

**Carleton University  
Winter 2021  
Department of English**

**ENGL 5208: Studies in Middle English Literature  
Winter 2021 Topic:**

**“For ther is so grete diversite”:  
Translation and Multilingualism in Late Medieval England**

**Tuesdays 8:35-11:25am  
Location: Online**

**Professor: Dr. S. Bly Calkin  
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Office Hours: By appointment on BBB or after class**

**Course Description:**

Translation and multilingualism loom large in contemporary discussions of global literatures and of transnationalism. These issues, however, also lie at the very heart of medieval English literature. What language do writers use at what point in their texts? Do they use a different language to speak to women or to men? How does translating a text change it, and in what ways? How might writers change texts to reflect the perspectives of their culture(s)? These are all questions that confronted writers working in the multilingual world of late medieval England as they made choices to write, or not to write, in English, French, Welsh, and Latin. This course offers students the opportunity to consider how various writers navigated these linguistic choices and the occasionally fierce, sometimes life-threatening, repercussions of the choices made. The course will explore the deployment of multiple languages within texts and within manuscripts as well as the ways in which texts migrate from one language to another through translation and re-translation. It will also consider the ways in which authors make use of different languages to advance distinctive authorial visions, and to retell the same narrative in intriguing and potentially inflammatory ways.

The course will begin by considering some of the theoretical pronouncements on multilingualism and translation by modern and medieval writers. It will then proceed to consider each week a set of late medieval texts that navigate multilingualism in interesting ways. We will study some Arthurian narratives and the forms they take in French, Welsh, and Middle English versions. We will also examine some macaronic poems (lyric poems written in multiple languages) and the ways they use different languages simultaneously to exclude or include certain audiences or evoke certain cultural associations. We will also study the writings of some of the renowned, canonical writers of late medieval England (Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, and William Langland) to study their engagement of the multilingual culture they inhabited. The course will then turn to translations of holy texts and saintly bodies, considering the ways in which the movements of such texts and bodies across borders are controlled and challenged. We will study in particular the ways in which women and heretics writing in English challenged the pervasive Latinity associated with masculine clerical culture during the Middle Ages as they translated or retold the Bible, and consequently found themselves involved in

vehement and deadly cultural debates. In all cases, we will strive to answer the questions: What are the distinctive registers and resonances of different languages, how do different medieval writers deploy them, and to what effect?

**N.B. All texts not in English will be read in a modern English translation, a decision which will, of course, also be a subject of reflection and discussion.**

### **Course Objectives:**

In this course students will:

- Read a variety of texts and genres from late medieval England
- Develop awareness of the multilingual registers within which many Middle English writers worked
- Reflect upon ideas of translation, originality, authorship, authority, “source” and “derivative” texts, and the problems of such terms and categorizations
- Develop awareness of the cultural politics associated with languages and translations in multilingual contexts both generally and in late medieval England
- Reflect upon the power of language selection and use, and the access to power that different languages either enable or thwart
- Read a range of secondary scholarship on the texts studied
- Develop an appreciation and understanding of the Middle English language as well as a facility with reading and quoting it
- Familiarize themselves with the characteristics of texts produced in a manuscript culture, and with the different ways in which such texts are presented today

### **Online Delivery Winter 2021:**

Based on feedback received from students, I am committed to offering students a seminar course where they can meet synchronously for a presentation/discussion experience at a set time as they read through these texts. This allows for the sharing of responses and ideas, the exploration of questions in a group format, and some virtual human contact with both me and your fellow students

To that end, I have decided that I will present this course online as a video conference meeting via Big Blue Button (BBB), which is similar to Zoom but embedded into CULearn with better security. BBB allows you the opportunity to virtually raise a hand, to unmute yourself and ask a question, or to type in a chat question for us all to explore. It also allows for recording and break-out rooms. I have been told by my students that they liked this feeling of in-person contact and dynamism on Big Blue Button, and that they desired the opportunity to attend class on a regular schedule to help structure their days during social isolation.

**BBB meetings will occur during most of our set meeting times and will be recorded** so that students who need to miss class can still access the course at a later time. Because this is a seminar, discussion is central and so I expect students to attend in-person as much as possible, barring internet/computer problems, illness, etc. I plan to allow the first 20-25 minutes of class as a chance to read your colleagues’ posts on the assigned readings so that when we meet in person starting at 9am people can start interacting with other people’s responses right away. We will then run the class live from 9-11:25am, with a 10-minute break halfway through to mitigate BBB fatigue (we can return and revisit this plan as necessary).

