergast@wooster.edu)*  
Freud famously said of the stranger, “not merely is this stranger in general unworthy of my love, I must honestly confess that he has more claim to my hostility and even my hatred.” Later he claims that “at bottom” the stranger and the neighbor are the same thing, Derrida theorizes this opposition by noting that the neighbor is part of one’s own ethnic group, that the enemy is fundamentally strange, and that the injunction to love both collapses the two categories. In what ways does medieval romance suggest that the neighbor is the enemy? Or that strangeness can be made congenial? Some contemporary theorists claim that the ethical injunction of hospitality enthralls us both the neighbor and stranger. Does medieval romance enjoin something similar? Is there a theory of strangeness/neighborliness that governs romance? Participants in this “Works in Progress Seminar” will share papers in any number of theoretical approaches as they address such issues as place, gender/sexuality, genre, the law, the idea of dwelling, etc.

**Thread: Ecologies**  
*Convener: Jeffrey Cohen*

**Paper Panel: Medieval Weather and the Natural Order**  
*Organizer: Robert Stanton (robert.stanton@bc.edu)*  
Paul Dutton has written that “‘weather’ is properly historical and stubbornly subjective, since it involves humans in time thinking about it and how it affects their lives.” How were meteorological phenomena in the late Middle Ages observed, described, and interpreted? Recent work in ecocriticism has signaled the endlessly fluid and negotiable character of nature; can we reconfigure the notion of “natural phenomena” as a negotiated interaction among divine, human, and physical orders? Submissions to this panel might address the reception of storms, floods, earthquakes, or droughts across genres; a comparison of representations of weather in textual and visual sources; or the relationship between generalized and archetypal descriptions of weather events and their strategic deployment as narrative and rhetorical elements.

**Paper Panel: The Ecologies of Metaphor**  
*Organizer: Brendan O’Connell (oconneb2@tcd.ie)*  
In his commentary on the *Metamorphoses*, Arnulf of Orleans assimilates the transformations of Ovid’s text to the classifications of metaphor in the *Poetria Nova*, noting that these transformations involve changes from living thing to living things, from non-living to non-living, from non-living to living and from living to non-living. In *Pearl*, the maiden rejects the narrator’s attempt to compare her bodily, living form to a pearl, insisting that it would more appropriately be compared to a rose, while her spiritual nature may be fittingly compared to the precious pearl. This panel will consider what the medieval theory and practice of metaphor reveals about the relationships between different forms of life as well as the boundaries between living and non-living. Topics might include: metaphor and metamorphosis; the comparison of the living to the non-living; organic and inorganic beauty; the *via negativa* and the use of metaphor in the mystical tradition (comparing God to living and non-living beings); metaphor and mortality; the erotisation of non-living objects.

**Paper Panel: Legal and Literary Forests in Late-Medieval Britain**  
*Organizer: Randy P. Schiff (rpschiff@buffalo.edu)*  
While the late-medieval forest is sometimes conceived as a legal formulation reserving land for royal use, it also frequently serves the radically different function of figuring wild, unclaimed space. The panel will offer a platform for work coming the wake of the ecocritical turn taken by a number of medievalists, who have sought to avoid exclusively symbolic treatments of medieval nature, and instead analyze cultural interaction with physical environments. Relevant questions might include: How does the legal discourse of the forest inflect literary conceptions of the woods? Does the post-Norman model of the forest dominate late-medieval British understanding, or can we speak of a transnational notion of the forest? To what extent is the modern notion of the
forest continuous with the pre-modern? How does ecocriticism alter our understanding of legal or literary formulations of the late-medieval forest?

**PAPER PANEL: ECologies/SCiences**

Organizers: Jeffrey Cohen (jjcohen@gwu.edu) and Holly Crocker (hercrocker@mailbox.sc.edu)

How do ways of knowing and forms of life intersect? This session culminates the “Sciences” and “Ecologies” threads, bringing them together for a shared conversation. We welcome papers that attempt any kind of synthetic work in these areas.

**RoundTable: Animate Objects and Ecologies**

Organizer: Allan Mitchell (amitch@uvic.ca)

What animates things? How do organic and inorganic things live together? Today thinkers are increasingly drawn to the nature of things in and of themselves, seeking material objects as they stand outside of the parochial, human subject. What can medievalists contribute? Our dialogue may turn on the following questions: How do objects, organisms, or environments become animated in late medieval literature? Where does Chaucer generate animate objects or ecologies? How do medieval writers (and how do we) draw the line between animate and inanimate presences? What is the source of the power of animation, generation, vivification, agency? What constitutes the environment outside of human use or cognition? How does imagining an “outside” open up new and productive problems or pathways? The panel will consist of several short pieces (10-15 minutes) that may take the form of brief analyses, position papers, talking points, field notes, or quodlibets.

**RoundTable: Political Ecologies**

Organizer: Brantley L. Bryant (brantley.bryant@sonoma.edu)

What new perspectives can we gain when considering the political narratives traditionally read alongside Chaucer, as the role of the parliamentary commons, the struggles of Richard II’s reign, or the coming of the Lancastrian regime, in the context of the relations of humans with nature? To what extent do imaginations of politics in literary or documentary texts imply or assume particular relationships with the environment? In what ways can various non-human actors, such as the weather, infectious disease, waterways, livestock, and crops be seen to engage with the textual discussion of society, law, royal power, and the common good in this period? In what ways do textual practices of imagining the political world intersect with those used to govern, describe, and regulate the environment? 5-6 presenters will provide a short text or passage relevant to the panel theme that will serve as the main topic of their comments. Presenters will speak from notes about their texts, providing interpretations, contextualizations, theoretical provocations, or other conversation-starting remarks.

**RoundTable: The Bare Life of the Greenwood**

Organizer: Joseph Taylor (joseph.taylor@uah.edu)

Medieval forests often act as sanctuaries to which humans flee from law, politics, and time altogether. Giorgio Agamben claims of the man who has reached the end of his political being that “there is nothing left but... the taking on of our biological life itself as the supreme political (or rather impolitical) task.” For the outlaw, the leper, the werewolf, and the lunatic, medieval greenwoods act as luminal zones, threshold spaces by which these castoffs return to the bare life of their existence. The forest provokes the question of what constitutes “life”? This session welcomes short presentations (5-8 minutes) that explore a variety of inquiries into forests, including but not limited to: How do these natural spaces affect law, sovereignty, power, and religion? What becomes of the man/animal that reemerges to confront the polis once again? How does Chaucer, a former deputy forester, construct the Greenwood space? How might the spurious second Cook’s Tale of Gamelyn and related tales of Robin Hood convey an alternative society of outlaws intimately tied to the natural environment wherein they live and “work”?

**Working Group: Teaching Medieval Ecologies**

Organizer: Kellie Robertson (krobertson2@wisc.edu)

This workshop will be dedicated to thinking about theoretical and textual issues in teaching medieval writings alongside modern ecocritical works. Participants will share syllabi—either aspirational or already road-tested. We’ll consider the
challenges as well as the potentially synthetic payoffs of such courses.

**Thread: Oceans**  
*Convener: Jeffrey Cohen*

**Paper Panel: Ocean Translations**  
*Organizers: Chelsea Henson (chanson@uoregon.edu) and Sharity Nelson (snelson2@uoregon.edu)*

Medieval oceans present a space on which identity changes or is challenged. Identity becomes fluid as subjects are translated from one location or element to the next. Papers for this session will examine how identities—human, national, social—undergo translation: literally changing as bodies of water are entered, crossed, and navigated. Topics might include Crusade narratives, the lady-at-sea motif in romance, travel narratives, or natural science texts. Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, and Continental language texts are welcome as sources.

