

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

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HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2009

COURSE II

PAPER A3 (b) LANGLAND AND GOWER

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TRINITY TERM 2009

Friday, 22 May, 9.30 a.m.- 11.30 p.m.

Time allowed – Two hours

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Answer *one* question. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the quotations and questions.

You may write on Langland or Gower or on both of them in comparison with each other or on either or both of them in comparison to Chaucer.

**Do *not* turn over until told that you may do so.**

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1. 'That is Mede the mayde...!'

'Mede mornede tho, and made hevy chere,  
For the mooste commune of that court called hire an hore'.

Discuss attitudes toward women OR the concept of gender in *Piers Plowman*.

2. 'For blood may suffre blood bothe hungry and acale,  
Ac blood may noght se blood blede, but hym rewe'.

Discuss blood OR blood-brothers/-brotherhood OR attitudes toward the suffering of others in *Piers Plowman*.

3. 'Nothing influenced Langland's craft more than the strategies of biblical commentary. Langland often took his poetic arguments from commentaries on his Latin quotations' (JOHN ALFORD).

EITHER Discuss Langland's use of his quotations.

OR Discuss, as the quotation suggests, biblical quotation as Langland's form of rhetorical 'invention'.

OR Discuss the relations of Latin, French, and English in *Piers Plowman*.

4. To what extent is *Piers Plowman* a 'Pilgrimage of the Life of the Manhood', as a contemporary translation of a French allegory styles itself?

5. *Piers Plowman* is the only Middle English dream vision with more than one vision. What problems of literary form are inherent in this fact and how does Langland address them? Has he any 'form' at all?

6. 'Thanne is Dowel and Dobet *dominus* and knyghthode?'

Discuss attitudes toward knighthood OR lordship in any two of your three authors.

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7. 'A boke for Engelondes sake'.

How does Gower realise his claim (or not)?

OR Might either *The Canterbury Tales* or *Piers Plowman* equally or better instantiate such a claim than does the *Confessio*?

8. 'Everyone notices Gower's Ovidianism, particularly his retelling of tales from the *Metamorphoses*'. To what extent do these narratives define his major themes in the *Confessio*?

OR Does either Chaucer or Langland have a greater interest in 'metamorphic' topics?

9. 'Somewhat of lust, somewhat of lore'.

How does Gower manage this alternation?

OR Do you find Chaucer more keenly aware and adept at this issue than Gower?

10. 'Nature, vicar of almyghty God'.

To what extent might you find this Chaucerian phrase descriptive of either Gower or Langland's thematic?

11. Discuss Gower's Venus and any distinctions you see between his interests and those of one or more Chaucerian portrayals.

12. Discuss the role of learnedness in one OR two of your three authors.