

**MDST 300.001 Fall 2013**

**Short Paper Assignment 3**

**Due: Monday Nov. 18 by 2 PM in [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) ;**

**Length: 4-6 pages exclusive of Works Cited Page**

**You are required to submit 2 out of 3 of the short papers. If you turn in all three, I will drop the lowest grade. This paper counts as 10% of your final grade.**

As we have studied the Middle Ages, we have noted how intertwined various aspects of medieval life are—history, religion, art, class, and gender are all tied up in people’s lives. One of the most outstanding places where we can see that intertwining is in the Luttrell Psalter, a 309-page medieval manuscript now housed in the British Museum. Commissioned by Sir Geoffrey Luttrell between 1320 and 1340 for the use of his family (especially his wife and daughters), it encapsulates the interrelationship of many ideas of medieval life. That’s why we’re reading Michelle Brown’s *The World of the Luttrell Psalter* in class.

The British Library has put part of this amazing manuscript online in its marvelous gallery of sacred texts at <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/luttrellpsalter.html>. After you read the introduction, you can click on the link at the bottom of the page and be taken to the online version of the manuscript. By dragging your mouse, you can literally turn the pages of the manuscript; there are embedded notes on each page, audio descriptions of important parts of each page, and a magnifying glass that will enable you to study the pages in great detail. And on Sept. 13, 2013, it put the full manuscript online digitally, so now you can look at the whole gorgeous thing:

[http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add\\_MS\\_42130](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_42130). (Click on the icon picture, and then click through the pages.)

In his book *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England*, Michael Camille says “this study demands that you enter into the spirit of medieval reading, slowly pondering, stopping and starting, turning backwards and forwards, comparing one image with another, returning to the same image and not necessarily finding an answer—which is, I think, not only what Geoffrey Luttrell did but what the psalter’s creators wanted you to do” (U Chicago P, 1998: 13-14). Your task in this paper is to examine the manuscript carefully, and then respond to it as a student of medieval studies. You might note, for instance, the kinds of religious attitudes it reflects, the kinds of artistic creation it contains, the way it preserves details of both aristocratic and working-class life, the ways in which it appeals to male and female readers—anything you particularly note about this very important text. Feel free to cite passages from the other texts you’ve read that may add to or deepen your reflections. I am leaving this assignment very ‘open’ so that you can choose whichever kind of approach (or combination of approaches) works best for you and make the argument you most want to make.

The 2009 MLA Works Cited forms for citing a web archive like the Luttrell Psalter would be the following:

For the introduction:

“The Luttrell Psalter.” *Online Gallery: Sacred Texts*. The British Library, 2008. Web. Date of download.

For the visual images:

“Turning the Pages: The Luttrell Psalter.” Page #. The British Library, 2008. Web. Date of download.

You’re very welcome to bring drafts, outlines, or just ideas for this paper by my office for discussion; that’s true of all the papers this semester. My office hours are M thru R 4-5 and by appointment.