

Carleton University
Winter 2020
Department of English

ENGL 3200, Section A: *Medieval Literature*
Topic 2020: *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*

Prerequisites: third-year standing or permission of the department.
Preclusions: None

Wednesdays and Fridays / 8:35-9:55am
Location: *Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:45-4pm; Fridays 10:15-11am; or by appointment

Course Description:

No English author can match the uninterrupted reading history that connects Chaucer to the present, and this course will explore why Chaucer has proven so engaging from the Middle Ages through to today. Specific questions to be considered as we read through his *Canterbury Tales* include: Was Chaucer a proto-feminist? How do various tales investigate questions of class and gender? How does Chaucer explore themes of love, chivalry, and the relationship between the sexes in his *Tales*? How, and to what effect, does Chaucer, a medieval Christian, depict other Christians, Jews, and Muslims in his *Tales*? How do we, and how did medieval readers, reconcile Chaucer's bawdy humor and criticism of the Church with his more straightforwardly "moral" tales? If you're willing to check your inhibitions at the door and engage in classes that discuss notions of masculinity and femininity, love poetry, philosophy, farting and medieval theories of sound, torture and the speech of quasi-beheaded saints, then this is the course for you. Chaucer himself has one of his characters state that Chaucer's tales are "not worth a turd"--are you really going to take him at his word? No one else has, and in this course we will try to figure out what the 600 years of hype are all about.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will have read most of the *Canterbury Tales* and should be able to:

- Read, understand, and quote Middle English texts in their original language
- Analyze and discuss Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* with critical acumen
- Articulate ways in which the *Tales* engage questions of class, gender, religion, genre, and authorial self-representation
- Situate Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in reference to the social, political, and historical contexts of late medieval England

- Appreciate the differences between medieval manuscript culture and the conventions of contemporary print culture editions of medieval texts

Texts:

- Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Jill Mann. Penguin Classics. Toronto: Penguin Books, 2005. (Paperback) ISBN: 0-140-42234-X / 9780140422344

Please make sure to get this full edition by Jill Mann and NOT “selections” or anything involving a modern English translation. This book presents all the Tales in their original spelling and language, with helpful glosses as well as excellent introductions and historical notes about each tale.

Books available at Haven Books, 43 Seneca Street, tel: 613-730-9888 /e-mail: havenbooks@cusaonline.ca; www.havenbooks.ca

Some supplementary readings have been put on reserve at the library to help with specific assignments.

Evaluation:

Pilgrim Presentation

10%

(A brief, 5-10 minute oral presentation that introduces the tale-teller for your chosen tale. I expect you to explain what your pilgrim’s medieval occupation was, and what his/her daily “work life” would have been like (this will require secondary research). You may then, if you choose and have time, draw attention to a salient detail or two presented in Chaucer’s General Prologue presentation of the pilgrim, explaining any scientific, technical, historical, geographical, or physical references involved in that detail that you think are key to us, and suggest why they are useful to remember as we study your pilgrim’s tale. See the full assignment sheet distributed in class.)

Middle English Language Exercises

10%

(These exercises include 1 oral presentation of a Middle English word and 4 in-class written translations or oral readings of 10-20 line passages of Chaucer. The word presentation requires you to research the various meanings of an assigned Middle English word in the Middle English Dictionary and the Oxford English Dictionary (both online) and then indicate how the word functions in the General Prologue in a 3-5 minute oral presentation to the class (counts for 2.5% of your final grade). The four translation/reading exercises require you to translate or read aloud an assigned passage of Middle English. You will be able to throw out your lowest-scoring exercise, and each of the remaining three counts for 2.5% of your final grade. If you miss a translation/reading for any reason other than a medical, familial, or religious necessity, you cannot make it up—but you can throw it away as your uncounted exercise).

Mid-Term Examination

20%

(Short answer, passage identification and analysis, essay question; will be scheduled during class time)

Term Paper:

Annotated Bibliography and Draft Thesis Statement 5%

Final Paper 20%

(A paper of 10-12 pages, double-spaced. MLA format and secondary research are required. Possible topics and a detailed outline of my expectations will be distributed in class, and I encourage you to come and discuss your ideas and essay outlines with me during my office hours. An annotated bibliography of 3 sources and a draft thesis statement are due Friday March 20th; the final paper itself is due Friday April 3rd.)

