

Assignment: Analysis of the materiality of a medieval manuscript

For this composition, you will analyze the material context of a medieval manuscript. You should utilize the assigned readings and lectures to complete your analysis. The following list of topics and questions should be helpful in guiding your thinking and planning for this assignment:

- ❖ **Content:** What types of texts does the manuscript contain?
- ❖ **Size:** How could the manuscript be used?
- ❖ **Language:** Who could read/write the manuscript?
- ❖ **Origin:** Where was it made? Who made it?
- ❖ **Owners:** For whom was it made?
- ❖ **Binding:** When was it bound or rebound?
- ❖ **Illustrations:** What colors of ink are used? What's the relationship between text and image? What does this tell us about the manuscript's use?

I have included links to several options on the assignment page of the course website (<http://eng181.jennycbledsoe.com/assignments/materialityanalysis/>). If you choose to find your own medieval manuscript, I suggest that you check with me to be sure that you have access to enough information about the manuscript for your composition to describe it fully.

This composition should be about 750 words. You can think of this composition as the text of an exhibition catalog describing how materials affect the way we interpret (or read) a particular manuscript object. You should post this composition on your website. You should integrate text and image when appropriate. You should consider the medium and audience for your composition as you write it. You're publishing this in a digital environment, so you should consider the rhetorical choices you can make that are particular to that context. Additionally, this composition should be aimed at a general audience (educated but not specialists), so you should make it easy to understand how the materiality of the manuscript or object affects our reading of it. You will email me a 200-word reflection on the rhetorical choices you made as a result of publishing the analysis in a digital environment and directing the composition to a general, non-specialist audience.

Learning Objectives

- ❖ You will develop critical thinking and reading skills by practicing a different type of reading by considering how the material context of medieval manuscripts affects our interpretation of them.
- ❖ You will employ rhetorical knowledge to present your analysis in a digital environment on your website and to reflect on the rhetorical choices you made as a result of the digital publication of the analysis and its aim at a general, non-specialist audience.
- ❖ You will go through the process of planning, composing, revising, and reflecting upon this essay, learning that the writing process is recursive rather than linear.
- ❖ You will practice presenting your work to your peers, receiving and integrating peer and instructor feedback, and editing and analyzing the writing of your peers.

For a gallery of student projects from the fall 2015 semester, visit <http://jennycbledsoe.com/pedagogy/studentwork/materiality181/>.