'Man, Nature and the Supernatural' is a specified subject that traces how men and women made sense of the visible and invisible world from c.1000 to c.1600. Taking account of both ‘learned’ and ‘unlearned’ perspectives, the paper responds to recent research that has been concerned with ideas of the natural and supernatural, relationships between material and immaterial worlds, and the means by which medieval men and women acquired and organized knowledge about these things. A range of themes, each of which has generated substantial historiographies, provides a scaffold for the paper. Thus the paper will examine the chain of being and how human beings fitted into a cosmos populated also by animals, angels, demons and ambiguous beings. It will be concerned with the boundaries of ‘the human’ and how these were conceptualized and negotiated by medieval writers. It will also consider how time was understood, in terms of time stretching in linear fashion from the creation of the world to its end, and in terms of the rhythms of ordinary life, liturgical and calendrical time and ‘agricultural’ time, marked by the seasons and the labours of the months. It will be concerned too with both the geography and topography of this world and that of the next – heaven, hell and purgatory – and discourses about ‘parallel’ worlds such as the fairy realm, as portrayed in chronicles and romance literature. The paper will concentrate on the British Isles, but there will be comparative reflections too, reaching out beyond Britain, and engagement with religious and intellectual dynamics of significance throughout the Christian West.

Issues spanning the paper's themes include the relationships between the bible, reason and experience in forming medieval interpretations, and the implications of ‘new’ knowledge — the New Platonisms and Aristotelian thought of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the ‘new humanism’ of the fifteenth century — for established understandings of the visible and invisible worlds. The themes of the paper also intersect with a series of ecclesiastical transformations. The central and later middle ages witnessed a dramatic centralization of the church’s power which had major implications for conceptions of the holy, sainthood, sacraments and the afterlife as these were subjected to closer definition. Intellectual activity also had consequences for magic as some forms were anathematized while others were partially rehabilitated as ‘natural’. Utilitarian and ideological uses to which knowledge was put will be avenues of inquiry too, and there will be a place in studying the paper for exploration of ‘practical rationalities’, represented by treatises dealing with subjects such as the properties of natural things, medicine, astrology, weather lore, agricultural management and animal husbandry. The paper ends beyond the limits of the middle ages, allowing a consideration of those changes in religion and geographical knowledge traditionally thought to mark the beginning of the end of the medieval understandings of the visible and invisible worlds. Here questions arise about how far existing medieval belief structures were, initially
at least, able to adapt and absorb this new knowledge prior to their fuller transformation by it, and about when, and if, forces giving rise to the world’s ‘disenchantment’ become perceptible.

Lectures, Classes and Supervisions

The paper will be taught by way of sixteen lectures in Michaelmas term. These will be followed in Lent by a series of eight classes that will permit closer engagement with primary sources (a significant fraction of which will be visual sources). Each student will also receive six one-hour supervisions, each lecture topic being a possible supervision topic. Supervision will be divided between Dr Horrox and Dr Watkins.

Maximum number of students: 25.

READING

God
C. Bynum, Jesus as Mother: studies in the spirituality of the high middle ages (1982).
E. Grant, God and Reason in the Middle Ages (2001).

Heaven, Hell, Purgatory
Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages, ed. C. Muessig and A. Putter (2007).


**Angels and Demons**


*Demons also feature largely in the literature of witchcraft, which has its own section below.*

**Ghosts and Revenants**


N. Caciola, Afterlives: the return of the dead in the middle ages (2016)


A. Murray, Suicide in the Middle Ages, Volume II: the Curse on Self-Murder (2000), 471-81.


R.N. Swanson, ‘Ghosts and Ghost-busters in the Middle Ages’, in The Church, the Afterlife and the Fate of the Soul, ed. P.D. Clarke (2009).


**Time, Ritual and Memory**

R. Bartlett, England under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 645-57.

H. Kleinschmidt, Understanding the Middle Ages (2000), ch 1.


**History and the Sense of the Past**


P. J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (1994)


**The Future and Prophecy**


J. Crick, ‘Geoffrey of Monmouth, Prophecy and History’, *Journal of Medieval
M. Reeves, The Influence of Prophecy in the Middle Ages (1969).


The Apocalypse
P. Binski, Medieval Death, ch four.

B.E. Whalen, Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages (2009).

The World
S. D. Westrem (ed), The Hereford Map: a transcription and translation
A. Hiatt, Terra Incognita: mapping the Antipodes before 1600 (2008).


**People[s]**

J. B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*


B. Clarke, *Mental Disorder in earlier Britain* (1975).


**Other Worlds and Ambiguous Beings**


**Saints and the Holy**


**Astrology**
nb some of the reading on magic will also be relevant here.


**Magic**

C. Fanger (ed), *Conjuring Spirits*.

R. Kieckhefer (ed), *Forbidden Rites*.

R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*.


S. Page (ed), *The Unorthodox Imagination in late medieval Britain* (2010).


E. Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law*.


**Witchcraft**

*Note*: the English and European experience of witchcraft was significantly different. Books marked * below are concerned with the English experience. Books that are mainly concerned with the seventeenth-century witch craze have not been included.

*B. Rosen (ed), *Witchcraft* (1969).*

*M. Gibson, *Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (2000).*


*G. Gifford, *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcrafts* (1593).*


*S. Anglo (ed.), *The Damned Art: essays in the literature of Witchcraft* (1977).*

*M. Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft* (1999).*


Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: volume 3. The Middle Ages, ed. K. Jolly et al, parts 1 and 3.
B. Ankarloo & S. Clark (eds), Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: the Middle Ages (2001).

Space, Place and Landscape
See also above, 'The World'
V. Fumagalli, Landscapes of Fear: perceptions of nature and the city in the middle ages (1994).
H. Kleinschmidt, Understanding the Middle Ages (2000), ch 2.
D. Pearsall and E. Salter, Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World (1973)
A.H. Merrills, History and Geography in Late Antiquity (2005), ch. 4 (Bede).
A. Pluskowski, Wolves and the wilderness in the Middle Ages (2006), ch. 3.
O. Creighton Designs upon the Land: elite landscapes of the Middle Ages (2009).
J. Goodall, The English Castle, 1066-1650 (2011).

S. Schama, Landscape and Memory (2004).


N. Whyte, Inhabiting the Landscape: place, custom and memory 1500-1800 (2009).


Nature, Miracle and Marvel

R. Bartlett, Natural and Supernatural in the Middle Ages (Cambridge, 2007), ch. 1.


A. Murray, Reason and Society in the Middle Ages (1978).


R. Bartlett, Gerald of Wales, 1146-1223 (1982).


Gerald of Wales, The History and Topography of Ireland, transl. J. O’Meara (1982).


C.E. Raven, English Naturalists from Neckham to Ray: a study in the making of the modern world (1949).


R. Barber, Bestiary: being an English version of the Bodleian Library, Oxford M.S. Bodley 764, with all the original miniatures reproduced in facsimile (1992).


J. Arnold, ‘The Materiality of Unbelief in Late Medieval England’ in The
Unorthodox Imagination in Medieval Britain, ed. S. Page (2010).
S. Reynolds, ‘Social Mentalities and the Case of Medieval Scepticism’,


‘Disenchantment’?
See also above, esp. ‘Nature, Marvels, Miracles’