'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 what might constitute ‘ordinary’ experience, and how these were conceptualized and negotiated by medieval writers and artists. 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, extraordinary ‘spiritual’ experiences (such as miracles, dreams, visions and prophecies) 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. Some classes will take place in Cambridge museums and libraries to permit examination of artefacts and manuscripts and there will also be one or more optional local field trips to examine ecclesiastical sites. Each student will receive six one-hour supervisions, each lecture topic being a possible supervision essay. Supervision will be divided between Dr Munns and Dr Watkins.

Maximum number of students: 20.

**READING**

**Images**

*Looking Beyond: Visions, Dreams and Insights in Medieval Art and History*, ed. C. Hourihane (2011)*
V. Sekules, *Medieval Art* (2001)*

**Frameworks**

J. Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief in Medieval Europe* (2005)*.

**God and Salvation**

**Mary and the Saints**

A.M. Kleinberg, *Prophets in their own country: living saints and the making of
sainthood in the later Middle Ages (1992).
St Edmund, King and Martyr: Changing images of a medieval saint, ed. A. Bale (2009).
A. Vauchez, Sainthood in the later Middle Ages (1997).

A. Walsham (ed), Relics and Remains (2010).

Sacraments
A.E. Nichols, Seeable Signs: The Iconography of the Seven Sacraments, 1350-1544 (1997)

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


**Angels, Demons and the Devil**


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

**The Dead**


S. Tarlow, Ritual, Belief and the Dead in Early Modern Britain and Ireland (2011).
N. Caciola, Afterlives: the return of the dead in the middle ages (2016)
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**

D. Cressy, Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England (1989).
E. Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, ch 1.
E. Duffy, Marking the Hours: English people and their prayers, 1240-1570 (2011).

**The Past**


**The Future**
R.W. Southern, ‘Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing III:
history as prophecy', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 22 (1972).


**The End of Time**


M. Reeves, ‘The Development of Apocalyptic Thought: Medieval attitudes’, in *The
Apo
calypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature, ed. C.A.
Patrides, J. Wittreich, 1984. Repr. in M. Reeves, The Prophetic Sense of
History in Medieval and Renaissance Europe (1999).
B.E. Whalen, Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages
(2009).

The World and its Peoples
D.K. Connolly, The Maps of Matthew Paris: Medieval journeys through space, time
E. Edson, Mapping Space and Time: how medieval mapmakers viewed their world
(1997).
A. Hiatt, Terra Incognita: mapping the Antipodes before 1600 (2008).
P. Whitfield, New Found Lands: maps in the history of exploration (1998); revised
in 2000 as Mapping the World.
S. D. Westrem (ed), The Hereford Map: a transcription and translation

A. Grafton, New Worlds, Ancient Texts: the power of tradition and the shock of
A. Pagden, European Encounters with the New World (1993).
J.R.S. Phillips, 'The outer world of the European Middle Ages' in Stuart B.
Schwartz (ed),

R. Bernheimer, Wild Men in the Middle Ages (1952).
S.G. Bruce, ‘Hagiography as Monstrous Ethnography’ in G. Wieland et al (eds),
C. Bynum, Metamorphosis and Identity (2001).
B. Clarke, Mental Disorder in earlier Britain (1975).
K. Daston and L. Park, Wonders and the Order of Nature
J. B. Friedman, The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought
D. Higgs Strickland, Saracens, Demons and Jews (2003).
S. Lipton, ‘Christianity and Its Others: Jews, Muslims and Pagans’, in The Oxford
R. Mellinkoff, Outcasts: signs of otherness in European art of the later middle ages
(2 vols, 1993).

Ambiguous Beings
H.R. Patch, The Other World: according to descriptions in medieval literature (1950).
A. Lawrence-Mathers, Merlin the Magician (2012).
J. Wade, Fairies in Medieval Romance (2011).


Magic and Witchcraft
B.Aankanluo & S. Clark (eds), Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: the Middle Ages (2001).
C. Fanger (ed), Conjuring Spirits.
R. Kieckhefer (ed), Forbidden Rites.
R. Kieckhefer, Magic in the Middle Ages.
E. Peters, The Magician, the Witch and the Law.

B. Aankanluo, S. Clark & W.Monter, Witchcraft & Magic in Europe: the period of the Witch Trials.

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.

*G. Gifford, A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcrafts* (1593).
*M. Gibson, Reading Witchcraft* (1999).


**Land and Sea**
See also above, ‘The World’
D. Pearsall and E. Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (1973)


O. Creighton *Designs upon the Land: elite landscapes of the Middle Ages* (2009).


The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages, ed. S. Sobekci (2011).


**Nature (and the Marvellous)**


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

R. Bartlett, Trial by Fire and Water: the medieval judicial ordeal (1986).
A. Murray, Reason and Society in the Middle Ages (1978).

E. Cameron, Enchanted Europe: superstition, reason and religion 1250-1750 (2010).