

## Department of English &amp; Writing Studies

**Disenchanted Chaucer: Authority and Literature in Medieval England**  
**English 3315E (001)**  
Fall/Winter 2019-20

**Instructor:** Richard Moll  
rmoll@uwo.ca; 661-2111 x85803, email is best!

**Course Location:** University Community Centre, 58

**Office hours:** UC 4410, Thurs. 1:30-4:30

**Course Date/Time:** Tues. 12:30-2:30 pm,  
Thurs. 12:30-1:30 pm

**Prerequisites:** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or 1.0 of Medieval Studies 1000-1999 or permission of the Department.

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**Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to:

- Read and pronounce Middle English with sufficient competency that they can examine the content, themes, rhetoric and prosody of Middle English literature;
- Describe and explain the literary and aesthetic expectations of a variety of medieval genres, including (but not limited to) romance, fabliaux, hagiography, and dream vision;
- Construct and present a complex argument about one or more Middle English texts which demonstrates mastery of the points above, and is firmly placed within existing theoretical and critical debates about the literature.

Course Materials**Course texts:**

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales: Seventeen Tales and the General Prologue*. Ed. V.A. Kolve and Glending Olson. New York: Norton, 2018. (CT)

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Ed. Kathryn L. Lynch. New York: Norton, 2007. (DV)

*Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds*. Ed. Robert P. Miller. New York: Oxford UP, 1977. (CS&B)

*Early English Drama: An Anthology*. Ed. John C. Coldewey. New York: Garland, 1993. (EED)

*Middle English Romances*. Ed. Stephen H.A. Shepherd. New York: Norton, 1995. (MER)

\*\*\*\*Middle English texts can vary widely between different editions, so please obtain *these editions*\*\*\*\*

**Recommended:** Hacker, Diana. *A Canadian Writer's Reference*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston/New York: Bedford, 2004. You probably have a writing handbook from first year. Any will do, but you will find it useful as you read about/discuss Middle English grammar.

### Methods of Evaluation

#### **Marks Distribution:**

Paper 1 (9-10 pages)	17%
Paper prospectus	5%
Paper 2 (15-17 pages)	30%
Recitation	10%
Translation tests	6% (best 6 of 8)
In-class test	4% (best 3 of 4)
Participation	5%
Final exam	23%

#### **Papers:**

Essays must be presented in MLA style. Essays are due by the end of class on the date assigned. Late essays will lose 3% per day (including weekends). Extensions will only be granted in the case of serious, documented illness or emergency and must be accompanied by documentation processed through Academic Counseling. In other words, I do not (indeed, University policy states that I cannot) grant extensions. If Academic Counseling determines that you should have an extension, I will comply. **Come see me BEFORE you are frantic in the week before a paper is due.**

#### **Recitation:**

Memorize, recite and be prepared to translate the first 18 lines of Chaucer's General Prologue. Every student will make an individual appointment with me to do this before Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>. Unexpected emergencies can be accommodated on Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, but no further recitations will be permitted after Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>. This assignment helps you get used to the strangeness of Middle English and gives me a chance to meet everyone. Use the pronunciation guides in your various texts for guidance. Online recordings are available on the Chaucer metapage: [http://academics.vmi.edu/english/audio/audio\\_index.html](http://academics.vmi.edu/english/audio/audio_index.html) (link in WebCT). We will talk about pronunciation in class, but come and see me in advance if you want some help.

#### **Translation Quizzes:**

You must be able to read Middle English to pass the course, and you must read it well to do well in the course. Translation quizzes will therefore be a regular part of the course.

The two lowest quiz scores will be discarded. An excuse for a missed quiz must meet the same standards as a late paper (i.e. documentation from your dean's office for *each* missed test).

Quizzes will be done at random throughout the year.

They will be held at any time within the class time (beginning, middle or end of class).

They will be short (6-8 lines or 15 minutes).

They will be drawn from the readings assigned for that day.

**IF YOU MISS *FOUR* QUIZES (UNEXCUSED) YOU WILL  
BE FAILED IN THE COURSE.**

#### **In-class tests:**

These will be short (15 minutes) and directly related to the day's topic of discussion. You will be asked to write a short piece of analysis based on the day's text. Grades will be based equally on your analysis and your ability to eloquently integrate textual evidence into your own prose. **TO DO THIS, YOU WILL NEED TO BE ABLE TO READ THE TEXT.**

**Class participation:**

Woody Allen might have said that “90% of life is just showing up”, but he never tried to learn Middle English. Being in class is not very useful if we are discussing texts that you haven’t read and with which you can not engage. Students will periodically be responsible for directing small-group discussion and this will weigh heavily as “Class Participation.”

**Exams:**

Exams are scheduled by the University.

**DO NOT MAKE TRAVEL PLANS UNTIL YOU KNOW YOUR EXAM SCHEDULE.**

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/Student%20Information.html>.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments 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 Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/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](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 a passage of text 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:**

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.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

**Information for students:**

Departmental and university policies related to course work, grades, plagiarism, appeals, etc. are available on the English Department website. Please see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

### Timetable

Read all assigned texts before class and *bring the book(s) with you*. We WILL be reading and talking about specific passages from the texts. Secondary sources are available from online databases through the Library. Heed the page or line numbers assigned.

- Thurs. Sept. 5            First day of class: Intros and wotnots  
Read: "The Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse" (given out in class)
- Tues. Sept. 10           Read: Chaucer, General Prologue (CT ll. 1-100, 118-162)  
Wetherbee, "An Introduction" (CT, 513-22)
- Thurs. Sept. 12           Read: "The Three Estates," CS&B (153-7)  
Gower, *Vox clamantis*, CS&B (192-206, 215-228, 231-3)  
Geoffroi de Charny, CS&B (166-8, 207-9)  
Hugh of St. Victor, CS&B (210-214)
- Tues. Sept. 17           Read: Chaucer, General Prologue (ll. 285-308, 45-476, 542-566, 715-859)
- Thurs. Sept. 19           Read: Boccaccio, *Decameron* (CT, 349-63)  
Augustine, "Human Life as a Pilgrimage" (CT, 364-5)  
Thorpe, "On Pilgrimage" (CT, 365-70)

### **Upon whose authority do we act?**

- Tues. Sept. 24           Read: Chaucer, Knight's Tale (ll. 859-1880)  
Ovid, *Amores*, CS&B (269-288)  
Andreas Capellanus, *The Treatise on Love*, CS&B (291-9)
- Thurs. Sept. 26           Read: Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, CS&B (289-90)
- Tues. Oct. 1             Read: Chaucer, Knight's Tale (ll. 1881-3108, ie. a LOT)  
**Test 1**
- Thurs. Oct. 3             Read: Boccaccio, *Teseide*, CS&B (322-43)  
Muscatine, Charles. "Form, Texture, and Meaning in Chaucer's Knight's Tale." *PMLA* 65 (1950): 911-29.  
Aers, David. "Imagination, Order and Ideology: The Knight's Tale."  
From: *Chaucer, Langland, and the creative imagination*  
(London: Routledge, 1980). Available at:  
<http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/bibliog/kt-aers.htm>
- Tues. Oct. 8             Read: Chaucer, Miller's Tale (ll. 3110-3850)
- Thurs. Oct. 10           Finish up with the Miller's Tale

### **Upon what authority does truth reside?**

- Tues. Oct. 15           Read: Chaucer, Truth (DV, 219-20)  
Chaucer, Chaucer's Words to Adam, His Own Scribe (DV, 216-17)
- Thurs. Oct. 17           Read: Chaucer, *House of Fame* (Intro, & Book 1, DV, pp. 39-55)  
**Last day for recitations (Oct. 19)**

- Tues. Oct. 22      Read: Chaucer, *House of Fame* (Finish, *DV*, pp. 55-92)  
Ruffolo, Lara. "Literary Authority and the Lists of Chaucer's 'House of Fame': Destruction and Definition through Proloferation."  
*The Chaucer Review* 27 (1993): 325-41.
- Thurs. Oct. 24      Read: Ruth Evans, "Chaucer in Cyberspace" (*DV*, 229-31).
- Tues. Oct. 29      Read: "The Anti-Feminist Tradition," *CS&B* (397-402)  
Theophrastus, *The Golden Book*, *CS&B* (411-414)  
Saint Jerome, *Epistle against Jovinian*, *CS&B* (415-436)  
Walter Map, *Courtiers' Trifles*, *CS&B* (437-46)
- After you have read the above material, then read:*  
Chaucer, Wife of Bath's Prologue (*CT* ll. 1-856, pp. 129-48). Note where the Wife has used the anti-feminist tradition.
- Thurs. Oct. 31      Read: As above. We'll keep talking about the prologue.  
Parker, David. "Can We Trust the Wife of bath?" *The Chaucer Review* 4.2 (1970): 90-98.
- Tues. Nov. 5      Fall Reading Week
- Thurs. Nov. 7      Fall Reading Week
- Tues. Nov. 12      Read: Chaucer, The Wife of Bath's Tale (*CT*, ll. 856-1264)  
**Test 2**
- Thurs. Nov. 14      Read: Petrarch, "The Story of Griselda," *CS&B* (136-152)  
Chaucer, Clerk's Tale (*CT*, ll. 1-196)
- Tues. Nov. 19      Read: Chaucer, Clerk's Tale (*CT*, ll. 197-1212g)
- By what authority is the household ruled?**
- Thurs. Nov. 21      Read: The last two weeks (Wife of Bath and Clerk)  
Linda Georgianna, "The Clerk's Tale and the Grammar of Assent,"  
*Speculum* 70 (1995): 793-821.
- Tues. Nov. 26      Read: Green, Richard F. "Why Marquis Walter Treats His Wife so Badly."  
*The Chaucer Review* 47.1 (2012): 48-62.
- Thurs. Nov. 28      Read: Gower, *Tale of Florent* (*CT*, pp. 422-31)  
**Paper 1 due.**
- Tues. Dec. 3      Read: "Noah" (*EED*, 306-323)
- Thurs. Dec. 5      Finish up with Noah

**Exam Period: We won't have a mid-year exam.**

**Upon what authority does the Church rest?**

Tues. Jan. 7 Read: Pardoner's Prologue (ll. 314-462, pp. 233-236)  
"A Pardoner's License," CS&B (229-30)  
Jean de Meun, *Romance of the Rose*, CS&B (251-4)

Thurs. Jan. 9 Read: Pardoner's Tale (ll. 463-969)

Tues. Jan. 14 Read: "Introduction" (*EED*, 1-8)  
*Everyman* (*EED*, 43-67)  
Lawrence V. Ryan, "Doctrine and Dramatic Structure in *Everyman*,"  
*Speculum* 32 (1957): 722-35.

**Test 3**

Thurs. Jan. 16 Finish *Everyman*

Tues. Jan. 21 Read: Prioress's Prologue & tale (ll. 435-690)  
Listen: The Alma Redemptoris, which is in WebCT

Thurs. Jan. 23 Finish Prioress  
Read: Besserman, Lawrence, "Ideology, Antisemitism, and Chaucer's  
*Prioress's Tale*." *The Chaucer Review* 36.1 (2001): 48-72.

Tues. Jan. 28 Read: *St. Erkenwald* (*I'll get this to you at the beginning of term*)  
This is more difficult than anything you will have read thus far.

Thurs. Jan. 30 Read: More *St. Erkenwald*

Tues. Feb. 4 Read: Finish *St Erkenwald*  
Sisk, Jennifer L. "The Uneasy Orthodoxy of *St. Erkenwald*." *ELH* 74.1  
(2007): 89-115

**Test 4**

Thurs. Feb. 6 Read: *Patience*. We'll use the edition in preparation at the Calgary "Cotton  
Nero A.x. Project," available at:  
<http://people.ucalgary.ca/~scriptor/cotton/projectnew.html>

Tues. Feb. 11 Read: The Book of Jonah (any Bible will do)  
Davis, Adam Brooke. "What the Poet of *Patience* Really Did to the  
Book of Jonah." *Viator* 22 (1991): 267-78.

Thurs. Feb. 13 We'll spend some time looking at the manuscript of this text. Explore the  
"Cotton Nero A.x. Project" (the manuscript also has *Sir Gawain  
and the Green Knight*).

Tues. Feb. 18 Reading Week

Thurs. Feb. 20 Reading Week

Tues. Feb. 25      Read: "The Second Shepherd's Play" (*EED*, 343-363)  
Kathleen Irace, "Mak's Sothren Tothe: A Philological and  
Critical Study of the Dialect Joke in the *Second Shepherd's  
Play*," *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance  
Studies* 21 (1990): 38-51. (This is hard to find. Use:  
<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0tb597k2>)

Thurs. Feb. 27      Finish up Ecclesiastical Authority

**By what authority does the crown rule?**

Tues. Mar. 3      Read: *Havelok the Dane* (*MEVR*, 56-129, ll. 1-985)

Thurs. Mar. 5      Read: *Havelok the Dane* (continued)

Tues. Mar. 10      Read: *Havelok the Dane* (*MEVR*, ll. 986-3001)  
Staines, David. "Havelok the Dane: A Thirteenth-Century  
Handbook for Princes." *Speculum* 51 (1976): 602-23.

Thurs. Mar. 12      Read: Faletta, Michael. "The Ends of Romance: Dreaming the Nation in  
the Middle English Havelok." *Exemplaria* 17.2 (2005): 347-80.

Tues. Mar. 17      Read: *The Awntyrs off Arthure* (*MER*, 1-338)

Thurs. Mar. 19      Read: *The Awntyrs off Arthure* (*MER*, 339-715)  
Howes, Laura. "Inglewood Forest in Two Middle English  
Romances." *Neophilologus* 97 (2013): 185-189.

Tues. Mar. 24      Finish up with *Awntyrs*  
**Paper 2 due.**

Thurs. Mar. 26      Chaucer, "Gentilesse" (*DV*, pp. 220-21)  
Finish up with secular authority.

**Kind of related to authority, but mostly because it's my favourite text:**

Tues. Mar. 31      Read: Chaucer, Nun's Priest's Prologue & Tale (*CT*, ll. 2766-3460, pp. 269-85)  
Macrobius, *CS&B* (44-52)  
Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *CS&B* (66-8, and handout)

Thurs. April 2      Read: Chaucer's Retraction (ll. 956-1092, pp. 306-307)

Tues. April 10      Catch up, review, what-have-yous.

**Exams: We WILL have a final exam. Don't book flights.**