Books for Review

Due date: Monday March 21

This assignment is intended to be heuristic; in other words, choose a book that’s going to be the most useful to you. Some of these are good background if you feel that’s what you need (Crane, Fewster, Ramsey); some help to situate the field theoretically (Patterson, Cohen); some are not on romances particularly but discuss history and culture in a helpful way (Aers, Bloch, Warren); some are on medievalism (Allaire, Duff, Glencross, Mancoff). You might also think ahead to your essay topic and choose your book accordingly. I haven’t put most of these on reserve because you’ll probably want to check them out, but if two or more people want to review the same book, you may have to share a copy or locate one elsewhere. I am also quite open to suggestion if you would like to review a book not on this list, but do clear it with me first.

The length should be about 5-6 pages. Your review should above all engage the book on a critical level and enter into some kind of dialogue with the author. Question the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the book; interrogate the choice of source material; situate it with respect to the field at large as much as you can (I will not expect any great detail in the latter respect). Reading other reviews of the book is by no means out of bounds and may be helpful in taking a broader view of the book. Have a look at Book Review Index (Z1035.A1 B6 Index Area of O’Neill) and book Review Digest Plus (online, available through BC Libraries). You can look other places for book reviews too: check out the BC library’s excellent guide at http://www.bc.edu/libraries/research/howdoi/s-findbookreviews/

You may also want to address some slightly more mundane concerns of a book review – for whom will the book be most useful? how is its style? are the organization and ancillaries (notes, index, etc.) helpful to the reader? – but the main point is to write a practical piece of criticism as described above.


Barefield, Laura D. *Gender and History in Medieval English Romance and Chronicle.*


Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages.* Minneapolis:


