

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3315E (001)
Disenchanted Chaucer
Fall 2026**1. Course Information**

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

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.

2. Instructor Information

Instructor: Richard J. Moll (rmoll@uwo.ca)

Office hours: UC 4410, Monday 3:00-4:45, Wed. 2:00-4:45 (in person preferred).
UC 2210A (if I'm not at the room above, I might be here, especially on a Tuesday or Thursday)

3. Course Syllabus, Schedule, Delivery Mode**Course Description**

The authority of crown, family, and church, and even the texts that supported those institutions, was questioned in the late medieval period. While introducing the Middle English language, this course will explore how Geoffrey Chaucer and his contemporaries used literature to critique social and political institutions.

Objectives

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

- 1) read and pronounce Middle English with sufficient competency that they can examine the content, themes, rhetoric and prosody of Middle English literature
- 2) 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
- 3) 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.

4. Course Materials

I am required by law to include publishers' websites and prices. (As a result, the prices are all in US\$ and don't include shipping.) Ignore these and use the University Bookstore. Most of these are also available used at abebooks.com. The Norton texts were used in last year's Middle English course and may be available used locally.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Norton Chaucer*. Ed. David Lawton. New York: Norton, 2019.
<https://wnorton.com/books/9780393603477> (\$80.32)
This will be shrink wrapped with *Middle English Romances* at a discount.

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

The Kingis Quair and Other Prison Poems. Ed. Mary-Jo Arn. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2005.
Available free online, or for purchase (of hardcopy) at:
<https://metseditions.org/editions/2ZIL20jU2emwT6A3fa8NZiRbezQxMad>

Middle English Romances. Ed. Stephen H.A. Shepherd. New York: Norton, 1995.
(MER) <https://wnorton.com/books/Middle-English-Romances/> (\$30.33).
This will be shrink wrapped with *The Norton Chaucer* at a discount.

Bookstore Link: [ENG 3315E Custom Link](#)

NOTE: Middle English texts can vary A LOT between different editions, so please obtain these editions. You will be allowed to take the *physical* copy of *The Norton Chaucer* into the exam.
NO OTHER AIDS WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE EXAM.

Additional course material will be posted to OWL: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

Timetable (Class schedule)

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.

Wed. Sept. 9	First day of class: Intros and wotnots Read: "The Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse" (given out in class)
Mon. Sept. 14	Read: Chaucer, General Prologue (CT ll. 1-100, pp. 69-79) Lawton's Introduction, 1-16

- Wed. Sept. 16 Read: John Gower, *Vox clamantis*, tr. Robert J. Meindl *et al.* (Boydell & Brewer, 2025). [Available electronically in *JStor*] [on knights and laborers] V.1-384, 449-629.
“The maner of makynge Knyghtes” in John Anstis, *Observations introductory to an historical essay, upon the Knighthood of the Bath* (London, 1725), 99-101 (the text runs to p. 106; feel free to finish it if you like. It’s available in the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/bim_eighteenth-century_observations-introductor_anstis-john_1725/page/n193/mode/2up).
- Mon. Sept. 21 Read: Chaucer, General Prologue (CT, 715-859)
- Wed. Sept. 23 Read: Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* (bk. 2., ch. 40, bk. 3, chs. 5, 12, 25, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1202.htm>; just the relevant chapters!)
Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalion* (Bk 5, chs. 1-3; use the Google Books version: https://books.google.ca/books/about/The_Didascalicon_of_Hugh_of_St_Victor.html?id=fVBwOdVw1DoC&redir_esc=y)
Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria*, pp. 24-37, 51-55 (pdf in OWL)
- Upon whose authority do we act?
- Mon. Sept. 28 Read: Chaucer, Knight’s Tale (CT, ll. 859-1354)
Andreas Capellanus, *The Treatise on Love* (PDF in OWL)
Chaucer, *Boece*, Book 5 (pp. 727-47)
- This is a challenging read: you can find a translation of the original Boethius (Chaucer’s *Boece*) here:
Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Tr. H.R. James (London, 1897), bk 5, pp. 229-ff.
(https://www.gutenberg.org/files/14328/14328-h/14328-h.htm#Page_229)
- Wed. Sept. 30 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Mon. Oct. 5 Read: Chaucer, Knight’s Tale (CT, ll. 13565-2282, ie. a LOT)
Boccaccio, *Teseide*, from book 7 on Temples (pdf in OWL)
- Test 1**
- Wed. Oct. 7 More of Knight’s Tale, Books 2 & 3
Read: Chaucer, *Boece*, Book 2 (pp. 644-67)
- Again, you may want to look at the translation:
Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Bk 2 (pp. 47-92; https://www.gutenberg.org/files/14328/14328-h/14328-h.htm#Page_47.)
- Mon. Oct. 12 Fall Reading Week
- Wed. Oct. 15 Fall Reading Week

- Mon. Oct. 19 Read: Chaucer, Knight's Tale (CT, ll. 2283-3108, i.e. a LOT)
Muscatine, Charles. "Form, Texture, and Meaning in Chaucer's Knight's Tale." *PMLA* 65 (1950): 911-29.
- Wed. Oct. 21 Read: Aers, David. "Imagination, Order and Ideology: The Knight's Tale." From: *Chaucer, Langland, and the creative imagination* (London: Routledge, 1980). Available at:
<https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/david-aers-imagination-order-and-ideology-knights-tale> (Link in OWL)
- Mon. Oct. 26 Read: Chaucer, Miller's Tale (CT ll. 545-66, 3110-3850, pp. 89, 142-58)
Wed. Oct. 28 Finish up with the Miller's Tale
Last day for recitations (Oct. 29)
- Mon. Nov. 2 Read: Chaucer, "Balade de bon conseil" (pp. 1155-6)
Chaucer, "Chaucer's Words to Adam Sciveyn" (p. 1158)
- Wed. Nov. 4 Read: Chaucer, *House of Fame* (Intro, & Book 1, pp. 1001-1016)
- Mon. Nov. 9 Read: Chaucer, *House of Fame* (Finish, pp. 1016-52)
Wed. Nov. 11 Read: Ruffolo, Lara. "Literary Authority and the Lists of Chaucer's 'House of Fame': Destruction and Definition through Proliferation." *The Chaucer Review* 27 (1993): 325-41.
- Mon. Nov. 16 Read: *The Kingis Quair* (pp. 1-10, 17-30, 31-54, lines 1-665)
Wed. Nov. 18 Look again at Boethius, *Consolation*, bk 2 (see above)
Test 2
- Mon. Nov. 23 Read: *Kingis Quair* (pp. 54-79, lines 666-1379)
Wed. Nov. 25 Hodapp, William F. "Reading the Narrator Reading Boethius: The Implied Audience of *The Kingis Quair*." *Enarratio: Publications of the Medieval Association of the Midwest* 14 (2007): 23-35.
- Mon. Nov. 30 Read: Chaucer, Nun's Priest's Prologue & Tale (CT, ll. VII.2766-3460, pp. 460-475)
Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*. 1.2.6-1.3.13, pp. 84-91). Use the version in the ACLS Humanities Ebook Database.
Link in OWL.
- Paper 1a due.**
- Wed. Dec. 2 Read: Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria* (pdf in OWL, focus on pp. 30-32)
- Mon. Dec. 7 Read: "Complaint of a Prisoner against Fortune" (*Kingis Quair*, pp. 173-80).
- Paper 1b due**
- Wed. Dec. 9 Finish up the "Complaint."

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

Upon what authority does the Church rest?

Mon. Jan. 4 Read: Pardoner's Prologue (CT. II I. 669-714, IV. 287-969, pp. 92-3, 357-71)

Jean de Meun, *Romance of the Rose* (pdf in OWL)

Wed. Jan. 6 Read: Pardoner's Tale (II. 463-969)

Mon. Jan. 11 The Prioress's Prologue and Tale

(We will discuss the apparent antisemitism of the Tale)

Read: Prioress's Prologue & Tale (CT II. I.118-62, VII.435-690, pp. 79-80, 387-690)

Listen: The *Alma Redemptoris* (OWL)

Wed. Jan. 13 Finish the Prioress's Tale

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

Test 3

Mon. Jan. 18 *Everyman* (and medieval drama)

Read: "Introduction" (EED, 1-8)

Everyman (EED, 43-67)

Lawrence V. Ryan, "Doctrine and Dramatic Structure in *Everyman*," *Speculum* 32 (1957): 722-35.

Wed. Jan. 20 Finish *Everyman*

Mon. Jan. 25 Read: *St. Erkenwald* (pdf in OWL)

This is more difficult than anything you will have read thus far.

Wed. Jan. 27 Read: More *St. Erkenwald*

Mon. Feb. 1 Read: Finish *St. Erkenwald*

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

Wed. Feb. 3 Read: *Patience*.

I had planned to use the edition created as part of the Gawain MS project at UofCalgary, but it is slipping into the digital void. I'll have a better option by the time we get here:

<https://wpsites.ucalgary.ca/gawain-ms/publications/>

Mon. Feb. 8 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.

Wed. Feb. 10 We'll spend some time looking at the manuscript of this text.

Test 4

Mon. Feb. 15 Reading Week

Wed. Feb. 17 Reading Week

Mon. Feb. 22 Read: "The Second Shepherd's Play" (*EED*, 343-363)
Irace, Kathleen. "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.

Wed. Feb. 24 Finish up "The Second Shepherd's Play."

Mon. Mar. 1 Read: "Noah" (*EED*, 306-323)

Wed. Mar. 3 Finish up "Noah" and Ecclesiastical Authority

Paper 2 Prospectus Due

By what authority does the crown rule?

Mon. Mar. 8 Read: *Havelok the Dane* (*MEVR*, 3-76, ll. 1-985)

Wed. Mar. 10 Read: *Havelok the Dane* (continued)

Mon. Mar. 15 Read: *Havelok the Dane* (*MEVR*, ll. 986-3001)
Staines, David. "Havelok the Dane: A Thirteenth-Century Handbook for Princes." *Speculum* 51 (1976): 602-23.

