Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
British Literature I
ENGL 2323
Dr. Brian McFadden

Manuscript
- London, British Library, Cotton Nero A.x
    - Cotton Nero A.x Project at Calgary (http://gawain-ms.ca/)
- Part of "Alliterative Revival" of late 14th century – Langland's *Piers Plowman,* Clerk's *Destruction of Troy, Winner and Waster, Parliament of the Three Ages, Alliterative Morte Darthur*
- Late 14th century
    - *Pearl*
    - *Cleanness/Purity*
    - *Patience*
    - *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Language
- Northwest Midlands Dialect
- Much different from Chaucer's English, despite being roughly contemporary
    - SGGK at Michigan (https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=cme;idno=Gawain)
    - compare to Chaucer (http://www.librarius.com/cantales.htm)

Stanza Format
- Stanza in alliterative verse – Alliterative Revival, as noted earlier
- *bob and wheel* – 2-syllable divider line ("bob") and a 4-line ballad stanza ("wheel")
- Combination of French/Latinate and English poetic styles

King Arthur
- More legendary than historical
- Possibly based on historical figures, but no one candidate
- British tradition - Mostly Welsh stories
    - *Goddodin, Mabinogion* most famous
- Continental tradition - tales of the court and of the loves of knights
    - Geoffrey of Monmouth - 12c *History of the Kings of Britain* - Latin work used as a source on the continent