

42nd UBC Medieval Workshop

7– 9 November 2014

Medieval and Renaissance Æcologies

The *Æcologies* Project, along with the Committee for Medieval Studies at the University of British Columbia, solicits contributors for the 42nd annual UBC workshop, to be held from 7-9 November 2014 at Green College, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Medieval and Renaissance Æcologies seeks to interrogate premodern understandings of the natural world and ecological thinking. A prevailing attitude within modern Western culture has imagined the natural world as “out there,” a distinct realm upon which humans import subjective meaning. More recently, ecocritics and theorists of the new materialism(s) have challenged this conception of nature. This workshop takes up these challenges by investigating the idea of “æcology,” an older and defamiliarizing spelling of the modern concept “ecology.” The spelling is retained in an effort to rethink “ecology” through the study of premodern natural history, taxonomy, hierarchy, and categorization, and to ask what conceptual or metaphorical resources might help us – as located moderns – reorient our perceptions about the premodern past and our present and future moments. In an effort to define complex terms such as “environment,” “landscape,” and “ecology,” we ask where do these terms come from? What came before them? What do they mean here and now? What did conceptions of Nature and “æcology” look like in the Medieval and Renaissance periods and how did different discourse communities define their meanings?

We welcome papers from any discipline, and especially encourage interdisciplinary approaches. Please send paper proposals, questions, and / or expressions of interest to:

Vin Nardizzi (nardizzi@mail.ubc.ca) or Robert Rouse (robert.rouse@ubc.ca) by the 15 December 2013.

This conference is part of the ongoing multi-year research project Æcologies (<http://oecologies.com>), supported by The University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University.