Wed. Mar. 17 Read: Faletra, Michael. "The Ends of Romance: Dreaming the Nation in the Middle English *Havelok*." *Exemplaria* 17.2 (2005): 347-80.

Mon. Mar. 22 Read: *The Awntyrs off Arthure* (*MER*, 263-88, lines 1-338)

Wed. Mar. 24 Read: *The Awntyrs off Arthure* (*MER*, lines 339-715)
Howes, Laura. "Inglewood Forest in Two Middle English Romances." *Neophilologus* 97 (2013): 185-189.

Mon. Mar. 29 More on the *Awntyrs*

Paper 2 due.

Wed. Mar. 31 Finish up with *Awntyrs*

Mon. April 5 Read: Chaucer, "Gentilesse" (pp. 1156-7)

Finish up with secular authority.

Wed. April 7 Read: Chaucer's Retraction (p. 590)

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

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. In RARE instances, I may add "Announcements", and these are also emailed to the class.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the OWL Brightspace Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Electronic Devices: No electronic aids are permitted for this exam. Electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted. (You WILL be allowed to bring the *Norton Chaucer* into the exam. This is the ONLY edition that will be allowed in the exam.)

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools/software/apps is not permitted for any assignment that will be submitted for a grade. This course asks you to engage with the literature, aesthetics and assumptions of a very foreign culture. Studying medieval literature teaches you to combine your understanding of different academic disciplines to understand how an unusual literature made sense to its authors and original audience. In its current state, AI helps users bypass learning the methods of research and communication that are at the heart of this kind of advanced philological scholarship. Rather than producing original scholarship, AI artlessly reproduces the mean of the texts upon which it was trained. It robs its users of the ability to grapple with a challenging subject and develop the intellectual and disciplinary tools necessary to engage with that subject with empathy and scholarly rigor. Don't settle for that.

If AI use is suspected, the instructor may ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

5. Methods of Evaluation (The Grading Stuff)

Marks Distribution

Paper 1 (9-10 pages total)	17%
Paper 2 prospectus	5%
Paper 2 (15-17 pages)	30%
Recitation	10%
Translation Pop Quizzes	6% (best 6 of 8)
In-class Tests	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 beginning two days after the due date (including weekends; see handouts for details). 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.

Please note that because the submission deadline for all papers already includes flexibility in the form of delayed late penalties, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility.

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. 28th. Unexpected emergencies can be accommodated on Oct. 29th, but no further recitations will be permitted after Oct. 29th without documentation. 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: <https://alanbaragona.wordpress.com/the-criyng-and-the-soun/the-canterbury-tales-general-prologue-ii-1-14-jane-zatta/> (link in OWL) and in the electronic resources that come with The Norton Chaucer. 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.** Please note, because not all elements of either the translation quizzes or the in-class tests are required in the calculation of the final course grade, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for these missed elements.

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."

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>.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

Formal Documentation Designation statement

Please note that this assessment is central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for any assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration for an assessment will be provided with the following opportunity to make up this work: make-up exam/test, alternate due date, etc..

Note that supporting documentation is always required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term.

When a student receives academic considerations or academic accommodations which overlap with the built-in flexibility of the assessment, the longest period of accommodation will determine the deadline. The built-in flexibility of the assessment should not be taken to extend any considerations or accommodations.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs posted on the Academic Calendar:
<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for attempted or completed work, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: Accessible Education.

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request without supporting

documentation in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

- Examinations scheduled during official examination periods (Defined by policy)

Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments

When a student misses the Final Exam and their Academic Consideration has been granted, they will be allowed to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). See the Academic Calendar (Special Examinations), especially for those who miss multiple final exams within one examination period.

Coursework with Assessment Flexibility

By policy, instructors may deny Academic Consideration requests for the following assessments with built-in flexibility:

Flexible Completion

Quizzes. This course has 8 quizzes, and the 6 quizzes with the highest marks are counted towards your final grade. Should extenuating circumstances arise, students do not need to request Academic Consideration for the first two missed quizzes. Academic consideration requests will be denied for the first two missed quizzes.)

Deadline with a No-Late-Penalty Period

Assignments. Students are expected to submit each of the assignments by the deadline listed. Should extenuating circumstances arise, students do not need to request Academic Consideration, and they are permitted to submit their assignment 2 days past the deadline without a late penalty. Should students submit their assessment beyond 2 days past the deadline, a late penalty of 3% per day will be applied. Academic Consideration requests may be granted only for extenuating circumstances that started before the deadline and lasted longer than the No-Late-Penalty Period (72 hours).

6. Additional Statements

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, here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

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>).

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays . Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Religious Accommodation requests for final exams should be submitted via the Student Absence Portal.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of study in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Accessible Education at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students”

<http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found here.

Support Services

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentssupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.