**Literary lecture: The making of literature**

From manuscript to literary history in the medieval context

Wed 8:30–11:45 (with intermittent break)

Lecturer: Karáth Tamás PhD habil. ([tamas.karath@gmail.com](mailto:tamas.karath@gmail.com))

Office hours: Mon 11:45–12:30, Wed 11:45–12:30 (Room 040)

Welcome to this course on the making of literary texts. This last course of the MA English literature specialization will focus on an aspect that earlier courses of the specialization have not yet investigated: what makes literature for the contemporary audience in terms of both its material making and reception? The context of the course will be the Middle Ages. In order to cope with medieval literary works, the course will also introduce you to Middle English (the stage of the English language between the 11th and 16th century). Finally, everyone will work on an individual manuscript project.

**Methods**

The course is a lecture, and it will be concluded with an exam. However, to profit maximally from the workshop size of the class, the course will be built on the preparation of individual research projects, which is why the lecture modules will alternate with supervision classes. The first part of the course will provide a general overview of Middle English language and literature, while the second part will help you to advance with the research projects in frames of individual consultations.

**Requirements**

The course is a lecture which will be concluded by an exam. As the course will be based on in-class discussions of texts and theory necessary for the research, you are expected not to miss more than two sessions. Please make sure you turn up for your individual project consultations. The exam requirements are described in the next section.

**Exam procedure**

The exam will consist of three home assignments and an oral exam. The home assignments are the following:

1. Editing a chapter of a forthcoming publication of the Hungarian History of English Literature (HUHI) according to the editor’s manual. Submission deadline: 24 March (eventual extension of deadline, in case your editing is not accepted, until 15 May)
2. Writing a missing subchapter for HUHI. Deadline: 31 May
3. Individual research projected related to the HUHI subchapter you are writing and based on the study of a manuscript. The project and its outcome have to be summarized in a research paper. Submission deadline: 31 May

The oral exam will be the defence of your research paper.

**Assessment of the exam**

A weighted average of the four exam components will be calculated as follows:

1. Editing – non-graded task; prerequisite for the signature; if no acceptable editing is presented until the submission deadline, you will have to continue the editing until it is accepted, but latest until 15 May
2. Writing a subchapter for HUHI – 40%
3. Research paper with defence – 60%

In order to pass the course, your weighted average must be at least 2. If your research paper receives the fail mark, it means the automatic failure of the first exam. In this case you will have to revise the paper and defend it on a second occasion.

**Course calendar**

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| Week | Discussion topics and readings |
| 13 Feb | Introduction to course contents, requirements, assessment and projects |
| Middle English Module 1: Chaucer’s English (“The General Prologue” of *The Canterbury Tales*, ll. 1-12, provided on handouts) |
| 20 Feb | HUHI Module 1: “Bevezetés a középkor irodalmához”, “Bevezetés a középangol irodalomhoz” |
| Middle English Module 2: Geoffrey Chaucer, “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue” from *The Canterbury Tales,* ll. 509–48 (The Wife’s fifth husband)  librarius.com (ed. by Sinan Kökbugur), with glossary by Larry D. Benson:  <http://www.librarius.com/index.html> |
| 27 Feb | HUHI Module 2: “A románc” |
| Middle English Module 3: *The Book of John Mandeville* (ed. by Kohanski and Benson), “Preface and Prologue”, ll. 1–72  <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/kohanski-and-benson-the-book-of-john-mandeville> |
| 6 Mar | HUHI Module 3: “Chaucer” |
| Middle English Module 4: “The Debate between the Body and the Soul”, ll. 1–40; Transcript of the Auchinleck manuscript version:  <http://digital.wustl.edu/r/revision/Debate_Transmission/auchinlecktrans.html> |
| 13 Mar | HUHI Module 4: “Vallásos tanítás, áhítat és misztika” |
| Middle English Module 5: Excerpt from the Middle English bestiary (British Library, Arundel MS 292): “The Whale” (to be provided on copies) |
| 20 Mar | HUHI Module 5: “Dráma és színház” |
| Middle English Module 6: “On the Times” (political verse from the 14th century), ll. 1–60 (only the Middle English lines)  <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/dean-medieval-english-political-writings-on-the-times> |
| 27 Mar |  |
| 3 Apr | Project consultation 1: two students |
| Project consultation 1: two students |
| 10 Apr | Project consultation 2: two students |
| Project consultation 2: two students |
| 17 Apr | **Holidays** |
| 24 Apr |
| 1 May |
| 8 May | Project consultation 3: two students |
| Project consultation 3: two students |
| 15 May | Project consultation 4: two students |
| Project consultation 4: two students |

**Topics of the HUHI subchapters and related manuscript projects**

(1) HUHI subchapter: “Utazás és fantasztikum: *The Book of John Mandeville* és középangol útleírások (zarándoklatok, Matthew Paris, Roger Landover)

MS project: Mandeville’s travels, an abridgement in British Library, Additional MS 37049, fols. 3–9

(2) HUHI subchapter: “Az allegória változatai Angliában (*Debate between* the *Body and the Soul, Pearl, Patience, Purity, Court of Sapience*)”

MS project: The *Debate* in the Achinleck manuscript (National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 19.2.1), fols. 31v–35r

(3) HUHI subchapter: “A látható világot rendszerező irodalom: lapidáriumok, bestiáriumok, enciklopédiák, orvosi és más tudományos szövegek”

MS project: The Middle English scientific texts in British Library, Harley MS 941

(4) HUHI subchapter: “A nemzet víziói: a Százéves Háború politikai versei”

MS project: Political verse in British Library, Harley MS 941

*Enjoy the course!*