Fall 8-15-2001

ENG 5000-001: Studies in Old and Middle English Literature: Gawain and Pearl

David Raybin
Eastern Illinois University

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English 5000: Studies in Old and Middle English Literature: *Gawain and Pearl*
Fall 2001

Instructor: **David Raybin**
Office: 3761 [324] Coleman Hall
Office Hours: Tu 11-12; W 9-12; and by appointment
Telephone: **581-6980** (office); **330/678-2628** (home, weekends before 9:00 p.m.)
Electronic Mail: cfdbr@eiu.edu

**Texts:**
- Derek Brewer and Jonathan Gibson, eds., *A Companion to the Gawain Poet*
- Susanna Fein, ed., *Moral Love Songs and Laments*
- Casey Finch, trans., *The Complete Works of the Pearl Poet*
- Thomas Hahn, ed., *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

**August**
- 22: Introduction to the Course
- 29: *Pearl*
  - Derek Brewer, "Introduction," in *A Companion to the Gawain Poet*
  - Response Paper

**September**
- 5: *Cleanliness*
  - Malcolm Andrew, "Theories of Authorship," in *A Companion to the Gawain Poet*
  - Response Paper
- 12: *Patience*
  - A. C. Spearing, "Poetic Identity," in *A Companion to the Gawain Poet*
  - Response Paper
- 19: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
  - Michael J. Bennett, "The Historical Background," in *A Companion to the Gawain Poet*
  - Response Paper

**Sept. 26 - October 17:** Poems in *Moral Love Songs and Laments* and criticism on *Pearl*

**October**
- 24: *Pearl*

**Oct. 31 - November 28:** Poems in *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales* and criticism on *SGGK*

**December**
- 5: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
  - Seminar Paper
- 12: Wrapping up of the Course
Course Description

The unique copies of the poems *Pearl, Cleanness, Patience*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are preserved in a late fourteenth-century manuscript: British Library MS Cotton Nero A.x. The unknown author of these poems, called the *Pearl-*poet by those who favor the spiritual *Pearl* and the *Gawain-*poet by those who fancy the chivalric *Gawain*, is one of the extraordinary voices in English literary history. In this class we will study the works of this consummate artist, contemporary verse that illuminates his accomplishment, and a good sampling of the abundant recent scholarship on the poems.

Course Requirements and Grading

Final grades will be determined on a 100-point scale:

- **Response Papers (4 @ 10 pts. each)**: 40 points
- **Seminar Paper**: 50 points
- **Presentations, Participation, etc.**: 10 points

**Course Grade**: A= 90-100; B= 80-89.99; C= 70-79.99; No Credit= below 70

**Response Papers**. Papers will be about **two pages** long and will develop an original idea about the primary text.

**Seminar Paper**. The paper will be about **ten to twelve pages** long, and will develop an original idea that shows awareness both of a primary text (or texts) and of current scholarship related to that text.

**Presentations**. While we will all read the primary texts, much of the reading of criticism will be divided among the class, with participants offering reports on what they have read.

Course/University Policies

**Typing**. Papers **must be typed** (double-spaced with one-inch margins). I recommend proofreading twice, and urge you to use a computer if possible.

**Honor Policy**. I believe education is based on trust. Should you cheat and I find out about it, you can expect to fail the course. The University may take additional action.

**Plagiarism**. If you use other people's words or ideas without citing your sources and indicating when you have quoted, you risk failing an assignment or even the course depending on how serious I deem the offense. If you are not sure what plagiarism is, or whether a particular use of language is plagiarism, ask me before you turn in an assignment.

**Students with Disabilities**. "If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible."