

**English 353:
An Anthology of Medieval English Poetry
Spring 2023**

Instructor: Allan Mitchell
Email: <amitch@uvic.ca>

Course Description:

This course is devoted to a single large manuscript (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Ashmole 61) containing over forty short and long poems, presenting a broad cross-section of popular verse in Middle English. Many items are well-attested elsewhere (e.g., Sir Orfeo, Sir Cleges, the Northern Passion, and the Charter of Christ), and all seem to be driven by a particular concern: the moral formation of children within the gentry household. To study medieval verse in this way is to observe how texts, annotations, and illustrations are materially bound together as a whole, producing a domestic anthology. We will read the book “cover to cover,” pausing to examine recreational, devotional, and educational writings within broader literary and cultural contexts.

Proposed Assignments:

- in-class writings
- brief presentations
- research proposal
- research paper
- final exam

Required Text:

- *Codex Ashmole 61: A Compilation of Popular Middle English Verse*, ed. G. Shuttleton (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008). ISBN: 978-1-58044-129-2

