Reading List for English Medieval Literature (12th to the 16th Century) as a Historical Field

[Students standing in this historical field are encouraged to demonstrate some knowledge of literature from the Old English Field as well as History of the English Language as background.]

**Primary Texts:**

Geoffrey Chaucer
- The Canterbury Tales
- *Troilus and Criseyde*

Dream Visions:
- *Book of the Duchess*
- *The Parliament of Fouls*
- *The House of Fame*
- *The Legend of Good Women*, including the F-text of the Prologue

Selected lyrics

Thomas Hoccleve
- Selections from *Regiment of Princes*

John Gower
- *Confessio Amantis*

William Langland
- *Piers Plowman* B-text, with some consideration of differences in the A- and C-texts

The Pearl Poet
- *Pearl, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Patience*, and *Cleanness*

Arthurian Literature
- *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales* (METS)
- *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* and *The Stanzaic Morte Arthur*
- *Sir Perceval of Galles*
- Chretien de Troyes, *Ywain*
- *The Works of Malory*

Middle English Romances (METS volumes)
- Middle English Breton Lays
- *King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelstan*
- *Sir Isumbras, Octavian, Sir Eglamour, Sir Triamour*
- *Amis and Amiloun, Robert of Cisyle, Sir Amadace*
- *The Storie of Asneth and The Pistel of Swete Susan*
- *Floris and Blancheflour, The Squire of Low Degree, The Tournament of Tottenham*

The Gest of Robin Hood, Sir Gamelyn, and other selected Robin Hood Tales

At least two debate poems, such as Clanvowe’s The Boke of Cupid (aka The Cuckoo and the Nightingale), The Debate of the Body and Soul, or The Owl and the Nightingale.

At least two political or ecclesiastical satires, such as Piers Plowman’s Creed, Richard the Redeless, or Mum and the Sothsegge, Why I Can’t be a Nun.

Medieval Drama
- One complete cycle (N-Town or York) and selections from others, including Townley and Chester (Bevington’s Medieval Drama provides a useful guideline here)
- The Digby Mary Magdalene and The Conversion of St. Paul
- Croxton’s Play of the Sacrament
- Castle of Perseverence, Mankind, and Everyman
- One or two early humanist plays, such as Johan Johan, The Play of the Weather, Wit and Science, Ralph Roister Doister, Gammer Girton’s Needle, or Patient Grissel

Mandeville’s Travels

Selections from John Lydgate’s works, such as The Siege of Thebes, Troy Book, Isopes Fabules, or The Mummings.

Religious and Meditional Writing
- The Cloud of Unknowing
- The Shewings of Julian of Norwich
- The Book of Margery Kempe
- Selections from The Ancrene Wisse
- Selected Saints Lives, including St. Erkenwald
- Selections from Wycliffite writings, including Prologue to the Bible, chapter 15

Scottish Poetry
- Selections from the Poetry of Robert Henryson (especially The Testament of Cresseid)
- Selections from the Works of William Dunbar
- James I, Kingis Quair
- Selections from Gavin Douglas, including Palis of Honoure

Continental and Anglo Norman Literature (in Middle English or Modern English translation):
- Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy
- Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, The Romance of the Rose
- Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain
- Christine of Pisan, The City of Ladies
- Selections from Chrétien de Troyes
- Selections from Marie de France

Anyone working in this historical field should be able to demonstrate some awareness of the importance of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio to the study of Middle English Literature.