**Paper Panel: Pacific Chaucers**  
*Organizer: Jonathan Hsy (jhsy@gwu.edu)*

This paper session would explore how medieval literary and cultural studies can be brought into conversation with cultures of the Pacific Rim. What is the “place” of Chaucer studies in Anglophone environments beyond Europe: Australia, Hong Kong, New Zealand, the North American Pacific, Singapore, Philippines? In what ways might the polyglot British archipelago engage with island contexts in the Pacific (e.g., Hawai`i, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan)? Other possible areas for discussion might include the status of English language and literature instruction in non-Anglophone classrooms; connections between medieval and contemporary contact literatures; venues for trans-Pacific collaboration; cross-cultural or comparative approaches to maritime literatures and diasporic identities.

**Paper Panel: Our Sea of Islands 1: Aquatic Spaces**  
*Organizers: Matthew Boyd Goldie (mgoldie@rider.edu) and Sebastian I. Sobecki (s.i.sobecki@rug.nl)*

The main title of these two related session refers to the influential twentieth-century ideas of Epeli Hau-oha, who reimagined the Pacific in terms of plentitude, networks, and routes. For the first panel, proposals are invited for 15 or 20 minute papers that use recent theoretical ideas about aquatic spaces to examine late-medieval texts and artworks, including Chaucerian ones. What does Britain, Europe, and the world look like from the sea? What shapes did medieval oceanic or inland water routes, vectors, and forces take? How did writers imagine (trans)maritime networks of exchange? What texts or topoi acted as agents of archipelagic and regional integration? What aquatic discourse were familiar to medieval writers, including Chaucer?

**Paper Panel: Our Sea of Islands 2: Insular Spaces**  
*Organizers: Matthew Boyd Goldie (mgoldie@rider.edu) and Sebastian I. Sobecki (s.i.sobecki@rug.nl)*

The second of these related sessions focuses on ideas about insularity in late-medieval texts and artworks, including Chaucerian ones. What were the correspondences between ideas of religious isolation and geographical insularity? How were islands imagined in relation to each other within archipelagos? What were the distinctions between islands and continents? How was the shoreline an interactive space? Proposals are invited for 15 or 20 minutes papers that examine how people thought about insularity in geographical, political, religious, and artistic discourses.

**Paper Panel: The Medieval Atlantic**  
*Organizer: Meg Worley (meg.worley@pomona.edu)*

In *Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy rejects the margin/center notion of black identity in favor of one that is based in the process of physically traversing the ocean and the process of transnational cultural and intellectual exchange. Gilroy’s argument might even been seen as getting medieval if we refigure space as time, if we read the physical seas as the ocean of perceptual time that separates the medieval from the modern. Gilroy agitates for a new understanding of modernity and its attendant practices; let us agitate for a new perspective of medievality and its practices—eternally transnational by many measures—using the Atlantic as our figure. Papers for this panel could set sail in a number of directions: survey new land in the global south by
uncovering and extending similarities between the
medieval and the modern Atlantic; use medieval
specificities to unlock modern puzzles; develop the
notion of the medieval as a faraway shore whose
natives become critical to the empire of the
modern. Contributions of both concrete and
abstract, traditional and innovative approaches are
welcome.

**PAPER PANEL: HIGH WATER: COMPOSING
THALASSOLOGIES**

*Organizers: Lowell Duckert (lduckert@gwu.edu) and Dan Remein (danremein@gmail.com)*

In the *Knight’s Tale* Chaucer describes the statue of
Venus in her temple: an emblem for an interface
between poetics and the watery world of the ocean
whose “wawes grene” ornament the bottom half of
what may seem to some a human effort at
sculptural making. This panel will try to take the
measure of the *roll of actual* waves in poetics.

How do physical oceans and seas infuse with the
human in poetic composition? Landscape and
seascape are creators of culture. Literature is a
product of sensual contact with the physical world.
And the ocean is certainly included. Steve Mentz
has recently argued for a more “blue” cultural
studies (or thalassology) in the early modern
period. How is the ocean not simply a passive
figure or a set of identifiable meanings in literature,
not simply traceable networks or routes of
exchange in history, but a way to examine our own
fluidic relationships to and with texts? How might
studying thalassologies create new ways of being in
an oceanic world past, present, and future? What
happens when writers visited and composed the
sea?

**PAPER PANEL: OCEANS/NEIGHBOR**

*Organizers: Jeffrey Cohen (jjcohen@gwu.edu) and Patricia Ingham (pingham@indiana.edu)*

How do watery spaces challenge us to think about
propinquity and community? How does the
neighbor invite us to reimagine what unfolds by
means of the sea? This session culminates the
“Oceans” and “Neighbor” threads, bringing them
together for shared conversation. We welcome
papers that attempt any kind of synthetic work in
these areas.

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**Thread: Image**

*Convener: Holly Crocker*

**PAPER PANEL: FIFTEENTH-CENTURY IMAGETEXTS**

*Organizer: Shannon Gayk (sgayk@indiana.edu)*

This panel will explore the complex relations
between image and text in fifteenth-century
England. Sacred and secular images were clearly
a vital and vibrant part of the late medieval
culture. Yet images were also under attack by
many religious writers, who sometimes promoted
cvernacular texts as preferable representational and
pedagogical media. This panel seeks to examine
the collaboration between and contention of
image and word in fifteenth-century England,
focusing on texts that combine words and images,
or, as W.J.T. Mitchell has termed them,
“imagetexts.” This panel might consider
questions such as: How do medieval writers or
artists understand and represent the relation of
image and word? What sort of reading practices
do imagetexts call for or even create? How do
images reinforce or complicate the texts they
accompany? Likewise, how does the presence of
a text affect the meaning of associate images?
How is writing used to authenticate images; and
how are images used to authenticate words? This
panel invites proposals on any aspect of image-
text relations in fifteenth-century England,
welcoming papers that consider image/text
combinations (such as illuminated manuscripts or
inscriptional verses in public spaces) as well as
papers focusing on related issues, including, but
not limited to: the relationship between visual and
verbal literacies, poems about images, images
containing writing, the debates about the uses of
images and texts, the functions of imagetexts in
both public and private settings.

**PAPER PANEL: ARMA CHRISTI TEXT AND IMAGE**

*ARMA CHRISTI ROLLS*

*Organizer: Dorothy Kim (dkim@vassar.edu)*

The image of the *Arma Christi* often included
“representations of the five wounds of Christ, the
heart, the hands, and the feet, or the Emblems, or
Instruments, of the Passion.” These were often
displayed separately with Middle English verse
and/or combined to form a “pseudo-heraldic”
image in Books of Hours and other devotional
texts. This panel is interested in the interaction of the *Arma Christi* as visual image and meditative verse. Papers can address its circulation in various forms: with text and image attached to a book, as a roll used in public prayer and meditation, without the text and only as a visual sign. Who were the reading and praying audiences of this image and verse text in roll or book form? What was the circulation of this genre? How did they function as lone documentary objects (i.e. roll)? How did they function within manuscripts produced earlier and/or later than the *Arma Christi* material?

**PAPER PANEL: ANIMAL IMAGES**  
*Organizer: Sarah Stanbury (sstanbury@holycross.edu)*  
Abstracts welcomed on animal metaphor and figuration, especially in dialogue with posthumanist animal theory. Topics may include human/animal boundaries; hybrids and zoomorphs; text and image relationships; visual theory.

**PAPER PANEL: IMAGINING MARVELS**  
*Organizer: Tara Williams (tara.williams@oregonstate.edu)*  
A “merveille” may be magical or miraculous, natural or mechanical, monstrous or wonderful. One common characteristic, however, is an investment in the visual: marvels ask us to envision the unusual or unexpected and to ponder the invisible causes behind spectacular effects. Marvelous images—whether represented visually or textually—may be harnessed to a variety of ends; scholars have recently examined the power of religious images to reinforce or undermine orthodoxy, for example, as well as the ways in which magical displays can address aesthetics or generic demands.

This panel focuses on how medieval writers and artists imagine the marvelous. How are marvels depicted, and what connections or distinctions can we discern among marvels from different categories or in different textual and material forms? What function might religious marvels perform in addition to the didactic, and how might secular marvels serve purposes beyond the titillating or decorative? How did shifts in theories of vision affect the possibilities for how marvelous images were represented and interpreted?

**ROUNDTABLE: THE AGENTIAL IMAGE**  
*Organizer: Shannon Gayk (sgayk@indiana.edu)*  
Medieval literature and art are populated by images and other objects that do things: that heal, that weep, that speak, that mysteriously move. Agential images appear across a range of literary genres: from miracle stories and *exempla* to romances and travel narratives. This panel will explore the agency of images, the perception of and response to such images, and the literary representation of that agency. Papers might consider, but are not limited to, the following topics: the vivacity of images; the powers of images and relics; talismanic images; ideas about and representations of speaking images; idols and worries about idolatry; the technologies that animate images; and the medieval scientific and theological discourses used to understand the agency of images and other objects.

**Thread: Sciences**  
*Convener: Holly Crocker*

**PAPER PANEL: SOUND SCIENCE: KNOWLEDGE, (DI)HARMONY, POETICS**  
*Organizer: Wolfram Keller (wolfram.keller@staff.hu-berlin.de)*  
The Middle Ages inherited from Antiquity a theory of music characterized by two opposing traditions, on the one hand, the interest in music’s affective dimension and, on the other hand, music’s mathematical rationality. The basis of music in intervals, in mathematical proportions cemented music’s status as a rational science. This session aims to study how late medieval literature reflects innovations in musical theory and practice, how it transforms Neo-Platonic notions of *harmonia mundi*, that is: how do late medieval writers envision and articulate a musical epistemology beyond Neo-Platonic models; how do late medieval texts work through the dualism of music as Pythagorean-mathematical as well as affective discourse; and how do late medieval writers correlate musical theory and practice with poietological and epistemological questions?

**PAPER PANEL: CHAUCER AND THE STARS**  
*Organizer: Lenny Koff (lkoff@aol.com)*  
This session seeks papers on Chaucer’s use of ancient and/or medieval theories of time, space,
and matter, and the reflections in human life of astral and planetary influences, sometimes read as a shorthand for divine presence, sometimes as the lexicon of psychological dispositions and/or social behavior. Comparisons with other medieval authors in which cosmology provides the sources or the terms for literary structure or character, social, or political analysis are also welcome, in addition to papers on the use of medieval “hard sciences,” which can be highly theologized, as in, for example, the transformation of matter by alchemy, magic, disguises, or language, which are the human analogues of the creation of the world.

**Paper Panel: The Arts of Medicine**  
*Organizer: Shayne Legassie (shayne@email.unc.edu)*  
This panel invites a consideration of medicine in theory and practice; the interdisciplinary nature of the medieval medical curriculum; the relationships between medical practice and other crafts, including the fine arts.

**Paper Panel: Frequently Asked Questions**  
*Organizer: Kellie Robertson (krobertson2@wisc.edu)*  
This panel investigates how the genre of the quodlibetal question intersects with vernacular literature; how well-known moments of questioning in medieval vernacular literature can be understood in relation to scholastic traditions or forms in either historicist or non-historicist ways.

**Paper Panel: Physiognomy in the Late Middle Ages**  
*Organizer: Cord Whitaker (cord.whitaker@unh.edu)*  
From Aristotelian scientific treatises to Chaucer’s *General Prologue*, from devotional texts to romances, physiognomy—the science of deciphering character by the external appearance of the body (size, proportion, shape, color, hairiness, and motion)—informs much late medieval literature and culture. In this session, papers may address the roles of physiognomic science in the construction of the late medieval subject as an individual and/or as a social being. Papers might explore questions such as: What roles does physiognomy play in the construction of literary characters? In the articulation and navigation of social relations? In late medieval political life? In theological thought and practice?

**Roundtable: Arabic and Hebrew Science in England**  
*Organizer: Ruth Nissé (rnisse@wesleyan.edu)*  
This roundtable invites a discussion of all aspects of the transmission of Arabic and Hebrew scientific texts from the Mediterranean to England. From the twelfth century to Chaucer’s own time, Christian and Jewish scholars translated and worked with texts on astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, and the natural sciences. Some of the notable figures in this history are Adelard of Bath, Daniel of Morley, Roger Bacon, Robert Grosseteste, and Abraham Ibn Ezra—but there are many others as well.

**Roundtable: Forms of History: Knowing the Past**  
*Organizer: Emily Steiner (steinere@sas.upenn.edu)*  
This roundtable explores the relationship between medieval historical writing and the organization, classification, and identification of knowledge. For example, some participants might discuss prologues, formal divisions of material, genealogies, dating schemes, or diagrams. Other participants might trace medieval historians’ reception of classical science, university learning, or local lore, or chart the transmission of information (via glosses, translations, redactions) to later historians, sermon-writers, and poets. Papers on book history are welcome, as are theoretical papers on philosophies of knowledge, the nature of information, and historical genres.

**Thread: Feminisms**  
*Convener: Karma Lochrie*

**Paper Panel: Imagine There’s No Woman I**  
*Session organizer: Julie Orlenski (jorleman@fas.harvard.edu)*  
Who, or what, is the subject of feminist scholarship today? In this moment in which Women’s Studies has become the study of “Women, Gender, and Sexuality,” and Queer Theory has welcomed almost all emancipatory intimacies under its umbrella, what is the role of the category of “woman” or “women”? This panel invites feminist medievalists to articulate what they see as the current tasks of feminist scholarship and for whom and about whom we speak. The session’s title resonates with the anti-
idealistic idealism of John Lennon’s 1971 song, “Imagine”—“Imagine there’s no heaven. It’s easy if you try...” The gentle irony of the lyrics is twofold: first, Lennon’s utopian social vision hinges on the elimination of another utopia, heaven; and second, the secular ease of imagining heaven’s non-existence contrasts with its substantialization and institutionalization in the world as religion. I hope these ironies will vibrate through our conversation, as we ask how new visions depend upon the overcoming or enfolding of prior imaginaries, as well as how medieval and contemporary acts of imagination relate different to abstractions and to institutions. The title also echoes the title of Joan Copjec’s 2002 book, which explores Lacan’s notorious assertion that “La femme n’existe pas.” Of course one need not rely on Lacan to arrive at such a conclusion: queer theory and postmodern critiques of essentialism have pushed us to imagine there is no stable entity corresponding to “woman.” Moreover, medieval literature presents us with plenty of scenarios in which we are asked to imagine that there’s no woman: male homosocial worlds in which women are absent; allegorical representations that disperse women into a collection of attributes; womanliness as masquerade; women as blinding points of pleasure or ideality; women as monsters; women as texts; women as the dead. With reference to both medieval literary works and contemporary scholarship, what are the implications, consequences and potentialities of imagining there’s no woman?

**PAPER PANEL: IMAGINE THERE’S NO WOMAN II**  
*Organizer: Karma Lochrie (klochrie@indiana.edu)*  
See description for “Imagine There’s No Woman I.”

**PAPER PANEL: INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER AND RACE IN MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE**  
*Organizer: Nicole Sidhu (sidhu@ecu.edu)*  
Studies of the intersection of race and gender have been a staple in feminist theory for years—eemplified in the work of bell hooks, Gayatri Spivak, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and others—but are not as highly developed in Middle English studies. Recent books by Lisa Lampert (*Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare*), Steven Kruger (*The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe*), and Geraldine Heng (*Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy*) have begun to explore this subject. However, the relationship between understandings of race and those of gender remain somewhat unexplored in numerous other areas of Middle English studies, amongst them: treatments of the Celts and Celtic past; the treatment of cultural and ethnic difference in medieval English chronicles; race and gender in saints’ legends and in medieval English drama; the intersection between gender and issues of racial and ethnic identity arising from the Norman conquest and the macaronic nature of medieval English culture.

