Fall 8-15-2008

ENG 3800-001: Medieval English Literature

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English 3800.001: Medieval English Literature
Fall 2008

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Texts: Geoffrey Chaucer. The Canterbury Tales
The Book of Margery Kempe (Windeatt, trans.)
The Lais of Marie de France (Hanning and Ferrante, trans.)
William Langland, Piers Plowman (Schmidt, ed.)
Thomas Malory, Complete Works (Vinaver, ed.)
Medieval English Lyrics, 1200-1400 (Duncan, ed.)
Middle English Romances (Shepherd, ed.)
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Patience, Pearl (Borroff, trans.)

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

August 27: Old English – Before the Conquest in 1066
“Caedmon’s Hymn,” “The Dream of the Rood,” “The Wanderer,” Riddles (handouts)

September 3: 1066-1300 or Writing in French in England
The Lais of Marie de France

10: Two 13C Middle English Debate Poems
The Thrush and the Nightingale – http://www.soton.ac.uk/~wpwt/digby86/thrushint.htm
The Owl and the Nightingale – http://www.soton.ac.uk/~wpwt/trans/owl/owlintro.htm

17: Middle English: 14C Romance
Chaucer, The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale

24: Sir Launfal, Sir Orfeo, The Weddyng of Syr Gawen and Dame Ragnell (in Shepherd)
Paper #1

October 1: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

October 8: Secular Lyrics: Medieval English Lyrics, # 1, 5, 17, 25, 110, 113, 118, 122, 124, 125, 127, 132

15: Middle English: 14-15C Spirituality
Piers Plowman, Vision I, pp. 1-41 . Midterm Exam

22: Chaucer, The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale
23-24: EIU Literature Conference: Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales

29: Pearl

November 5: Medieval Feast
Spiritual Lyrics: Medieval English Lyrics, # 42, 52, 54, 63, 70, 73, 79

12: The Book of Margery Kempe, Chapters 1-16, 18, 46-54, 79-81

19: Middle English: Thomas Malory, Le Morte D’Arthur
Paper #2
November 26: Thanksgiving Holiday


10: Malory, "Sir Launcelot and Queen Quinevere" and "Morte Arthur," pp. 609-726

17: Final Examination

Course Description

Adventure, Religion, and Love: the course surveys literature written in England during the thousand-odd years we call the Middle Ages. We will read romance, and *laia*, love lyric and dream vision, bawdy debate and spiritual autobiography... strange works from a foreign place and time. Among the authors and works we will encounter are Geoffrey Chaucer, Margery Kempe, William Langland, Thomas Malory, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and *Pearl*. Though some more difficult works will be read in translation, much of our reading will be in Middle English, the language of England in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries: prepare yourself for serious and rewarding effort. Occasionally we will explore related cultural events in areas such as music, art and architecture, and food. Assignments include two papers, a midterm, and a final examination.

Course Requirements and Grading

Final grades will be determined on a 100-point scale:

- Writing Assignments: 60 points
- Final Exam: 30 points
- Participation: 10 points

Course Grade: A= 91-100; B= 82-90.99; C= 73-81.99; D= 65-72.99; F= below 65

**Writing Assignments.** You will write xxx papers. Grading will be based on what you have to say and how well you say it. Handouts will describe the assignments more fully.

**Final Exam.** A comprehensive test will encourage you to rethink, organize, and articulate your understanding of the works we have read this semester.

**Participation.** This is not a lecture class. I expect you to show up for each class and offer sensible contributions to the classroom discussion. Poor attendance will be reflected in the participation grade.

Course/University Policies

**Typing.** Your papers must be typed (double-spaced with one-inch margins).

**Honor Policy.** Education depends on honesty. Should you cheat and I find out about it, you can expect to fail the course. The University may take additional action.

**Plagiarism.** If you use other people's words or ideas without citing your sources and indicating when you have quoted, you risk failing an assignment or even the course depending on how serious I deem the offense. If you are not sure what plagiarism is, or whether a particular use of language constitutes plagiarism, ask me before you turn in an assignment.

**Students with Disabilities.** "If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible."