

Instructor: Erica Leighton

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Office hours: Tuesdays 9:30-11:30 and Thursdays 10:30-11:30, A&H Building room 2G28E

Class: Tuesdays 12:30-2:30 and Thursdays 12:30-1:30, University College room 30

### **Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to some of the major texts and themes of Middle English literature, with an emphasis on Chaucer and his contemporaries. Examples of medieval drama, romances, texts from the Arthurian tradition, and medieval autobiography and letter-writing may also be included. Although the period during which Middle English was spoken in England ranges from 1100-1500, we will spend most of our time on texts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. From dragons, unicorns and raunchy jokes to compelling narratives and displays of philosophical argumentation, the variety and imagination of medieval literature has something to interest and entertain all readers.

### **Course Objectives:**

1. Learn to read and pronounce Middle English with enough comfort to be able to identify and discuss the main ideas, themes and concerns of various texts, as well as to describe and explain the literary and aesthetic expectations of a variety of medieval genres, including romance, satire, fabliau, hagiography, drama, and dream vision.
2. Examine and think critically about the historical, social, religious, political and economic forces that shape and regulate the culture and ideas of those living and writing in the medieval period.
3. Develop the ability to read, interpret and analyze medieval texts and to produce clear, well-articulated and logical arguments supported by adequate evidence from the text(s) in the form of discussions as well as essays in MLA format.
4. Appreciate and enjoy the awesomeness of Middle English language and literature.

### **Required Texts:** (available in Western's Book Store)

*A Book of Middle English*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Eds. J.A. Burrow and T. Turville-Petre. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Canterbury Tales*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ed. V. A. Kolve and G. Olson. NY: Norton, 2005.

*Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*. Eds. R.B. Herzman, G. Drake and E. Salisbury. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999.

Malory, Thomas. *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Ed. Stephen H.A. Shepherd. NY: Norton, 2004.

Access to the internet and OWL (various online material will be posted)

**Mark Distribution:**

Participation and Group Work: 15%

Recitations: 5%

First Essay (5-6 pages): 10%

Midterm: 10%

Translation Tests: 10% (4 tests, 2.5% each)

Second Essay (10-12 pages): 15%

Final exam: 35%

**Class Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Pre-Reading, Tests and Assignments</b>
<b>Th Sept. 4</b>	Week 1: Introduction	“Robin Hood and the Potter”
<b>T Sept. 9</b>	Week 2: Sights and Sounds of ME	Finish up “Robin Hood”; Pronunciation and Language handouts
<b>Th Sept. 11</b>		Caxton’s translation of Ovid’s “Orpheus and Eurydice”
<b>T Sept. 16</b>	Week 3: A medieval spin on a classical tale	“Sir Orfeo” ( <i>BME</i> 112-131); <i>BME</i> chapters 3&4
<b>Th Sept. 18</b>		Finish up “Sir Orfeo” and <i>BME</i> chapters
<b>T Sept. 23</b>	Week 4: Chaucer’s English and the <i>Tales</i>	Chaucer, <i>General Prologue</i> (L 1-42; 118-162; 270-308; 445-76); Langland, Gower and Wycliffe (S&B 335-340); <i>BME</i> chapters 1&2
<b>Th Sept. 25</b>		<i>General Prologue</i> (L 669-859); Boccaccio, Augustine and Thorpe (S&B 311-32)
<b>T Sept. 30</b>	Week 5: Marriage in the Tales	Sources for Wife of Bath (S&B 348-86); Chaucer, <i>Wife of Bath’s Prologue</i> ; <i>BME</i> chapter 5
<b>Th Oct. 2</b>		Finish up <i>Wife of Bath’s Prologue</i> ; optional reading, Kittredge “The Marriage Group” (S&B 539-46)
<b>T Oct. 7</b>	Week 6:	Chaucer, <i>Wife of Bath’s Tale</i> ; <i>BME</i> chapter 6 <b>Translation Test #1</b> <b>Last day for recitations</b>
<b>Th Oct. 9</b>		Finish up <i>Wife of Bath’s Tale</i> ; Gower, “The Tale of Florent” (S&B 386-96)

<b>T Oct. 14</b>	Week 8:	Petrarch, "The Story of Griselda" (S&B 407-421); Chaucer, <i>Clerk's Prologue and Tale</i> (L 1-448)
<b>Th Oct. 16</b>		Finish up with <i>Clerk's Prologue and Tale</i> (L 449-1212)
<b>T Oct. 21</b>	Week 9: Autobiography	<i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i> (selections)
<b>Th Oct. 23</b>		Finish up <i>Margery Kempe</i>
<b>T Oct. 28</b>	Week 10: The Saint's Life/Miracle Tale	Chaucer, <i>Prioress' Prologue and Tale</i> ; background (S&B 439-50)
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Oct. 30</b>	<b>FALL STUDY BREAK</b>
<b>T Nov. 4</b>	Week 11:	Finish up <i>Prioress' Tale</i> ; Anon., <i>Gilte Legende</i> (Saints Edmund and Winifred) <b>Translation Test #2</b>
<b>Th Nov. 6</b>		Finish up <i>Gilte Legende</i>
<b>T Nov. 11</b>	Week 12:	Voragine's "Saint Margaret"; Bokenham's <i>Saint Margaret</i>
<b>Th Nov. 13</b>		Finish up <i>Saint Margaret</i> ; <i>Stanzaic Life of Margaret</i>
<b>T Nov. 18</b>	Week 13: Medieval Manuscripts	How to read manuscripts; "Chaucer's Words to Adam" <b>First Essay Due</b>
<b>Th Nov. 20</b>		"Seynt John of Bevirlee" transcription exercise
<b>T Nov. 25</b>	Week 14: Drama (Cycle Plays)	<i>Second Shepherd's Pageant</i>
<b>Th Nov. 27</b>		Finish up <i>Second Shepherd's Pageant</i>
<b>T Dec. 2</b>	Week 15:	<i>The Harrowing of Hell</i>
	<b>Dec. 6-17: Mid-year</b>	<b>Exam Period</b>
<b>T Jan. 6</b>	Week 16: Drama (Morality Plays)	<i>Everyman</i>
<b>Th Jan. 8</b>		Finish up <i>Everyman</i>
<b>T Jan. 13</b>	Week 17: Dreams and Fate	Chaucer, <i>Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale</i> ; background (S&B 455-65)
<b>Th Jan. 15</b>		Finish up <i>Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale</i>
<b>T Jan. 20</b>	Week 18: Animals	TBA
<b>Th Jan. 22</b>		<b>Translation Test #3</b>

<b>T Jan. 27</b>	Week 19: English National Identity	<i>Athelstan</i>
<b>Th Jan. 29</b>		Finish up <i>Athelstan</i> ; Lazamon, <i>Brut</i> (BME 96-105)
<b>T Feb. 3</b>	Week 20:	Finish up <i>Brut</i> ; <i>King Horn</i>
<b>Th Feb. 5</b>		Finish up <i>King Horn</i>
<b>T Feb. 10</b>	Week 21: Death and Sin	Chaucer, <i>Pardoner's Prologue</i> ; background (S&B 431-8)
<b>Th Feb. 12</b>		C. Dinshawe (S&B 566-85); Chaucer, <i>Pardoner's Tale</i>
<b>Feb. 16-20 READING WEEK</b>		
<b>T Feb. 24</b>	Week 22: Arthurian Legend	Malory, <i>Le Morte D'Arthur</i> (p.1-61) <b>Translation Test #4</b>
<b>Th Feb. 26</b>		Malory, <i>Le Morte D'Arthur</i> (p.62-77)
<b>T Mar. 3</b>	Week 23:	Malory, <i>Le Morte D'Arthur</i> (p. 113-51); Alliterative <i>Morte</i> (S&B 714-18); John Hardyng, <i>Chronicle</i> (S&B 719-20)
<b>Th Mar. 5</b>		Malory (p. 151-77); Gilbert Hay, <i>The Buk of Knychthede</i> (S&B 777-80)
<b>T Mar. 10</b>	Week 24:	Malory (p. 588-645)
<b>Th Mar. 12</b>		Lambert "Shame and Guilt" (S&B 849-56); Strohm "Mellyagant's Primal Scene (S&B 894-906)
<b>T Mar. 17</b>	Week 25:	Malory (p. 645-98); The Stanzaic <i>Morte</i> (S&B 740-7)
<b>Th Mar. 19</b>		Finish up Malory; Cooper "Counter-Romance" (S&B 819-30)
<b>T Mar. 24</b>	Week 26: Drama (The Flood)	<i>Noah</i> ; ME paraphrase of the flood in <i>Genesis</i> <b>Second Essay Due</b>
<b>Th Mar. 26</b>		Finish up <i>Noah</i>
<b>T Mar. 31</b>	Week 27: The Pear Tree Fabliau	Chaucer, <i>The Merchant's Prologue and Tale</i>
<b>Th Apr. 2</b>		Finish up <i>The Merchant's Tale</i>
<b>T Apr. 7</b>	<b>LAST CLASS</b>	Review
<b>Apr. 11-30 Final Exam Period</b>		

**Participation and Group Work: 15%**

The grade for participation will be determined based on your individual performance in all elements of class, from attendance and attentive listening to thoughtful questions and comments that demonstrate engagement with the texts and lectures. "Participation" means coming to class having done the readings, material in hand, prepared for active involvement in discussion and activities; it also means your own effort in maintaining a respectful and positive classroom space. Showing up late, leaving early or being absent will cost you marks.

For the group work, on any given day the class will be divided into groups in order to examine the text or passage assigned, and work through the exercise or question(s) proposed. When we take the material up as a class, groups may be called upon to report the results of their discussion.

