

EN398: Special Topics in Medieval Studies
A Yorkshire Miscellany
Spring, 2020

Miller Library 205
Thursdays, 1:00-3:30pm

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Office Hours: Monday, 9:30-11:00; Thursday, 10:30-12:00; other times by appointment (send an email or talk to me in class)

In this class we will study both the contents and the material form of British Library MS Additional 37049, a manuscript prepared for a community of Carthusian monks living in Yorkshire, England, near the end of the fifteenth century. (For a digital facsimile of this manuscript, see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_37049.)

The collection brings together a wide variety of late medieval texts, including both prose and verse, many accompanied by vivid—if somewhat unrefined—illustrations depicting religious figures, decaying bodies, and the fate of souls in the afterlife. While many of the texts are religious in nature, as to be expected given the book's initial audience, the volume also contains travel narratives (*Mandeville's Travels*), historical writing, and English translations of classical texts. As such, it demonstrates the literary and rhetorical power of the miscellany form, where the juxtaposition of disparate texts make visible new themes, resonances, and patterns.

Goals and objectives:

I have several goals for our experience in this class. I hope that we will:

1. read and analyze the Middle English texts contained in British Library MS Additional 37049, and consider their place in the complex cultural, historical, linguistic, and religious world of late medieval Europe;
2. attend to the material characteristics of this manuscript, including the presence of images, the physical construction of the book, and signs of its origins and use by readers;
3. explore the relationship between form and content and consider how, in the words of bibliographer D.F. McKenzie, “form effects meaning;”
4. consider the opportunities and challenges afforded by digitization and related methods of analysis;
5. use literary and bibliographical analysis as the basis for rigorous argumentative writing and conduct research using primary and secondary sources.

To pursue these goals, we'll do the following:

1. Read a selection of texts from Additional 37049 in modern editions, and consider their structural, poetic, and thematic qualities;



Detail, BL Add MS 37049 fol. 32v

2. Learn about the history and production of Additional 37049 and similar medieval manuscripts through secondary reading and analysis of objects in Special Collections;
3. Investigate Additional 37049 further through use of the digital facsimile, drawing on a variety of digital humanities resources as we do so;
4. Build skills in transcription, annotation, and visual analysis;
5. Produce written work that:
 - a. Engages carefully with course readings,
 - b. Writes specifically about both the form and contents of Additional 37049,
 - c. When appropriate, incorporates recent, relevant, and peer-reviewed secondary sources,
 - d. Properly documents its use of those sources
6. Develop familiarity and facility with a number of resources for the study of early books and literature, including manuscript and library catalogues, the Digital Index of Middle English Verse, the Middle English Dictionary, the International Medieval Bibliography and the MLA International Bibliography, as well as reference works like *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*.
7. Learn to use the library resources available to us at Colby to their fullest extent.

As we approach this material together, I expect us to strive to uphold the values articulated in Colby's statement on diversity:

Colby College is dedicated to the education of humane, thoughtful, and engaged persons prepared to respond to the challenges of an increasingly diverse and global society and to the issues of justice that arise therein. The College also is committed to fostering a fully inclusive campus community, enriched by persons of different races, gender identities, ethnicities, nationalities, economic backgrounds, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, political beliefs, and spiritual values. We strive to confront and overcome actions and attitudes that discourage the widest possible range of participation in our community, and we seek to deepen our understanding of diversity in our daily relationships and in our dealings as an institution. (<http://www.colby.edu/diversity/statement-on-diversity/>)

Required Texts

The only required text for this class is Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Cornell UP, 2008), which is available at the campus bookstore and online. Additional course materials will be made available via Moodle. Students should come to class with a laptop computer with reliable internet access (navigation of the digital facsimile of the manuscript will be difficult on a phone or tablet; laptop computers can be borrowed from the library circulation desk). Our classroom has a limited number of outlets; you are responsible for making sure your device is adequately charged.

Course Rubric

Participation and attendance (20%)

Semester project (80%)

Assignment 1: Description (10%)

Assignment 2: Transcription (10%)

Assignment 3: Comparison (10%)

Assignment 4: Annotation (10%)

Assignment 5: Analysis (10%)

Note: these five assignments will be graded but may be revised before they are resubmitted as a part of the final portfolio

CLAS poster session
In-class presentation (5%)
Poster (25%)

Participation

To receive full credit for this component of the grade, you must attend class regularly, contribute actively to our class discussions, and participate fully in the work of the class. This means that you must arrive on time, having read the assigned material, and with a copy of the day's materials accessible. I may, from time to time, give short quizzes on the assigned reading. I also expect you to be sufficiently rested and/or caffeinated to remain alert throughout class and to refrain from checking your cell phone, and to use your laptops responsibly throughout the class.