**PAPER PANEL: TRANS READING, TRANSFORMING MEDIEVAL STUDIES**  
*Organizer: Masha Raskolnikov (mr283@cornell.edu)*  
Feminist analysis of literature has, as one of its primary mandates, an interest in how the category “woman” is constructed and maintained in opposition to the category “man”: historical moments when these categories seemed stable and knowable are rare, and much of the work on the literature of the Middle Ages has traced just how women are “wom.aned.” Consequently, the emergent field of transgender studies, which observes the workings of those individuals who cross from one assigned sex to another (in the Middle Ages, through magic, miracle, or sheer desire) has an important place in medieval feminist studies, although at times, the encounter with transgender studies seems to stretch the word “feminist” into a new shape. This call for papers invites scholars to experiment with what a medieval transgender studies might look like and the kinds of feminist urgencies such a field of study could possess.

**WORKING GROUP: FEMINIST FUTURITY**  
*Organizer: Aranye Fradenburg (lfraden@english.ucsb.edu)*  
Since Lee Edelman called for the queer resistance to “reproductive futurity” (*No Future, Duke UP, 2004*), queer scholars have been debating the possibility and meaning of queer futurity. In his recent book, *Cruising Utopia* (NYU Press, 2009), Jose Estaban Muños counters Edelman by
proclaiming that “the future is queerness’s domain,” as he endeavors to characterize “the modality of queer utopianism” (pp. 1 and 3). Ironically, a feminist book published in tandem with Edelman’s from Duke University Press seems to have been overlooked so far in this debate. Elizabeth Grosz argues in The Nick of Time (2004) for the explicitly feminist ethical and political project of exploring “the possibility of being untimely, of placing ourselves outside the constraints, the limitations and blinkers of the present . . . [and] “to develop, to cultivate the untimely, the out-of-place and the out-of-step (p. 117). This session will be devoted to reading Grosz’s book, along Robyn Wiegman’s “Feminism’s Apocalyptic Futures” (New Literary History 31 (2000): 805–25) in order to consider what feminism might have to contribute to this debate about alternative notions of futurity. It will assume a familiarity with Edelman and Muñoz’s works, and it will seek to redefine the parameters of the debate from the perspective of feminist theories.

Thread: Book

Convener: Simon Horobin

Paper Panel: Filler, Content, and the Interpretation of Medieval Books
Organizer: Arthur W. Bahr (awbahr@mit.edu)

On some literal level, “filler” and “content” should be synonyms; that which fills up a given space is after all part of its content. As codicological terms, however, they have contrasting, even opposed connotations: the content is what ought properly to be the subject of sustained analysis, while textual filler (of quires, pages, margins, flyleaves, etc.) is a mere afterthought. Recent scholarship has productively challenged this binary in a host of ways, using such apparent filler as essential content for arguments about textual dissemination, local literary cultures, reading practices, and reception history. This session welcomes further contributions to these modes of argumentation, but seeks also to expand how such seeming filler can be interpreted, and how notions of content can be complicated. When does filler contribute to the form of a medieval manuscript in literary and aesthetic terms, rather than simply suggest facts about that manuscript’s circumstances of production or readership … and is that distinction even fair or meaningful? How might the physical “filling” of a book – its leaves, binding, and other material forms – interpretively relate to its textual content? How might absences or lacunae in a manuscript, from conspicuous white space to lost folios or miniatures, constitute a kind of content in formal, aesthetic, or historical terms, and how might those terms profitably intersect? What about the palimpsest, a form of simultaneous content-and-absence? If seemingly descriptive codicological terms like filler and content represent not so much intrinsic categories as interpretive modes (a debatable proposition that papers are welcome and encouraged to debate), then how might these and other complexities raise theoretical questions that can expand how we engage with medieval books and their many histories?

Paper Panel: Reading Scribes and Scribal Readings
Organizer: Aditi Naïde (aditi.naide@keble.ox.ac.uk)

Though we tend to look authors on a literary level, we only tend to consider scribes on a historical level, outlining their genealogy, professional links, workspaces, and copying procedures. This session aims to provide a conflation of two approaches: to ask what scribes are doing on a literary level, and so to consider how their copying of a text affects our reading of it. Malcolm Parkes identified that scribes paid attention to readers’ needs in organizing their material on the manuscript page; more recently Kathryn Kerby-Fulton has suggested that scribes were ‘professional readers’ who ‘processed’ the text for the reader. Despite these broad claims, there is very little detailed work on individual scribes’ interpretation of the literature they copy. This session encourages papers that look in detail at the alterations made by scribes through manuscript layout in order to put the scribe into the centre of the production of literature, not only the production of the manuscript. How does the use of parahs, initials, borders, rubrics and other decoration to impose upon a text a particular meaning? How does the scribe exploit the layout
of the text to influence its reading? Papers that offer a close-reading of individual manuscripts are warmly invited.

**Paper Panel: Encountering the Middle English Text in Early Modern England**

*Organizer: Megan Cook (cookm@english.upenn.edu)*

The fate of medieval manuscripts in early modern England has attracted considerable attention in recent decades, but of late the focus of scholarly attention has expanded from bibliographic issues to encompass the lexical and textual dimensions of renaissance engagement with earlier manuscripts. When one turns to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century commentary on the vernacular texts contained within these manuscripts, one finds a pervasive sense that their language is regarded as “antique,” “old,” or otherwise outdated. This perspective necessarily affects the role such texts play in nascent narratives of English literary history, inspiring both the self-conscious archaizing of poets like Hawes and Spenser and the caveats of stylists like Puttenham, who warns readers of his *Art of English Poesy* (1589) that “our maker therefore at these dayes shall not follow Piers plowman, nor Gower, nor Lydgate, nor yet Chaucer, for their language is now out of vse with vs.” This understanding of medieval language as somehow different from the vernacular of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English also inflects representations of medieval poetry in later manuscripts and printed texts. Such printed materials not only constitute their own record of early modern attitudes toward medieval language and literature, but play a significant role in modern scholarship, as witnesses to lost manuscripts and, at times, the only source of texts not elsewhere preserved.

This session, then, will consider how the language of the Middle English text was read and understood in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. Topics may include glossaries and lexicons; translations; editorial practices; the role of the medieval text in early modern print and scribal culture; the influence of humanistic scholarship in Latin and continental vernaculars; and practices of annotation, commonplace, and quotation. Of special interest are papers that provide a comparative perspective or which attend to the relationship between textual and bibliographic studies. Such papers might explore how attitudes toward Middle English poetry affected the preservation and transmission of medieval materials or, in turn, take up the ways in which discourse on Middle English writing shaped early modern notions of language, literature, and literary history.

**Roundtable: The Vernon Manuscript as Multifaceted Miscellany**

*Organizer: Courtney Rydel (rydel@sas.upenn.edu)*

Oxford Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. a. 1, known as the “Vernon Manuscript,” is one of the largest surviving medieval English manuscripts, both in terms of size and variety of contents. This panel proposes to discuss this late fourteenth century manuscript as an artifact attesting to reading tastes and resources available to readers contemporary with Chaucer. As scholars such as Felicity Riddy have noted, the Vernon Manuscript contents attest to communities of women readers interested in “talking about the things of God”—women readers obliquely glimpsed in Chaucer’s depictions of the Prioress and Second Nun. This panel will be much in the spirit of the 1990 *Studies in The Vernon Manuscript* volume edited by Derek Pearsall, with presentations considering both the volume as a whole and individual items within the miscellany. We may explore its organizational strategies and its production and reception by communities of readers, as well as more specific questions. How do the mystical, religious and liturgical materials in this miscellany interact with each other? In what ways do major Vernon texts familiar to us from other contexts, such as *Piers Plowman* and Rolle’s writings, take on different resonances in relation to unique or lesser-known entries such as the Vernon lyrics? Can we regard the Vernon Manuscript as a liturgical primer? How might the first quire, filled with the *South English Legendary* and a collection known as the “Vernon Golden Legend” condition readers’ responses to the rest of the volume? In what ways do the graphic and artistic elements of the Vernon Manuscript interact with its multilingual contents? Panelists will seek to illuminate these issues in conversation with each other.
WORKING GROUP: READING, EDITING, AND RESEARCHING THE TEXT OF CHAUCER IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Organizer: Peter Robinson (peter.robinson@usask.ca)

In 1997, Jerome McGann declared that we are entering a ‘great age of editorial scholarship.’ In the years since, the accelerating pace of digitization of primary textual resources has brought us towards a prospect unthinkable even a few years ago: that we will have online, accessible by a few clicks on any computer or mobile phone, images of every page of every surviving manuscript containing any text of Chaucer; every page of every incunable; every page of every early edition (and indeed most modern editions) – and, beyond that, the same for every author contemporary with Chaucer, or whom he might have read. McGann’s premise was that this vast new access to primary materials would require a new generation of scholars, able and willing to discover, interpret and explain these wealths to others.