**Recitation: 5%**

Memorize, recite and be prepared to translate the first 18 lines of Chaucer's "General Prologue" to the *Canterbury Tales*. Every student will make an individual appointment with me to do this **by October 7<sup>th</sup>**. This assignment helps you get used to the strangeness of Middle English and gives me a chance to meet everyone early in the year. Use the pronunciation guides from our texts and listen to examples posted on OWL.

**Midterm: 10%**

You will be given a choice of passages selected from our first semester readings, and will be asked to translate some or all of the selection and answer several questions in paragraph form based on your analysis of the passage. There may be a short section consisting of passage identification. More information will be provided in class.

**Translation Tests: 10% (4 tests; 2.5% each)**

Translation tests will take place during class and are designed to evaluate your grasp of the Middle English language. There will be no accommodation for missed tests.

**Papers: First Essay: (5-6 pages), due IN-CLASS Tuesday November 18: 10%****Second Essay: (10-12 pages), due IN-CLASS Tuesday March 24: 15%**

For the first essay, students will be required to write on an assigned topic related to the course readings. For the second essay, students will write on their choice of topic, which must be discussed with and approved by the instructor **no later than February 12<sup>th</sup>**. The second essay also requires a minimum of **6 secondary sources**. Both essays should include a clear and specific thesis statement, as well as a logical argument defended with evidence from the text(s) (i.e. primary sources) discussed. These assignments must be submitted in **MLA format**. Do not hesitate to consult the instructor regarding your essay as you begin your brainstorming and research.

**Exams:**

Exams are scheduled by the university. **DO NOT MAKE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS UNTIL THE EXAM SCHEDULE HAS BEEN POSTED.**

**A Note on Attendance:**

Excessive absenteeism is grounds for debarring a student from taking the final examination. The 2014 Academic Calendar states: "Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given)/ On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course" (p. 35). *For the purposes of this course, "excessive absenteeism" will be defined as missing six hours or more (two weeks) of classes over the course of each term.*

**COURSE WORK AND EXAM:**

STUDENTS MUST PASS BOTH TERM WORK AND THE FINAL EXAMINATION (IN COURSES WITH FINAL EXAMINATIONS) IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE. STUDENTS WHO FAIL THE FINAL EXAMINATION (REGARDLESS OF THEIR TERM MARK) AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE.

**ASSIGNMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS:**

Late assignments will be penalized 2% per day, including weekends. **As per UWO regulations, students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any misses texts, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation.** Academic accommodation on assignments cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Please note: instructors are not permitted to review medical documentation; all requests for academic accommodation that include doctor's notes, etc., regardless of the total worth of the assignment to a student's final grade, must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office and not to the instructor.

**Please submit all assignments, in person, to your instructor.** Assignments are due on their due date at the beginning of class. Assignments submitted to the essay drop box, located outside the English Department main office **will incur a late penalty.** Electronic submissions will NOT be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

**Plagiarism checking:** The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking (i.e. Turnitin). Students will be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

**PLAGIARISM**

(See 2013 U.W.O. Calendar, pp. 19-21.)

Plagiarism (the unacknowledged use of another person's work) is one of the most serious academic offences, since it involves fraud and misrepresentation. In plagiarizing, one is in effect claiming another person's words or ideas or data as one's own work, and thus misrepresenting material subject to academic evaluation. It is necessary, therefore, that plagiarism carry appropriate penalties. These are within the discretion of the Chair of

Undergraduate Studies, but may include failure of a course or a grade of zero on an assignment, without the privilege of resubmitting it.

**STUDENTS FOUND GUILTY OF A SECOND SERIOUS OFFENCE WILL BE EXPELLED FROM DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH COURSES. FURTHER ACTION MAY BE TAKEN BY THE DEAN'S OFFICE.**

Students must acknowledge each printed or electronic source (**including study guides such as *Cole's Notes and Internet materials***) by author, title, date and place of publication, and page number if: (a) they quote from it directly; (b) they paraphrase its ideas; (c) they are conscious of any influence its ideas may have had on their own work. **Every source (including websites) that students have consulted (whether they refer to it directly or not) must be included in a bibliography (Works Cited).** Some instructors may require that students provide copies of material downloaded from the Internet.

It is not always possible to identify the sources of inspiration of one's own ideas with total accuracy. A reasonable and conscientious effort is all that is required. **However, it is entirely the student's responsibility to be aware of the nature of plagiarism.** If students have any questions about plagiarism, they should ask their instructor. If students have any doubts about the documentation of their own essays, they should see the instructor before the essays are due. Information about correct forms of documentation may be found in the *MLA HANDBOOK For Writers of Research Papers* (New York: Modern Language Association, 2009), available in the Reference section at Weldon (LB 2369.M57).

Students found to have submitted the work of another person as their own work **will automatically fail the course.** Any students who know their own work has been used improperly have a responsibility to inform the Department of that fact; otherwise they will be considered collaborators.

Since honest students (by far the majority) are potentially affected by the actions of the dishonest few, some may choose to bring instances of plagiarism or other forms of cheating confidentially to the attention of the Chair of Undergraduate Studies.

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>).

**Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help:**

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>