This course best fits the Carleton definition of a **Synchronous Course**, with the qualifications that the class will be recorded for asynchronous access when needed and that students may choose to present their seminar as a pre-recorded 30-minute lecture/presentation and then run the discussion live during class time.

### **Synchronous Courses**

A real-time, online course where the instructor and students meet via web conferencing tools, at scheduled days and times. Instructors and students share information, ideas and learning experiences in a virtual course environment. Participation in synchronous courses requires students to have reliable, high-speed Internet access, a computer (ideally with a webcam), and a headset with a microphone.

### **Technology likely to create best experience:**

- reliable high-speed internet access at the class meeting times
- a headset/ear buds with a microphone
- computer, ideally with a webcam function (phones may work but BBB seems to work better on computer)

See also the Carleton Educational Technology Web Pages re:

- Technological Specifications for Online Learning: <https://carleton.ca/its/help-centre/faq-technical-specs-for-new-students/>
- Browser Requirements: <https://carleton.ca/culearnsupport/students/browser-support/>
- Accessing and Using Big Blue Button as a student: <https://carleton.ca/culearnsupport/students/bigbluebutton/>

If you have any questions, please contact me at [siobhain.calkin@carleton.ca](mailto:siobhain.calkin@carleton.ca).

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

**Religious obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520- 6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

## Required Texts:

- Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*. Trans. William W. Kibler. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 1991. (Paperback) ISBN: 0-14-044521-8 / 9780140445213
- *Sir Perceval of Galles and Ywain and Gawain*, ed. Mary Flowers Braswell. TEAMS. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995. (Paperback) ISBN: 1879288605 / 978-1879288607 (also available on-line at <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams>; these texts are quite long though so you may prefer to read them in a hard copy)

**Required readings not in these books will be available through library reserves (ARES) or the TEAMS web resource for scholars.**

## Please note:

*I have ordered the two books through the student-run Haven Books near campus (43 Seneca Street). During Covid-19 Haven has moved to an online model of selling books in which they offer shipping across North America and free curbside pickup (tel: 613-730-9888; e-mail: [havenbooks@cusaonline.ca](mailto:havenbooks@cusaonline.ca); [www.havenbooks.ca](http://www.havenbooks.ca)). You may also order books directly from the individual publishers or seek copies from your preferred online booksellers (e.g. abebooks etc).*

## Evaluation:

### Manuscript Editing Assignment

15%

*An assignment to transcribe and edit 10-15 lines of Middle English from a manuscript reproduction or reproductions. You will be expected to provide the edited lines, a description of the hand, and a brief rationale for your edition. A full assignment sheet with detailed instructions will be distributed separately.*

### Short Article Summary

5%

*A brief (one-page single-spaced maximum) written summary of one scholarly article listed as a Recommended Secondary Reading for this course. The summary is to be posted on CULearn by **12noon the Monday before** the class meeting under which it is listed.*

### Seminar Presentation

30%

*A 60-minute seminar presentation on issues related to the text(s) assigned for the day of your presentation. You should present information for 30 of those minutes (either in person or pre-recorded; your choice) and then lead a live class discussion for the other 30 minutes. Secondary research is required, as are a one-page outline of the presentation and a list of the sources used. Evaluation will be based on the presentation, outline, list of sources, and discussion. It will reflect the seminar's fulfillment of the length and format requirements, the quality of research, the quality of analysis of primary texts, the clarity of organization and expression, the effectiveness of organization and expression, the correctness and accuracy of any written materials displayed or distributed, and the ability to engage class members and manage discussion.*

## Term Paper

5-minute Draft Paper Abstract Presentation

5%

15-20 page paper

25%

*Secondary Research is required, as is use of MLA or Chicago Style for bibliographic references.*

## Reading Responses

20%

*You are expected to post to CULearn 2 (two) questions for discussion or 1 (one) paragraph of reflection on the assigned readings for each class meeting Weeks 2-11. Each post is to be made to CULearn before 8am on the Tuesday of that class meeting, and you are expected to come to class prepared to share your ideas as a kick-off to discussion as needed. Posts will be evaluated on thoughtfulness of analysis, clarity and correctness of prose communication of your ideas, timeliness of completion/posting, and engagement with the readings for that day.*

**Please note:** Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations, lectures, hand-outs, assignments, etc) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