We have not yet reached (and perhaps never will completely reach) the state where all will be available to all. But we have already reached a critical mass of digital materials, to the degree that most of us working day-to-day with primary materials now routinely use digital surrogates – and so too, do our students, and so too readers everywhere. The object of this workshop is to explore the impact of this shift on how we read, edit and research the text of Chaucer. At the heart of this is a recognition that for us in the digital age the concept of ‘text’ itself has shifted – and as it has shifted, so must our conversations with each other on any matter relating to text move their ground.

Because this topic is fundamental to many areas of Chaucer scholarship, this workshop will seek to involve as many participants as possible, so as to represent as many different viewpoints as we can. We are in a period of profound, and exciting, experimentation: no view should be excluded. This makes the working group format ideal. We are not seeking to promote a particular view of Chaucer’s text or how it should be approached (as recent sessions at NCS conferences have done): rather, we wish to provide a forum for the widest possible range of views. We would do this by following past working group practice, of convening a virtual seminar in advance of the conference and inviting contributions to the seminar from the whole NCS community. We would seed the discussions ourselves, by establishing a sequence of virtual seminar topics (‘What can we do now we could not do before?’; ‘Examples of digital editions made to now: strengths and weaknesses’, ‘Digital Chaucer in the classroom’, ‘Crowdsourcing the editing of Chaucer: can this work and how?’ for example). The conference session, as in previous workgroups, would then act as a summary and ongoing debate of issues raised in the virtual seminar.

Thread: Affect

Convener: Glenn Burger

PAPER PANEL: VIOLENCE, AFFECT, AND LITERARY AESTHETICS

Organizer: James Goldstein (goldstj@auburn.edu)

Violence and its representation are capable of producing extremely powerful affect, which in turn may elicit aesthetic responses, whether by design or otherwise. This session will explore how violence and its associated emotions may serve aesthetic purposes, broadly defined, for medieval or modern readers of Chaucer or other late-medieval writers. Questions raised may include but need not be limited to the following: How do medieval and/or modern theories of affect help us understand what is at stake in representations of violence in medieval literature? What roles are played by visual culture in the aestheticization of violence in Chaucer’s poetry? What is the moral status of the aesthetic enjoyment of violence or its representations? Can the study of affect help us think about violence in medieval art as either beautiful or sublime? How might contemporary popular culture now help us think about the aesthetics of violence in the medieval period?

PAPER PANEL: AFFECT AND LAW

Organizer: Emma Lipton (liptone@missouri.edu)

While grounded in public institutions of church and state, medieval law addressed personal matters of the heart by, for example, considering intention in assessing crime, sin or the integrity of a contract, and by defining the sacrament of marriage as “affection.” Moving between private and social,
medieval law both regulates and constructs affect. This session seeks papers that explore the relationship between affect and representations of medieval law and legal categories, and that consider how recent interest in affect might speak to the field’s ongoing preoccupation with the relationship between law and literature. Possible topics include (but are not limited to) the representation of contracts and promises (in the Franklin’s Tale and elsewhere), the depiction of intention, witnessing as both legal category and affective experience (in the drama and elsewhere), and emotional responses to the law.

**PAPER PANEL: EMOTIONAL LITERACIES: THE TEXTUAL PRODUCTION OF FEELING**

*Organizer: Myra Seaman (mseaman@mac.com), College of Charleston*

This session will investigate how later medieval texts participated in the cultural production of emotion. As Sarah McNamer has recently demonstrated, religious texts such as Passion lyrics offered medieval Christians scripts through which ritualized “iterative affective performance[s]” might generate particular feelings. Such training, Barbara Rosenwein has argued, successfully occurs within an emotional community whose shared needs and values prefer certain emotions and means of communicating them. Some affective communities were, in the Middle Ages as now, textually produced. This session will explore textual emotional communities of the later Middle Ages and the range of aesthetic strategies that supplied them with scripts of feeling.

**PAPER PANEL: THEORIZING EMOTION**

*Organizer: Jessica Rosenfeld (jrosenfe@wustl.edu)*

Where and how is emotion theorized in the medieval period? This session will consider the discourses within which the “emotions” or “passions” are overtly analyzed, described, and prescribed. Papers might consider confessional literature, treatises on the vices and virtues, rhetorical treatises, moral philosophy, sermons, devotional literature, conduct manuals, medical treatises, or other places where emotions come under definitional pressure. Are the emotions theorized in genre-specific ways? Differently in Latin versus the vernacular? What kinds of emotional theories does Chaucer’s poetry engage with? How do certain frames such as “vice and virtue” or the medicalizing of emotions shift understandings? What is the relationship between taxonomic definitions and narrative illustration? Are emotions gendered? How does the theorizing of emotion shed light on understandings of politics or intersubjectivity? What does the emotional body look like? How do various medieval discourses figure in the history of emotions?

**ROUNDTABLE: DISPLAYING, HIDING, AND FAKE EMOTION IN CHAUCER**

*Organizers: Lawrence Besserman (lawrencebesserman@gmail.com) and Stephanie Trigg (sjitrgg@unimelb.edu.au)*

Anyone familiar with Middle English literature in general, and with the works of Chaucer in particular, will have noticed how often our attention is drawn to a character’s emotionally expressive countenance (‘bearing,’ ‘demeanor’; ‘the look or expression of a person’s face’). Gestures, facial expressions, non-verbal utterances, and single or combined instances of the latter three means of expression—-as in sighing, weeping, smiling, laughing, blushing, turning pale, and scowling—are among the more obvious means whereby individuals (in life as in literature) reveal or conceal their emotions. Chaucer’s characters experience and perform a wide range of emotions in all the ways mentioned above, and then some. We invite papers that address any of the following questions: How do the faces and bodies of Chaucer’s characters reveal or conceal their emotions? By what gestures, facial expressions, or non-verbal utterances (sighs, groans, laughter, etc.) do they enact or attempt to hide different emotions? Are there gender and or class differences in the overt, withheld, or dissembling performance of emotion?

**SEMINAR: MEDIEVAL AFFECT STUDIES**

*Organizer: Mark Amos (maamos@siu.edu)*

This seminar welcomes submissions of works in progress dealing with medieval affect studies. Paper topics might include but are not limited to: the role that affect plays in marking (and crossing) boundaries between inner and outer feelings, between bodies and signs, between the private and the social; theorizing affect for medieval and
Chaucer studies; the relationships between affect’s role in structuring personal borders and the construction of gendered, classed, or religious political positions; the ways that affect and the domain of the aesthetic be mutually constitutive of each other in a Chaucerian poetics; affect and medieval conduct. Participants will be expected to circulate copies of their own paper a month in advance of the conference and to have read the papers of other participants by the time of the conference. Individual papers will be discussed but not read during the conference seminar.

**Mini Thread: Pedagogy & Institutions**

**Paper Panel: Teaching Chaucer as a Foreign Language**

*Organizer: Michael Foster (michaelfoster.public@gmail.com)*

For the average English-speaking undergraduate, Chaucer’s English may appear daunting; the unfamiliar spelling, the unexpected syntax, and the occasional exotic word are hurdles that must be overcome to appreciate the text. Over the decades, various introductions to Chaucer’s language and Middle English have attempted to familiarize students with this seemingly foreign language. However, how can students whose native language is not English approach Chaucer, and what is the teacher’s role in this context? Are guides such as the “Chaucer’s Language” chapter in the *Riverside Chaucer* appropriate for EFL students, or is another approach more beneficial? Do different types of EFL students demand different approaches? How do we engage students of diverse cultures and make them understand Chaucer’s own cultural context? Are we teaching “British Culture” or a more specific moment in a specific geographical location, and how do we communicate this to our students? This panel will consider how native speakers of languages other than English may approach Chaucer and how we can open up Chaucer’s text to these students. Topics may include (but are not limited to): the use of translations in the classroom; using language acquisition methods in the classroom; addressing cultural gaps when teaching Chaucer; comparative approaches to teaching Chaucer; historical linguistics and explaining modern English through Chaucer.