Final Examination

25%

(cumulative; short answer, in-depth passage identification and analysis, and essay questions; will be scheduled during Formal Examination Period)

Class Participation and Attendance

10%

(You are expected to come to class with the assigned readings completed, with the text in hand, and with 1-2 questions or comments on the assigned readings to contribute to our lecture/discussions either orally in class or through CULearn. Attendance will be taken regularly. You are expected to meet your in-class presentation commitments (barring illness, bereavement etc.). You are also expected to pay attention to lectures and your fellow students' presentations, and to participate in class discussion regularly. Please note that surfing the web, e-mailing, texting, facebooking, doing the homework for other courses, sleeping etc. while in class does not constitute an active presence; you may be here physically but are elsewhere mentally, and your mark will reflect that absence.)

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines **plagiarism** as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, suspension from a program, suspension from the university, or even expulsion from the university. For more information please go to:

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Attendance and Late Paper Policy:

I expect you to be at class mentally as well as physically, and to contribute to our discussions and activities. For this reason, I have dedicated a portion of the grade to class participation and attendance and will take attendance regularly after our first class meeting. My expectations are set out above, in the Evaluation section. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your paper is due at class on the date specified. An e-mailed version will only be accepted as a temporary solution to printing problems and must be followed by submission of a hard copy within twenty-four hours. Late papers will be accepted until the University deadline for the submission of term work, but may not receive written comments.

Please Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: <https://carleton.ca/equity/contact/form-pregnancy-accommodation/>

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

For more details, visit the Equity Services website:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/discrimination-harassment/religious-spiritual-observances/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the Paul Menton Centre Website: carleton.ca/pmc

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/sexual-violence-prevention-survivor-support/>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Please note: Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations, hand-outs, assignments, quizzes, drafts, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Schedule of Classes and Readings:

Check Class Location in Carleton Central. Readings are to be completed for class by the date under which they are listed. Please note that I reserve the right to adjust this syllabus to meet the needs of the class; however, major changes will be announced in advance.

W. Jan. 8	Overview of Course and Requirements Introduction to Middle English Historical Contextualization of <i>Canterbury Tales</i>
F. Jan. 10	FIELD TRIP: Book Arts Lab (MacOdrum, Main floor) TBC Finish Historical Contextualization Manuscript vs. Print Culture; the Various Manuscripts and Tale Orderings
W. Jan. 15	Finish Manuscripts and Orderings <i>General Prologue</i>
F. Jan. 17	<i>General Prologue</i>
W. Jan. 22	Finish <i>General Prologue</i> <i>Knight's Prologue and Tale, Part 1</i>
F. Jan. 24	Middle English Word Presentations I <i>Knight's Tale, Parts 1-2</i>
W. Jan. 29	Middle English Word Presentations II <i>Knight's Tale, Parts 2- 3</i>
F. Jan. 31	<i>Knight's Tale, Parts 3-4</i> Assigned Excerpts from Boethius's <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i> (on ARES)
W. Feb. 5	Translation/Reading Exercise #1 Finish <i>Knight's Tale</i> <i>Miller's Prologue and Tale</i>
F. Feb. 7	<i>Reeve's Prologue and Tale</i> <i>Cook's Prologue and Tale</i>
W. Feb. 12	Translation/Reading Exercise #2 Discuss Manuscript Ordering Debate <i>Man of Law's Introduction, Prologue, Tale</i>
F. Feb. 14	<i>Man of Law's Tale and Epilogue</i>
W. Feb. 19 F. Feb. 21	NO CLASS; READING WEEK
W. Feb. 26	Mid-Term Examination (in class)
F. Feb. 28	<i>Wife of Bath's Prologue</i>

W. Mar. 4	<i>Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale</i>
F. Mar. 6	Translation/ Reading Exercise #3 <i>Friar's Prologue and Tale</i> <i>Summoner's Prologue and Tale</i>
W. Mar. 11	Finish <i>Summoner's Tale</i> Begin <i>Clerk's Prologue and Tale</i>
F. Mar. 13	Translation/Reading Exercise #4 <i>Clerk's Tale</i>
W. Mar. 18	Begin <i>Merchant's Prologue and Tale</i>
F. Mar. 20	Annotated Bibliography and Thesis Statement due <i>Merchant's Tale and Epilogue</i> Begin <i>Franklin's Prologue and Tale</i> if time
W. Mar. 25	<i>Franklin's Tale</i> <i>Physician's Tale</i>
F. Mar. 27	<i>Pardoner's Prologue and Tale</i>
W. Apr. 1	<i>The Shipman's Tale</i> <i>Prioress's Prologue and Tale</i>
F. Apr. 3	Final Paper Due <i>Second Nun's Prologue and Tale</i> <i>Prologue and Tale of Sir Thopas</i> <i>Tale of Melibee</i> <i>Chaucer's Retractions</i>
TBD	Optional Medieval Potluck Lunch and Exam Review(?)