

English 486:
Works of the *Gawain* Poet
Spring 2008

ROBERT ADAMS
Evans 110
Office Hours: 10-12, M/W
or by appointment

Required Text: *The Complete Works of the Pearl Poet*,
ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron. Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1993.
ISBN: 0-520-078713

FOR AVAILABLE COPIES, go to:
<http://www.campusi.com/bookFind/asp/bookFindPriceLst.asp?prodId=0520078713>

Supplemental Text: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Patience, and Pearl*,
trans. Marie Borroff. New York: W. W. Norton, 2001.
ISBN: 0-393-97658-0

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1		Syllabus Distributed Class Policies [January 17]
2	Historical Introduction [January 22]	Historical Introduction [January 24]
3	The <i>Gawain</i> Poet: An Overview [January 29]	<i>Patience</i> [January 31]
4	<i>Patience</i> [February 5]	<i>Patience</i> [February 7]

5	<i>Cleanness</i> [February 12]	<i>Cleanness</i> [February 14]
6	<i>Cleanness</i> [February 19]	<i>Cleanness</i> [February 21]
7	<i>Cleanness</i> [February 26]	<i>Cleanness</i> [February 28]
8	MIDTERM [March 4]	<i>Pearl</i> [March 6]
9	SPRING [March 11]	BREAK [March 13]
10	<i>Pearl</i> [March 18]	<i>Pearl</i> [March 20]
11	<i>Pearl</i> [March 25]	<i>Pearl</i> [March 27]
12	<i>Pearl</i> [April 1]	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> [April 3]
13	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> [April 8]	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> [April 10]

14	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> [April 15]	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> [April 17]
15	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> [April 22]	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> [April 24]
16	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> [April 29]	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> [May 1]
17	REVIEW [May 6]	REVIEW [May 8]

Grades: There will be a midterm and a final exam, with an optional term paper. Each item will count 50% of your final grade (unless you do a term paper, in which case each item counts 33.3%). If you do a term paper, it must cover a topic that has been approved by me in advance and must cite the lines of the *Gawain* poet in Middle English (i.e., from the Andrew/Waldron edition, not from the Borroff or Finch translations). Current MLA documentation style is required for the term paper. It should be approximately 10 pages, doublespaced, with 1" margins, dealing with a historical or literary-critical topic closely related to one or more of the works of the *Gawain* poet.

Grading Scale:

A = 100-92

B = 91-83

C = 82-70

D = 69-60

F = 59->

Attendance:

Not required except at midterm and final. If you miss the midterm, you must notify me immediately on your return to class and explain the absence to *my* satisfaction. If I judge the reason to be adequate, you will be allowed to make up the missed test on *one day only*, viz. Thursday, May 8th.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES: The central purpose of this course is to introduce you to key cultural myths that have shaped the modern Western world. In elucidating these myths, we will be using several important traditional genres of Western literature (especially lyric poetry and prose fiction) and exploring the shifting boundaries and expectations established by these genres. By the end of the course, if you do well, you will have gained a sophisticated understanding of such features of traditional cosmography as Universal Harmony, the Great Chain of Being and *Contemptus mundi*.

Random SHSU-mandated information: Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911(a)(2) defines religious holy days as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code...." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will notify the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

Americans With Disabilities Act: SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. **NOTE:** no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. Please contact the Chair of the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students and Director of the Counseling Center, Lee Drain Annex, or by calling 294-1720. A course evaluation form will be offered near the end of the semester. Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. If anyone creates a serious disturbance in the classroom and refuses to leave, I will have that person removed by force. For the policy regarding academic dishonesty, check the following link:

<http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

Course Title: Genres & Ideas; 3 credit hrs. Spring '08 Location: EV251 (unless I change the room) Class Meeting Times: 9.30 T/Th