**Paper Panel: Digital Tools for Medievalists**

*Organizer: Dan Mosser (dmosser@vt.edu)*

While many resources have become available to medievalists in the past decade or so, issues of forward migration plague many early efforts. Even with the emergence of de facto standards, such as XML and TEI, challenges for preserving older resources and creating new ones abound. Issues of access—economic and technological—affecting digital projects include questions of platform (e.g., CD/DVD vs. Web-based materials); of publication via traditional or non-traditional commercial publishers vs. freely available, web based self-publication (perhaps subverted by the provision of institutional server support); and of projects that are copyright-constrained vs. those that subscribe to the Creative Commons licensing format. Digital projects are commonly collaborative, even if that collaboration extends only to the dependence of a content provider on a technical-support person, but collaboration raises other issues, especially for humanists with respect to tenure and promotion. Speakers may address these issues in practical and/or theoretical terms.

**Paper Panel: Keeping Chaucer Canonical**

*Organizer: Susan Yager (syager@lastate.edu)*

The economic collapse of 2007-08 has had enormous repercussions in U.S. colleges and universities. Budget cuts, already severe, may increase as temporary funds run out and states continue to face large deficits. Some institutions may have experienced little pressure regarding class size and pedagogy, but many, both public and private, are implementing sweeping changes due to reduced faculty lines, the aging of the tenured professoriate, and “streamlined” curricula. Against this backdrop, those with a professional interest in Chaucer and medieval literature face the challenge of sharing strategies to define and maintain the nature and significance of our work for students and for the general public. Brief papers might treat multi- and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching Chaucer or medieval literature; teaching through material culture; multi-modal teaching and the medieval;
and other approaches, as well as empirical studies of changes in the teaching of Chaucer or medieval literature (e.g. frequency of offering, class size, combined undergraduate and graduate courses, etc.) in the past several years.

**Roundtable: Glimpses of a Literary Life: the uses of biography in teaching Chaucer**
*Organizer: Alan T. Gaylord (alan.t.gaylord@dartmouth.edu)*

What do we want the/a biography for, and at what point(s)? Do we need almost no biographical materials, but much more social and cultural materials?

**Open Sessions**

**Paper Panel/Roundtable?: Creating Chaucer/Creative Chaucer**
*Organizer: Sandy Feinstein (sxf31@psu.edu)*

As a center of alternative creative activity and energy, Portland is an ideal venue to bring together a variety of arts that talk to, back, and about Chaucer. Here, as elsewhere, adaptation and adaptation theory have informed the work done by both artists and artist-scholars (e.g., Schieb, Mee, Ruhl, Campbell). Are there any among us who inhabit Chaucer as performers or artists? This session invites artists and scholar-artists of any genre—literature, performance arts, or visual media—to submit works that in some way respond to or adapt Chaucer. Since this session intends to offer a multi-genre contemporary response to Chaucer, submissions may be in varying formats: print, audio, video, or “Powerpoint.” Submit whole works (up to three lyric poems, two short-shorts, five examples of flash fiction, etc.) or parts of longer works (a chapter from a novel for which a context is provided; a scene from a larger play with its context; an aria, also contextualized, etc.); or one reproduction of a visual work in any media; it is also understood that forms may be combined (mash-ups; graphic novel; prose poems, etc). This session seeks to show how Chaucer speaks to artists (and scholars as artists) now. It seeks to bring together a scholarly audience with practitioners of the arts to reveal some of the kinds of artistic productions Chaucer elicits. Thus, the session will be part reading, part exhibition, part performance offering living examples of the multiple languages through which Chaucer is seen, heard, re-constructed, and re-enacted.

**Paper Panel: The Uses (and Disuses) of Augustinian Privation: Evil in Ricardian Literature**
*Organizer: Arthur Lindley (adlindley@gmail.com)*

Saint Augustine’s theory of evil as privation—as loss, absence, and the progressive nihilation of the soul—was the orthodox Catholic view in the fourteenth century as it is today. As such, it is fundamental to the depiction of evil in Ricardian literature. It shapes, for example, Chaucer’s presentation of both the Pardoner and the Wife of Bath, as it later does Shakespeare’s presentation of those other centerless performers Iago, Goneril, and Edmund. This session is devoted to papers dealing with texts which present or problematize the privative version of evil or which present alternative versions.

**Paper Panel: Functions of the Chaucer Edition**
*Organizer: Robert J. Meyer-Lee (meyerlee@aya.yale.edu)*

Editorial debates about Chaucer’s writing typically involve competing arguments about what constitutes the most historically rigorous representation of that writing. Yet editions of Chaucer serve a variety of functions other than scholarly ones: pedagogical, aesthetic, cultural, and economic, to name just a few. This session is interested in papers that explore how concerns or investments in one or more of these other domains affect—or should affect—the representation of Chaucer’s writing, or, conversely, how editorial practice has affected the functionality of the edition in respect to one or more of these domains. Papers may range from theoretical considerations—for example, the complex historicity of the editorial object—to practical recommendations for editions answering to specific functional demands.

**Paper Panel: Narratives of Confession**
*Organizer: Robyn Malo (rmalo@purdue.edu)*

Papers on this panel will examine medieval confessional narratives in both Latin and the vernacular, in order to address the role of
confessional discourse in late medieval poetry. Possible texts include but are not limited to confessional formulas and manuals such as Jacob’s Well, but also shorter formulas; works by Gower, Chaucer, Langland, the Gawain-poet, and Hoccleve; late medieval sermon collections; the Cursor mundi, and the Prick of Conscience. Papers might engage with recent discussions of confession as a tool of the mainstream church that employs technologies of secrecy or, in its heterodox forms, a tool of resistance to the mainstream church. Approaches that reexamine confession in light of the performative are also encouraged. The primary goal of this panel will be to expand the boundaries of contemporary definitions of medieval confession, problematizing both the limiting of confessional discourse as either liberating or restrictive. Related questions might include: how do we define medieval confession? Is confession a question of form or genre? How can we understand medieval confession and subject formation, and does the general consensus about confession and subjectivity need to be revisited?

**Paper Panel: Chaucerians and the Italian Renaissance—Reception and Influence**

**Organizer:** Helen Fulton (helen.fulton@york.ac.uk)

The aim of this session is to explore some of the ways in which the Italian Renaissance was beginning to influence literary, political and aesthetic ideas in Britain (including Wales and Scotland) in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Papers may consider the work of Chaucer himself, and his engagement with Italian humanists such as Dante and Petrarch, or the work of Chaucer’s contemporaries and followers who benefited from an increasing flow of ideas from Renaissance Italy. The purpose of having short papers is to identify areas of influence, in the form of case studies, rather than to give longer analyses of particular texts. The session forms part of an ongoing project on Britain and the Italian Renaissance, and papers presented in this session will be considered for a planned volume of essays on this theme.

**Paper Panel: Chaucer and the English Renaissance**

**Organizer:** Kathy Lavezzo (kathy-lavezzo@uiowa.edu)

At least since A. C. Spearing’s Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry, scholars have queried the Early Modern construction of the medieval past and its cultural products (i.e., David Matthews, Bobby Meyer-Lee, William Kuskin, Tom Prendergast, James Simpson and others). Cognizant of how the problem of the relationship between medieval and Renaissance English literature remains unresolved and urgent, this panel invites innovative scholarship on Early Modern English responses to Chaucer and his legacy. The panel may entail a paper on the state of criticism, and a response from a distinguished invited speaker known for her/his work on literary history and periodization. Possible paper topics may include but should not be limited to Early Modern editions of and scholarship on Chaucer’s poetry (i.e., Stow and Speght), as well as the use of Chaucer as a source in works by Shakespeare, Spenser, Jonson, Marlowe, and other English writers.

**Paper Panel: Morality Drama in the Age of Chaucer: The Castle of Perseverance**

**Organizer:** Theresa Coletti (tcoletti@umd.edu)

This session invites new critical perspectives on the theatrically ambitious and expansive play known as The Castle of Perseverance (c. 1400-25), preserved in the Macro dramatic anthology (Folger Library MS V. a. 354) and assigned by linguistic analysis to central Norfolk. Literary histories usually approach Castle as the premier instance of the English morality genre, and the play is probably best known for the mysterious diagram of scenic disposition that accompanies it in the Macro manuscript. The Castle’s reputation as foundational example of a dramatic genre—the assumed normativity of its plot, religious content, and dramatic technique—has discouraged close examination of a rich verbal texture that points to a dramatic author well versed in poetic as well as pastoral materials, skilled in manipulating rhetorical registers of style and idiom. These features argue for the Castle’s inclusion in the Age of Chaucer on more than temporal grounds. Papers on all aspects of the play are welcome.
PAPER PANEL: BEAUTY
Organizer: Michelle Karnes (karnes@stanford.edu)
Recent years have seen renewed interest in the category of the aesthetic in literature, medieval and otherwise, but beauty itself has proven a concept difficult to pin down. In the Middle Ages proper, the most common definition of beauty is remarkably specific and ultimately mathematical: beauty is a matter of proportion. This paper session will take up the question of how beauty might be defined: is it affective or intellectual, sensory or intelligible, ambiguous or precise? With reference primarily to Chaucer’s works, it will ask not only how medieval writers identified beauty but how they constructed and responded to it. Papers are welcome to consider modern and/or medieval aesthetics, loosely defined, in relation to any of Chaucer’s works.

PAPER PANEL: FRAUD IN THE AGE OF CHAUCER
Organizer: Brendan O’Connell (oconnel2@tcd.ie)
Fraud was an offence of great significance in Chaucer’s cultural, political and social contexts. Edward III’s Statute of Treasons established a category referred to by Pollock and Maitland as crimen falsi, establishing a link between the falsification of the king’s seal and the forgery of coins. No attentive reader of the Commedia could fail to note that Dante devoted no less than a third of the Inferno to the punishment of simple fraud. The counterfeiting of seals, documents and coins raises important questions about the status of authority, the instability of identity, the art of persuasion, the nature of truth, the relationship between original and representation. This session will consider the many faces of Fraud in Chaucer’s works, including issues such as: references to counterfeit coinage in Chaucer and his contemporaries, the forged documents of the Clerk’s and Man of Law’s Tales, sharp practice in the General Prologue, the alchemical fraud of the Canon’s Yeoman, the moral status of the pander in Troilus, the English response to Dante’s Malebolge.

PAPER PANEL: HOW BELATED IS POSTMODERN CHAUCER?
Organizer: Peter Travis (peter.w.travis@dartmouth.edu)
“Postmodernity is a style of culture, . . . a depthless, decentered, ungrounded, self-reflexive, playful, derivative, eclectic, pluralistic art which blurs the boundaries between ‘high’ and ‘popular’ cultures, as well as between art and everyday experience”: so writes Terry Eagleton in The Illusions of Postmodernism. In “Postmodernism and Consumer Society,” Fredric Jameson targets the stylistic diversities of postmodernism as a purposeless mashup of ahistorical, apolitical mimicries. On the other hand, in A Poetics of Postmodernism Linda Hutcheon contends that parody, rather than pastiche, is the quintessential postmodern form, for parody “both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies, [forcing] a reconsideration of the idea of origin or originality that is compatible with other postmodern interrogations of liberal humanist assumptions.” These three literary critics are among dozens who have taken on the daunting task of defining and evaluating the world of cultural, artistic, and theoretic postmodernism. And it is within, as well as against, the zeitgeist of this world that Chaucerians have, until recently, been reading Chaucer.

How belated is postmodernism? If postmodernism once influenced the ways many of us viewed Chaucer, is that hermeneutic now entirely passé? Is it still appropriate to entertain likenesses between contemporary postmodernisms and Chaucer’s putative postmedievalisms? Or is Chaucer actually more modernist than postmodernist? If postmodernist theory is now undergoing various displacements, for instance, by posthumanism, how might a posthumanist Chaucer be distinct from a postmodernist Chaucer? In sum, as evidenced in its productive employment in Chaucer criticism in the recent past, it is possible that postmodernism remains a powerful theoretical set. What, for Chaucerians, does it now mean?
**Paper Panel:** In the Digital Era, Will Chaucer “count”?

*Organizer:* Elizabeth Scala (scala@mail.utexas.edu)

New digital technologies have brought medieval manuscripts to a wider audience than ever before, but do some of these very same technologies threaten Chaucer and medieval studies in more invidious forms? Recent advances in quantitative research methods, fueled by Google books promises access to count and analyze data from a wider swathe of literary culture than ever before possible, but such data sets typically begin after 1700 and, more often, even as late as the early 19th century. Will Chaucer still count if his works can’t be counted in the same way as the texts of print, post-Blackletter culture? Will the power of Google books hegemonize the novel and literary prose? How will the computer technologies available to students reconceptualize what counts as the literary or as culture? Alternatively, how should we begin to think about the variety of edited medieval texts in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries that may be searched in this way and how to collate that data? All perspectives on the issue and its solutions welcome.

**Roundtable: Chaucer and the Gawain-Poet**

*Organizer:* Lynn Staley (lstaley@colgate.edu)

A session focusing on Chaucer’s “relationship” to the Gawain-poet. “Relationship” might include historic, political, aesthetic, textual, patronal, or thematic congruences, evidence for thinking about the two poets as potentially in conversation with one another. Conversation, of course, does not need to be actual or even contemporary.

**Roundtable: Chaucer’s Neoplatonism: Does it Matter?**

*Organizer:* John M. Hill (jdomars@aol.com)

I would hope for four participants in a roundtable discussion focused on Chaucer’s apparent Neoplatonism especially on how his commitments to that philosophy actually shape how he thinks and thus much of the cognitive content if not the evolving significations of his poetry. He has garnered his Neoplatonism from his close work with and translation of The Consolation of Philosophy, along with readings from Macrobius and Alain de Lille. I hope the roundtable will discuss the dream visions, especially The Parliament of Foules, and Troilus and Criseyde. Some attention might focus also on the tales of Canterbury. Among questions to ponder, apart from a sketch of what Boethian Neoplatonism is: what do we gain by focusing on Chaucer’s Neoplatonism, rather than by thinking of him as a late medieval nominalist or even a skeptic? In short, what is they payoff? Do we see the many versions of his great subjects—enabling belief, love, friendship and community—differently through Neoplatonic lenses? Is he a follower only of some normative version of Neoplatonism or does he introduce his own inflections? When he is playful, does he thereby distance himself from a philosophical commitment he takes seriously in other moods and contexts?

**Roundtable: William Peraldus’ Summa on the Vices and Virtues and the Foundations of Chaucerian Ethics**

*Organizers:* Richard G. Newhauser (richard.newhauser@asu.edu) and Larry Scanlon (lfscanlon@aol.com)

As Dante had before him for the Purgatorio, when Chaucer needed an authoritative overview of the seven deadly sins for the Parson’s Tale, he drew on the Summa on the Vices by the Dominican William Peraldus (c. 1200 – c. 1271). From the time of its earliest dissemination (c. 1250), Peraldus’ double Summa on the Vices and Virtues was a major influence on the moral tradition. With a critical edition and translation of the Summa on the Vices now well underway, the time is right for a Roundtable on Peraldus. Part of the purpose of this Roundtable will be to make Chaucerians aware of the edition. However, we hope to place greater emphasis on a wide-ranging discussion of the importance and manifold significance of the work’s content. Ethics has been an important preoccupation in recent Chaucer scholarship. This major work provides an additional focus for ethical inquiry, one that bespeaks a central strand in later medieval thought and that obviously influenced Chaucer. Participation is invited from all Chaucerians with an interest in ethics, penitential theology, and other aspects of religious thought in Chaucer’s work.
A conference to honour Derek Pearsall’s extraordinary contribution to Middle English studies on the occasion of his 80th birthday in 2011 is to take place Thurs., Oct. 20 - Sat., Oct. 22, 2011 at the University of Notre Dame London Facility (near the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, London). The theme of the conference will be "New Directions in Medieval Manuscript Studies and Reading Practices". The programme of speakers is now set, but for information, contact Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (kkerby@nd.edu) or Sarah Baechle (sbaechle@nd.edu).