## Schedule of Classes and Readings:

**Jan. 12**      **Introduction to Course  
Historical Contexts**

**Jan. 19**      **Theoretical Pronouncements: Multilingualism, Translation, and the Vernacular**

### ***Required Readings:***

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator," trans. Steven Rendall, in *TTR: Traduction, terminologie, redaction* 10.2 (1997): 151-65. (ARES)

Dante Alighieri, *Il convivio*, Treatise 1, chapters 5-13, pp. 42-66 in *Dante's Convivio*, trans. W. W. Jackson. (ARES)

John of Trevisa, "Dialogue between the Lord and the Clerk on Translation; Epistle on Translation," pp. 131-8 in *Idea of the Vernacular*. (ARES)

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, "The Politics of Translation," pp. 179-200 in *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. (ARES)

### ***Recommended Secondary Reading:***

Stein, Robert M. "Multilingualism," in *Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm 23-37. (ARES)

**Jan. 26**      **French and Welsh: Migration, Translation, Multilingualism**

### ***Required Readings:***

Chrétien de Troyes, *Story of the Grail (Perceval)* in *Arthurian Romances*

*Peredur son of Efrog*, in *The Mabinogion*, ed Sioned Davies (ARES)

**Recommended Secondary Readings:**

Aronstein, Susan. "Becoming Welsh: Counter-Colonialism and the Negotiation of Native Identity in *Peredur vab Efwrc*." *Exemplaria* 17.1 (2005): 135-68. (ARES)

Lloyd-Morgan, Ceridwen. "Migrating Narratives: Peredur, Owain, and Geraint." In *A Companion to Arthurian Literature*, ed. Helen Fulton, pp. 128-141. (ARES)

**Feb. 2 Welsh and French: Migration, Translation, Multilingualism II**

**Required Readings:**

*The Lady of the Well* in *The Mabinogion*, ed. Sioned Davies (ARES)

Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain (Le chevalier au lion)* in *Arthurian Romances*

**Recommended Secondary Readings:**

Fulton, Helen. "Individual and society in *Owain/Yvain* and *Gereint/Erec*," in *The Individual in Celtic Literatures*, ed. J. Nagy, pp. 15-50. (ARES)

Lindahl, Carl. "Yvain's Return to Wales," *Arthuriana* 10.3 (2000): 44-56. (ARES)

Black, Nancy B. "The language of the illustrations of Chrétien de Troyes's *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*," *Studies in Iconography* 15 (1993): 45-75. (ARES)

**Feb. 9 French and Middle English: Translation, Context, Literary Value**

**Required Readings:**

*Sir Perceval of Galles* (TEAMS)

*Ywain and Gawain* (TEAMS)

**Recommended Secondary Readings:**

Warren, Michelle. "Translation" in *Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm 51-67. (ARES)

Matthews, David. "Translation and Ideology: The Case of Ywain and Gawain." *Neophilologus* 76.3 (1992): 452-63. (ARES)

Busby, Keith. "Chrétien de Troyes English'd." *Neophilologus* 71.4 (1987): 596-613. (ARES)

**Feb. 16 No Class meetings; Reading Week**

**Feb. 23      Editing Assignment Due**

**The Multilingualism of Manuscripts and Lyrics: Revelations and Agendas**

**Required Readings:**

\*All texts available online from the TEAMS website: <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams>. You will need to title search the specific volumes, then click on the "View All X items" link, then locate the number or title of the lyric.

Items 53, 54, 55, 69, and 114 in *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, ed. Susanna Fein, David Raybin and Jan Ziolkowski, vols. 2 and 3, TEAMS

Items 5, 57, 58, 82, 83 in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, ed. Karen Saupe, TEAMS

John Gower, *Balades* 25, 35, 41-46 from the *Cinkante Balades* in *The French Balades*, ed. R. F. Yeager, TEAMS

"Abuse of Women," in *The Trials and Joys of Marriage*, ed. Eve Salisbury, TEAMS

"Thou that sellest the word of God" and "Freers, Freers, Wo Ye Be," in *Medieval English Political Writings*, ed. James Dean, TEAMS

**Recommended Secondary Readings:**

Lerer, Seth. "'Dum ludis floribus': Language and Text in the Medieval English lyric" *Philological Quarterly* 87. 3-4 (2008): 237-55 (ARES)

Scahill, John. "Trilingualism in Early Middle English Miscellanies: Languages and Literature." *Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003), 18-52. (ARES)

Butterfield, Ardis. "*Lingua franca*: The International Language of Love," in *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War*, pp. 234-68 (ARES)