Studies show that active participation in class discussion has a direct, positive impact on the amount of material students learn in a class. I want you to learn as much as possible. To that end, I expect you to participate verbally and as a listener in both small group and class-wide discussions. From time to time, I may ask you to assess your level of participation.

Since this class is a seminar, we will have a short break midway through our meetings. I expect you to plan your time such that you do not ordinarily need to leave class while we are in session (what I mean is: go to the bathroom before class). Snacks and drinks are fine as long as they do not distract other students.

Attendance policy

Students are expected to be present and prepared for all class meetings. If you know you will be absent for an athletic contest, religious observance, or other obligation, you must inform me via email during the first two weeks of the semester. Students will generally be allowed one excused absence per term; beyond that, excused absences are at my discretion and you are responsible for contacting me concerning your absence and making arrangements to obtain notes and other course materials. Unexcused absences will lower your participation and/or overall grade.

Late work

I expect you to submit all written work for the course in a timely fashion, and will apply a penalty of one grade (e.g., A- to B+) for each day an assignment is late. I also realize that each of you are balancing a variety of obligations, academic and otherwise, that may become more acute at certain times of the semester. Because of this, I grant students two free late days per semester. You may use these either consecutively or for two different assignments, but once they are gone, a retroactive penalty of one grade per day will kick in. Thus, under this policy, an A paper turned in within 48 hours of the due date would still receive an A, but at 49 hours past the due date, it would receive a B.

Academic Honesty

The word plagiarism derives from the Latin word for "kidnapping." Intellectual kidnapping may take many forms. It can be as self-consciously deceitful an act as the stealing of someone else's work and passing it off as one's own. More often, though, it is the result of inattention and carelessness, such as the failure to properly document someone else's words or ideas by setting them off within

quotation marks and citing the source. Depending on the nature of the offense, penalty will range from failing the assignment and failing the course to disciplinary action from the Office of the Dean of Students. As a rule of thumb, err on the side of safety and cite your sources. If you are ever unsure about how or when to do so, just ask!

Accommodations

Any student requiring accommodation over the course of the semester should contact me in order to make arrangements.

Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement

Colby College prohibits and will not tolerate sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination of any kind. Colby is legally obligated to investigate sexual misconduct (including, but not limited to sexual assault and sexual harassment). If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact Colby Counseling Services (207-859-4490) or the Director of the Gender and Sexual Diversity Program, Emily Schusterbauer (207-859-4093). Students should be aware that faculty members are considered responsible employees aka mandated reporters; as such, if you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a faculty member, they have an obligation to report it to Colby's Title IX Coordinator. "Disclosure" may include communication in-person, via email/phone/text, or through class assignments. To learn more about sexual misconduct or report an incident, visit <http://www.colby.edu/sexualviolence/>.

Schedule of readings and topics

PART 1: Reading the Book

Week 1 (February 6): Introduction, Orientation to Medieval Manuscripts

Topics:

- What is Additional 37049?
- Introductions
- Syllabus and assignment overview
- Close looking at a manuscript page

Before class:

- download images

Week 2 (February 13): A Deeper Dive: Middle English and Monastic Cultures

Topics:

- Who were the Carthusians?
- How to read a manuscript description
- Introduction to Middle English
- Resources for research

Before class:

- Read Jessica Brantley, "Silence Visible": Carthusian Devotional Reading and Meditative Practice" from *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (University of Pennsylvania P, 2007), pg. 27-77.

- Read Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Cornell UP, 2008), pg. 1-66.
- Read this short blog about cataloging the manuscript:
<https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2013/07/wandering-in-the-desert-of-religion.html>
- Read the British Library's catalogue description for Additional MS 37049:
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_37049
- Set up and log into your Digital Mappa account

Week 3 (February 20): Text and Context: Manuscript Miscellanies and the Edited Text

Topics:

- What is in MS Additional 37049?
- What are miscellanies and how to we read them?
- Introduction to Middle English paleography
- Transcription practice

Before class:

- email Professor Cook with your first and second choice of text for the semester project
- Read Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Cornell UP, 2008), pg. 67-180.
- Read Arthur Bahr, "Miscellaneity and variance in the medieval book," in *The Medieval Manuscript Book: Cultural Approaches*, ed. Michael Johnston and Michael Van Dussen, (Cambridge UP, 2015), pp. 181-198

Week 4 (February 27): Text, Image, and Imagetext

Topics:

- description and transcription
- the relationship between text and image
- affective piety

Before class:

- Assignment 1: submit a detailed description of your folio(s) via Moodle
- Read Jessica Brantley, "The Shapes of Eremitc Reading in the *Desert of Religion*," *Reading in the Wilderness*, 79-120.
- Review fols. 46r-66v of Add MS 37049 (the *Desert of Religion*) as well as fols. 72-73r (the "flowchart of salvation") and fols. 80v-81r (the "cart of the faithful").

