



Department of English & Writing Studies

Middle English Literature English 3116E (001) Fall/Winter 2013-14

Instructor: Dr. Anne Schuurman
(nee McTaggart)

Date/Time: Tuesday 12:30pm-2:20pm
Thursday 12:30pm-1:30pm

Location: Physics & Astronomy Bldg 150

Prerequisites

At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both of English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Antirequisite(s): English 3118F/G (Huron), English 3119F/G (Huron) and English 3114E.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

In this course, we will study the language spoken in England and the literature written in English from about 1300 to 1500, with a special focus on the work of Geoffrey Chaucer. We will explore a range of genres and themes, and attend to some of the political contexts surrounding the development of literary traditions in late medieval England. This was a period of staggering social crisis (famine, plague, rebellion, war), but also a period of flowering literary creativity in English culture: we will explore the crises and the creativity, aiming to understand this history so that we might better understand our own cultural moment and the language we use and inhabit every day. One major theme shaping our class discussions will be the idea of the medieval book: how were books made, materially and conceptually, in Chaucer's day? Who read them and who owned them? How did medieval authors understand themselves and their craft? While these will not be the only questions we consider this year, we will use the question of the book as a loose frame with which to organize the diversity of texts and contexts we encounter.

Objectives:

Successful students who complete the course will be better able to:

- Read Middle English for the purposes of examining the content, themes, rhetoric, and prosody of Middle English literature, and understand the principles of pronouncing Middle English;
- Describe and explain the literary and aesthetic expectations of a variety of medieval genres, including romance, satire, fabliau, hagiography, drama, and dream vision;
- Construct and present a complex argument about one or more Middle English texts, demonstrating mastery of the points above and engagement with relevant critical debates about the literature.

Course Materials

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Second Edition. Edited by Robert Boenig and Andrew Taylor. Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2012*

English 3116 Course Pack.

Other short texts distributed in class.

****Note:** You must buy this version of *The Canterbury Tales*, as the background readings included in this edition will be part of your assigned reading for the year. I have tried to reduce student costs by making a course pack, but, sorry, online versions won't cut it. The final exam will be "open book" but you will be permitted to bring in only these two required texts, plus any other readings distributed in class. If you do not get these texts and bring the assigned reading to class every day, so you can fill your texts with helpful marginalia and glosses for yourself, you will regret it when you get to the exam.

Recommended Text:

The Bible. If you don't own a copy, go to <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/> and bookmark this page. When looking up passages or stories, try checking different versions. Relevant versions for this course include: a) the Douay-Rheims (the "Catholic Bible" - a translation of the Latin Vulgate. The Vulgate was the version familiar to Chaucer and his contemporaries); b) Wycliffe's Bible (fourteenth-century translation made by followers of the English reformer John Wycliffe); the Geneva Bible (the Bible of the Calvinist Reformation, an interesting contrast to the Douay); The King James Bible (most influential English Bible of all time).

Methods of Evaluation

Participation	10%
Reading tests	15%
Mid-term	10%
Essay #1 (analytical paper, 5-6 pages)	10%
Essay #2 (research paper, 1012 pages)	20%
Final exam	35%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Timetable:

All texts by Chaucer can be found in the Broadview *Canterbury Tales*; texts marked with an asterisk (*) will be handed out in class; texts marked with a B are background readings found in the Broadview; all other texts can be found in the course pack. L 2 Lecture, R = assigned reading.

Sept	10	Introduction: on reading and not fearing Middle English poetry.
	12	Lecture: Authors and Scribes. Read: "Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, his owne Scriveyn."*
	17	L: <i>Auctorite</i> and <i>Makes</i> . R: Augustine, "Creation and Fall of Man"; "Lak of Stedfastnesse"*
	19	L: <i>Auctorite</i> and Readers. R: Dante, from <i>Convivio</i> and <i>Letter</i> , lines 1-92 of Gower, <i>Prologus</i> .
	24	L: Medieval Manuscripts. R: lines 93-584 of Gower's <i>Prologus</i> .
	26	Reading test on Augustine, Dante, Gower. R: finish Gower's <i>Prologus</i> .
Oct	1	L: Medieval Estates and the Language of Dissent. R: Langland, <i>Prologue</i> .
	3	Langland cont'd
	8	L: Chaucer and the Ellesmere Manuscript. R: Boenig and Taylor's Introduction, pp. 10-18 (B).
	10	L: The <i>General Prologue</i> and its Sources. R: lines 1-207; B, pp. 468-73.
	15	L: The <i>GP</i> and its Sources. R: lines 208-541; B, pp. 473-75.
	17	L: The <i>GP</i> and its Sources. R: lines 541-end; B ("The Friar"), pp. 480-81.
	22	Reading test on Langland, GP, and estates.
	24	L: Introduction to <i>The Knight's Tale</i> . R: Ovid, <i>Art of Love</i> and <i>Amores</i> .
	29	L/R: Parts 1 and 2 of <i>Knight</i> .
	31	FALL BREAK
Nov	5	UR: Parts 3 and 4 of <i>Knight</i>
	7	Wrap up <i>Knight</i> ; introduction to cycle plays.
	12	L: Sacred and Profane in Biblical Drama. R: <i>Noah</i> from the Wakefield/Towneley Cycle.
	14	L/R: <i>The Miller's Prologue</i> and <i>Tale</i> .
	19	L/R: <i>Abraham and Isaac</i> from the York Cycle (The Parchment makers' and Bookbinders' Play).*
	21	L/R: <i>The Second Shepherds' Play</i> from the Wakefield/Towneley Cycle.*
	26	MR: <i>The Crucifixion</i> from the York Cycle.*
	28	Reading test on Knight, Miller, and Biblical Drama.
Dec	3	L: Estates and Dissent II. R: <i>The Friar's Tale</i> and <i>The Summoner's Tale</i> .
	5	Friar-Summoner cont'd; distribute mid-term review and <i>Golden Legend</i> readings for next class.
Mid-term period: Dec 8-Dec 19		
Jan	7	L: Medieval Antifeminist Discourse. R: Theophrastus, <i>Golden Book on Marriage</i> ; Jerome, <i>Against Jovinian</i> ; "Saint Lucy, Virgin" and "Saint Agatha, Virgin" from <i>The Golden Legend</i> .
	9	L: Medieval Women as Authors and Readers. R: Christine de Pizan, from <i>The Book of the City of Ladies</i> .
	14	L: Medieval Women cont'd. R: Marie de France, <i>Lanval</i> .

- 16 L/R: *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*.
21 Prologue cont'd; R: *The Wife of Bath's Tale*.
23 R: Gower's *Tale of Florent*.
28 Cont'd
30 L: The Good Wife? R: *The Clerk's Tale* (optional background reading: Bocaccio, *Patient Griselda*, pp. 485-89 [B]).
- Feb 4 **Reading test on Christine, Marie, Gower, Wife of Bath, and Clerk.**
6 L: Ovid and Chaucer. R: Ovid, *The Rape of Proserpine*.
11 L: The Science of Ageing. R: *The Merchant's Tale*.
13 L: Proserpine's Revenge. R: *Merchant* cont'd.
17-21 READING WEEK: no classes
25 L: Vices and Virtues. R: *The Pardoner's Prologue*; "False Seeming's Speech" (B).
27 L/R: *The Pardoner's Tale*; "The Hermit, Death, and the Robbers" (B).
- Mar 4 Cont'd
6 L: "What Man Artow?" Chaucer and his Book. R: *Thopas-Melibee Sequence* excerpt.
11 **Reading test on Ovid, Merchant, Pardoner, and Thopas-Melibee Sequence.**
13 L: Medieval Beast Fables. R: *The Nun's Priest's Tale*; Caxton, Marie, and *Le Roman de Renart* (B).
18 *Nun's Priest* cont'd; Macrobius, *On Dreams* (B).
20 L: Ovid and Chaucer II. R: *The Manciple's Tale*; from Ovid and Gower on Phoebus and Coronis (B).
25 L: Making Earnest of Game? R: *The Parson's Tale* excerpt.
27 Chaucer's Retraction and *Canterbury Tales* wrap up.
- Apr 1 After the Book: modern interpretations and adaptations of medieval books.
3 Cont'd
8 Course conclusion

Assignments:

Reading Tests: You will write five reading tests over the course of the year: three in the fall term and two in the winter term, each worth 3% of your course grade. These tests will be designed to test your progress in learning Middle English vocabulary and grammar, your basic comprehension of assigned texts (plot, structure, character), and to help you prepare for the mid-term and final exams. Note well the dates of these tests on the class schedule and make sure you don't miss them: make-up tests will be granted only in extreme extenuating circumstances. If you miss a test without giving me any advance notice, and if you cannot provide demonstrable proof of the legitimacy of your absence, you will be **out of luck** for that particular test.

Papers: Detailed instructions and topics for the formal papers will be distributed in class. Remember that careful editing and proofreading for spelling, punctuation, grammar, usage, and structure are important in all your written work, and shortcomings in these areas will be reflected in your marks.

Essays must follow MLA style and are due in **hard copy** in class on the date assigned (see class schedule). **I do not accept papers electronically**, so make sure you have a good supply of toner and paper on hand as your essay deadlines approach. Late essays will lose 3% per day (including weekends). Extensions will be granted only in the case of serious, documented illness

or emergency and must be accompanied by documentation processed through Academic Counseling. University policy states that I cannot grant extensions; if Academic Counseling determines that you should have an extension, I will comply.

Attendance:

To earn a passing participation grade, you must attend class regularly, listen attentively, and come prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Beyond this, participation credit will also be given for thoughtful questions and comments, and, in general, demonstration of active engagement with the course material in class. Attendance will be recorded on a sign-in sheet every class to help ensure that your participation grade is fair and objective. Please note that students can be barred from writing final exams in cases of frequent absence from class. Read actively, take responsibility for your own learning: take notes, formulate questions, and try to make connections between texts and ideas on your own.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.