

Spring 1-15-2015

ENG 3801-001: Chaucer

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English 3801
Policies and Procedures
Spring 2015
Shonk

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Office Hours: MWF 2-3
TR 1-3

Course Objectives: The primary objective of the course is to provide each student a sound reading knowledge of fourteenth -century English and an understanding of Chaucer's major works. To this end, we will read most of Chaucer's texts in their original Middle English and discuss the important philosophical, religious, and political ideas and events behind and within them. Assigned papers require that students demonstrate an ability to read Middle English and set forth in clear, mature prose their insights into Chaucer's works and their comprehension of his major themes. Exams provide students opportunities to demonstrate their familiarity with Chaucer's works, their comprehension of issues and themes raised in class discussions, and their abilities to synthesize ideas in meaningful essay responses. To demonstrate an understanding of the sounds and syntax of Middle English, students are required to come by my office any time before the last week of classes to read 20-25 lines from any work of Chaucer they choose.

Texts:

The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer (John Fisher, ed.)
Troilus and Criseyde (Neville Coghill, ed.)

Course Requirements and Determination of Final Grade:

Midterm Exam	15%
Paper I (5-6 pages)	15%
Paper II (8-12 pages)	25%
Final Exam	20%
Quizzes	15%
Reading	5%
Attendance/Participation	5%

Quizzes:

During the term, I will give a number of brief (10 points) quizzes over the assigned readings, quizzes that focus on the basic elements of plot, theme, and character. They are intended to keep students reading Middle English regularly to improve their fluency with the language. At semester's end, I will drop two (probably) scores and assign one letter grade for all the quiz scores combined.

Papers:

Both paper assignments require that you present an *argument* of some sort, not merely a summation of plot or the number of instances in which an item or event occurs. Rather, you should try to persuade your reader that your thesis is true and significant in expanding your reader's understanding of a given work. While I prefer that you invent your own topics, I will suggest paper topics and give additional, more detailed information about the papers within a week or so before they are due--at least. In grading the papers, I look for a precise, meaningful thesis; an argument strongly supported by textual evidence; close analysis of the textual evidence provided; and clear, error-free prose.

Exams:

Examinations are rather standard in form: an objective section (e.g., identification and/or definitions of key terms, symbols, events, etc.) and an essay section. Both sections will carry approximately the same weight.

Reading:

You are assigned to read aloud in my office 20-25 lines from any Chaucer work we have read during the term. The reading must be done before the last week of classes. At any time during the semester, you are welcome to come by my office to complete this assignment or to practice the reading and seek my advice and corrections. The practice reading, of course, is not required.

Attendance/Participation:

Success in this segment of the grade does not demand that you answer every question at every opportunity. Rather, you merely need to be familiar with the reading on a given day and to be prepared to respond intelligently if called upon. The best grades in this segment come not necessarily from those who answer the questions but rather from those who *ask* the intelligent questions.

English 3801
Course Syllabus
Spring 2015
Shonk

- Jan. 12 Introduction to the course; sounds of Middle English
14 Backgrounds, sounds (cont.)
16 Reading Middle English
19 King's Birthday--No Classes
21 Reading Middle English, the Dream Vision
23 *Book of the Duchess*
26 *Book of the Duchess*
28 *Book of the Duchess*
30 Courtly love (lecture)
- Feb. 2 *Parliament of Fowls*
4 *Parliament of Fowls*
6 *Parliament of Fowls*
9 From *Boece*: 816-18, 826-31, 835-37, 845-49
11 From *Boece*: 856-59, 880-85, 886-96, 899-903
13 Lincoln's Birthday—No Classes
16 *House of Fame*
18 *House of Fame*
20 *House of Fame*
23 *House of Fame*
25 *Canterbury Tales*, "General Prologue" (selected)
27 *Canterbury Tales*, "General Prologue" (cont.)
- Mar. 2 **EXAM I**
4 "Miller's Tale"
6 "Miller's Tale" (cont.) **PAPER I DUE**
9 "Reeve's Tale"

	11	“Wife of Bath’s Prologue”	
	13	“Wife of Bath’s Prologue” (cont.)	
	16-20	Spring Break—No Classes	
	23	“Wife of Bath’s Tale”	
	25	“Friar’s Tale”	
	27	“Summoner’s Tale”	
	30	“Clerk’s Tale”	
Apr.	1	“Clerk’s Tale” (cont.)	
	3	“Franklin’s Tale”	
	6	“Merchant’s Tale”	
	8	“Merchant’s Tale” (cont.)	
	10	“Pardoner’s Tale”	
	13	“Pardoner’s Tale” (cont.)	
	15	“Nun’s Priest’s Tale”	
	17	“Nun’s Priest’s Tale” (cont.)	
	20	“Prioress’s Tale”	
	22	“Canon’s Yeoman’s Prologue”	Paper II Due
	24	“Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale”	
	27	“Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale” (cont.)	
	29	“Parson’s Tale”	
May	1	Summary Discussion	Final Exam TBA