PART 2: Reading the Texts

Note: the topics in weeks 5-9 will depend on the texts chosen by students in the class. Two or three students will present each week.

Week 5 (March 5): Imaging in the World

Topics:

- the organization of Add MS 37049
- secular materials in religious books
- locating editions and other witnesses

Before class:

- Assignment 2: submit your transcription via Moodle
- Review folios 1-10v in Add MS 37049
- Read selections from *Mandeville's Travels* (Moodle)
- Wolfgang-Valentin Ikaš, "Martinus Polonus' Chronicle of the Popes and Emperors: A Medieval Best-Seller and Its Neglected Influence on Medieval English Chroniclers." *The English Historical Review* 116, no. 466 (2001): 327-41.

Week 6 (March 12): Devotion to Christ

Topics:

- lyric forms
- law and literature
- role of the Virgin Mary
- reading a text across multiple manuscripts

Before class:

- no assignment this week, but make sure you have located an edited version and a facsimile of another witness of your next. Plan ahead, as you may need to request a volume through CCBcat, MaineCat, ILLiad!
- Review folios 23r-30r, 67v in Add MS 37049
- Read the *Shorter Charter of Christ* (Moodle)
- Read "In a tabernakil of a towre" (Moodle)
- Read "With sharp thorns that beth keen" (Moodle)
- Read *The Complaint of Christ on the Cross* (Moodle)
- Read Douglas Gray, "London, British Library, Additional MS 37049 -- a spiritual encyclopedia," in *Text and Controversy from Wyclif to Bale: Essays in Honour of Anne Hudson*, ed. Helen Barr and Ann M. Hutchison (Brepols, 2005), pp. 99-116 (Moodle)

Week 7 (March 19): Mystical Devotion

Topics:

- Mysticism in late medieval England
- Introduction to Digital Mappa

Before class:

- Assignment 3: submit a comparison of your text with another witness to Moodle
- Review folios 30v-44v in Add MS 37049
- Read excerpts from Richard Rolle, *Ego Dormio* (Moodle)
- Read excerpts from the *Prick of Conscience* (Moodle)
- Read excerpts from the *Treatise of the Seven Points of True Love and Everlasting Wisdom* (Moodle)
- Jeremy Catto, "1349–1412: Culture and History," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism*, edited by Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (Cambridge UP, 2011), 113–32.

Spring Break (March 26): no class

Week 8 (April 2): The Fate of the Soul

Topics:

- Debate poetry
- Close reading Middle English

Before class:

- Assignment 4: annotated version of your text due on Digital Mappa
- Review fol. 19v (Debate for the Soul), fol. 20r 24r, 32v-35r (including transi tomb image), 69v-70r
- Read “Querela Divina” (Moodle)
- Read the “Apple of Solace” (Moodle)
- Read “Debate between the Body and the Worms” (Moodle)

Week 9 (April 9): The Heavenly Destination

Topics:

- translation
- text and image
- mysticism and song
- preparing for CLAS, poster sessions

Before class:

- Assignment 5: 500-700 word analytical paper on your text
- Review fols. 70v-84v in Add MS 37049
- Read “Dance of Makabre” (Moodle)
- Read excerpts from Thomas Hoccleve’s translation of *The Pilgrimage of the Soul* (Moodle)

PART 3: Sharing the Book

Week 10 (April 16):

Topics:

- Preparing for CLAS
- No meeting this week.
- Students meet individually with Professor Cook.

Before Thursday, 3:30pm:

- All poster materials due

Week 11 (April 23): CLAS dress rehearsal

Topics:

- Students present their work in progress to the class.

Before class:

- Prepare to discuss your final project with the class. Each student will have 10-12 minutes to a) discuss their semester project, including any difficulties or challenges they may have faced and b) answer questions from the class.

- come up with a list of five things to share with someone viewing your poster for the first time that are not already directly on the poster.

Week 12 (April 30): CLAS

Invite your friends and professors, and impress them with pictures of grinning skeletons and happy worms!

Week 13 (May 7): Where do we go from here?

Topics:

- digitization, labor, and sustainability
- tour of Colby special collections

Before class:

- read Bridget Whearty, "Adam Sciveyn in Cyberspace: Loss, Labour, Ideology, and Infrastructure in Interoperable Reuse of Digital Manuscript Metadata," in *Meeting the Medieval in a Digital World*. Ed. Matthew Evan Davis, Tamsyn Mahoney-Steel and Ece Turnator (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), pp. 157–202.
- read Heather Bamford and Emily C. Francomano. "On Digital-Medieval Manuscript Culture: A Tentative Manifesto." *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures* 7, no. 1 (2018): 29-45

Friday, May 15, 1:00pm:

- **final portfolios due with cover sheet.**
- **All previously submitted assignments may be corrected and resubmitted as a part of the portfolio**