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

MARGINALIA, an interdisciplinary graduate journal of the Middle Ages, invites submissions for its 2011 Issue on the theme of "Taste". Suggestions for topics include, but are not limited to:
- patronage
- the liturgical: 'gustate et videte', 'O taste and see'
- connotations of 'sapere' in Latin: 'to taste of', 'to resemble' 'to be inspired by' and 'to exercise discernment'
- extremes: starvation, gluttony and their moral implications
- medieval aesthetics
- vicissitudes: sweetness and bitterness
- conspicuous consumption and material culture
- Eve and the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
- feasting and fasting
- applications of sociological analyses of taste, e.g. the work of Pierre Bourdieu

We invite submissions in the form of long articles (approximately 5,000 words) and shorter Notes and Queries style articles (approximately 1,000 words). Please see our website www.marginalia.co.uk for further details.

Proposals for papers should be sent via email, no later than 10th March 2010, to submissions@marginalia.co.uk. We will be happy to answer queries before the deadline.

The editors of Marginalia are graduate students, advised by a board of academics, from the University of Cambridge.

CONFERENCES AND CALLS

On Friday, May 13, 2011, The Chaucer Review will feature three sessions in memory of Charles Muscatine at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo:
(1) STYLE: Nancy Mason Bradbury, Mary Clemente Davlin, R. D. Perry, Leah Schwebel (Presider, C. David Benson)
(2) THE AGE OF CHAUCER: Joyce Coleman, Susan Crane, William Watts, Richard Firth Green (Presider, Susanna Fein)
(3) TEACHING MEDIEVAL LITERATURE: John M. Fyler, Betsy Bowden, Peter G. Beidler, Robert Jacob McDonie (Presider, David Raybin)

Registration has now opened for the fourth London Chaucer conference, Chaucer and Celebrity
Details are available here: http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/events/conferences/2011/Chaucer/index.htm
Call for Papers: Medievalism, Arthuriana, and Landscapes of Enchantment

The conference committee for Studies in Medievalism is pleased to invite paper and session proposals for its 26th Annual International Conference on Medievalism, to be held at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, on October 20–22, 2011. The theme of this year’s conference is “Medievalism, Arthuriana, and Landscapes of Enchantment,” but we also welcome proposals on any topic related to the invocation or representation of the Middle Ages in post-medieval periods.

Email 250-word proposals to Anita Obermeier (AObermei@unm.edu) by April 18, 2011
For full CFP, see <http://ims.unm.edu/sim/SIM2011CFP.pdf>

NEW BOOK SERIES - CALL FOR PROPOSALS
University of Wales Press

NEW CENTURY CHAUCER - STUDIES AND TEXTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
General Editor: Helen Fulton

The University of Wales Press has launched a new series of Studies and Texts focused on the work of Geoffrey Chaucer and his contemporaries. Purpose-built editions and translations of individual texts, accompanied by stimulating studies introducing the latest research ideas, will be aimed at twenty-first century students and scholars whose training and research interests have been shaped by new media and a broad-based curriculum.

New Century Chaucer Texts: editions of single texts with facing translations into modern English, with notes and glossary, available in hard copy and online with spoken versions of the Middle English text.

New Century Chaucer Studies: contextualizing research-led studies of individual texts featuring new approaches which include comparative studies, Chaucer’s post-medieval reception, Chaucer and his contemporaries, and historical background. Online support will include images and bibliographies.

To discuss your ideas for contributing to this series, please contact Helen Fulton, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York, UK, helen.fulton@york.ac.uk

Situating the Dartmouth Brut Manuscript

May 20-21
Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, USA

In 2006, Rauner Special Collections Library of Dartmouth College purchased a fifteenth-century manuscript of the English Brut chronicle. Previously in private hands and not included in previous studies of the Brut tradition, the manuscript contains a unique version of British history, from Trojan settlement to King Arthur to Henry V. This conference aims to bring the Dartmouth Brut into current scholarly discussions of late medieval English culture, scribal practices, and reading publics.

Speakers: Elizabeth Bryan (Brown University), Edward Donald Kennedy (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Meg Lamont (North Carolina State University), Julia Marvin (University of Notre Dame), Lister Matheson (Michigan State University), Ryan Perry (Queen's University, Belfast). Conference free and open to all. Information and RSVP: Michelle R. Warren, Professor of Comparative Literature (Michelle.R.Warren@Dartmouth.edu).

PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Religion & Literature is very pleased to announce the publication of a special double issue entitled “Something Fearful: Medievalist Scholars on the Religious Turn in Literary Criticism,” guest edited by Dr. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, The Notre Dame Professor of English, and Jonathan Julfs, Visiting Lecturer, University of Notre Dame.


2010 R. H. Gapper Book Prize Recipient

NCS member Ardis Butterfield has been awarded the 2010 R. H. Gapper Book Prize for her book, The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language and Nation in the Hundred Years War. The award is given by the Society for French Studies for the best book published in 2009 by a scholar working in Britain or Ireland in French studies, judged on the criteria of critical and scholarly distinction and likely impact on wider critical debate. http://www.sfs.ac.uk/gapperbook_2010.htm

Prof. Ed Condren is in the early stages of preparing an edition of the poems of the Pearl Manuscript for a completion date of late summer, 2012. He welcomes any and all contact: condren@humnet.ucla.edu, or Prof. Ed Condren, P.O. Box 567, Glenbrook, NV 89413.

THE NEW CHAUCER SOCIETY

President: Carolyn Dinshaw

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ADDENDUM

Please note the addition of the following announcement omitted from the original list of conference calls in the print version:

**International Anchoritic Society Biannual Conference: September 2011 in Grand Forks, ND**

The next International Anchoritic Society Conference will be held September 16-18, 2011 in Grand Forks, North Dakota USA at the University of North Dakota.

Conference theme: liminality and the wilderness.

Keynote Speaker: Michael G. Sargent, Queens College/CUNY

Please send 500-750 word abstracts to <IAS.UND.2010@gmail.com> by June 15, 2011. Please also include a cover sheet with your name, affiliation, and contact information. The conference theme is liminality and the wilderness, but we will accept abstracts on any aspect of the anchoritic vocation, as well as on enclosure, monasticism, and related topics. We are especially interested in explorations of little-known texts.

Questions? Please contact: Michelle M. Sauer
IAS Vice President & Conference Host
Department of English; Stop 7209
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND 58202
(701) 777-2783
michelle.m.sauer@und.edu

Reserve the date! Please join us for the biannual conference—the first in the USA!

*The Chaucer Review* is pleased to announce that its next publication will be a special double issue (46.1/2) that celebrates the scholarship and ongoing career of C. David Benson. After an introduction by Daniel Donoghue, Linda Georgianna, and James Simpson, it contains new essays on Chaucer and Middle English topics by Amy Appleford and Nicholas Watson, Christopher Cannon, Christine Cooper-Rompano, Mary Clemente Davlin, O.P., A. S. G. Edwards, Susanna Fein, Jamie C. Fumo, Rebecca Krug, Kathryn L. Lynch, Francine McGregor, Derek Pearsall, Susan E. Phillips, David Raybin, and Elizabeth Robertson. Edited by Fein and Raybin with Donoghue, Simpson and Watson, the special issue will appear in August/September 2011.