Shannon Gayk  
Associate Professor of English, Indiana University  
“On the Instrumental: the Arma Christi and Premodern Poetics”  
Thursday, March 29  
5.15pm, Lincoln Room, Lilly Library

The arma Christi, the instruments of Christ’s passion, were an extremely popular iconographic motif in late medieval Europe. This talk examines a series of English poems written about the arma as a means of exploring the relationships between the material world, religious practice, and poetic performance in late medieval England. More specifically, this talk considers the ways in which arma Christi lyrics attend to the materiality and instrumentality of poetry itself, representing verse as a medium that enacts change.

Jordan L. Zweck  
Assistant Professor of English, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
“Bodies of Record: Documentary Culture in Anglo-Saxon Hagiography”  
Saturday, March 31  
5.30pm, Dogwood Room, Indiana Memorial Union

Letters and other documents are surprisingly prevalent in Anglo-Saxon vernacular literature. While Anglo-Saxon hagiography often represents these documents as personal, private correspondence between two individuals, some of its documents become public witnesses or records. This talk will examine the ways in which both letters and bodies in Anglo-Saxon hagiography come to function as archives or other storage media, arguing that the movement between private witness and public record is made possible in part by letters’ methods of circulation, and by the hybrid nature of their audiences. The talk explores what happens when the authenticating speaker (who says “I was there,” “I did or saw this”), gives way to the authenticating document or record, and how this transformation can be written on the body. I argue that in these documents, both message and medium are imagined to communicate intelligibly, and that treating letters not as private two-way communication but as public record opens up new ways of understanding medieval miracles, medieval memory, and medieval media.