**Mar. 2      Chaucer: French and Latin Worlds**

**Required Readings:**

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale*

—. *The Summoner's Prologue and Tale*

(accessed via: <https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/pages/text-and-translations>)

French Sources of *NPT*, in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Correale and Hamel, vol. 1, pp. 449-55 and 474-87 (ARES)

**Recommended Secondary Readings:**

Somerset, Fiona. "'As just as is a squyre': The politics of 'lewed translacion' in Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 21 (1999): 187-207. (ARES)

Travis, Peter W. "The Nun's Priest's Tale as Grammar-School Primer." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* (1985): 81-91. (ARES)



**Mar. 9 Chaucer, Italian Multilingualism, and the Politics of Translation**

Readings:

Chaucer, *The Clerk's Prologue and Tale* (accessed via:

<https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/pages/text-and-translations>)

Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Day 10, Story 10 in any English translation (ARES)

Francesco Petrarco, *Epistolae Seniles XVII.3*, in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Correale and Hamel, vol. 1, pp.108-29 (ARES)

**Recommended Secondary Reading:**

Wallace, David. "'Whan she translated was': Humanism, Tyranny, and the Petrarchan Academy," in *Chaucerian Polity*, pp. 261-98. (ARES)

**Mar. 16 Clerical Cultures I: Latin and English**

**Required Readings:**

William Langland, "Prologue" and Passus XV in *Piers Plowman* [B-version], ed. Shepherd and Robertson, 2006. (ARES)

**Recommended Secondary Readings:**

Somerset, Fiona. "'Al þe comonys with o voys atonys': Multilingual Latin and Vernacular Voice in *Piers Plowman*," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 19 (2005): 107-36. (ARES)

Steiner, Emily. "Introduction (Prologue)," *Reading Piers Plowman* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), pp. 1-20. (ARES)

Cannon, Christopher. "Vernacular Latin," *Speculum* 90.3 (2015): 641-53. (ARES)

**Mar. 23 Clerical Cultures II: Translating Bodies**

Readings:

Osbern Bokenham, "Vita Sanctae Margarete Virginis et Martiris," in *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, pp. 7-38. (ARES)

"Inventio crucis" in *Legends of the Holy Rood symbols of the passion and cross-poems*, ed. R. Morris (1871), pp. 18-47 (Vernon Manuscript version, right-hand side) and pp.154-60 (Caxton's version) (ARES)

"Exaltatio crucis" in *Legends of the Holy Rood . . .*, ed. Morris (1871) pp. 49-61 (Vernon MS, right-hand side) and pp. 161-69 (Caxton's Version) (ARES)

**Recommended Secondary Readings:**

Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, Preface and

Chapter 1 (pp. xi-xiii and 3-27 in 1990 rev. ed) (ARES)  
Florence Bourgne, "Translating Saints' Lives into the Vernacular: Translatio Studii and Furta Sacra (Translation as Theft)," *Traduire au Moyen Age. The Medieval Translator* 5, ed. Ellis and Tixier (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), pp. 50-63 (ARES)

**Mar. 30 Clerical Cultures III: Translating the Bible**

**Required Readings:**

Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson. (N.B Any translation will do), Book 2, Chapters 4-6 and 10-16; Book 4, Chapter 20 (pp. 36-38, 43-53, 146-52 in Robertson). (ARES)

Prologue to the Wycliffite Bible, Chapter 15, pp. 67-72 in *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. Anne Hudson (ARES); text also available online in *Medieval English Political Writings*, ed. J. Dean, TEAMS

Margery Kempe, Book 1, Chapters 79-81, lines 4441-4696, in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Lynn Staley, TEAMS (available on-line)

Nicholas Watson, "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409" *Speculum* 70. 4 (1995): 822-864. (ARES)

**Recommended Secondary Reading:**

Venuti, Lawrence. "Genealogies of Translation Theory: Jerome," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, pp. 483-502. (ARES)

**Apr. 6 Draft Paper Presentations/Discussions**

*Please come with a 5-minute presentation from your paper, either an outline including the thesis and line of argument or the first page or two of a draft. You will distribute copies of these to the class along with your bibliography. You will then read/present them orally. An informal discussion and advice session will follow.*

**Apr. 13 Term Paper Due**

**Make-Up / Catch-up Class (for any missed seminars, or for interrupted/cancelled classes)**

**If class desires, virtual Rare Books Tour or Book Arts Lab activities or Closing Discussion can be arranged.**