Spring 1-15-2006

ENG 3801-002

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Course Objectives:

The primary objective of the course is to give each student a sound reading knowledge of fourteenth-century English and an understanding of the major works of Geoffrey Chaucer. To this end, we will be reading most of Chaucer’s texts in the original Middle English and discussing the important philosophical, religious, and political ideas and events behind them. Papers require students to demonstrate an ability to read Middle English and to set forth in clear prose their insights into Chaucer’s works and their understanding of his major themes. Exams provide students opportunities to demonstrate their comprehension of the works, their familiarity with issues and themes raised in class discussions, and their ability to synthesize ideas into meaningful essay responses. To demonstrate an understanding of the sounds and syntax of Middle English, students are required to come by my office at any time during the course of the term to read 20-25 lines from any piece from the works of Chaucer they have selected.

Texts:

*The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer*
*Troilus and Criseyde*

Course Requirements and Determination of Course Grade:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper I (5-7 pages)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Paper II (8-12 pages)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Quizzes:

During the semester I will give a number of brief (10 points) quizzes over the assigned readings. The quizzes focus on the basic elements of plot, theme, and character. They are intended to keep you reading Middle English daily in order to improve your fluency with the language and to reward you for doing so. At semester’s end, I will drop two (probably) scores and assign one letter grade for all the quizzes combined.

Attendance/Participation:

Success in this category does not demand that you answer every question at every opportunity. Rather you merely need to be familiar with the reading for a given day and be prepared to respond intelligently when called upon and, especially, to ask good questions about that material.

Papers:

Both paper assignments ask that you present an argument of some sorts, not merely a summation of plot or of the number of instances in which some item or event occurs. Rather, you should try to persuade your reader that your thesis is true and important in expanding your reader’s understanding of a given work. You should also make efforts to explain the larger significance of your thesis and evidence. While I prefer that you invent your own topics, I will suggest paper topics and will give additional, more detailed information about the papers a week or more before they are due. In grading the papers, I look for a precise thesis; an argument well 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 definition of key terms, events, symbols, passages, etc.) and an essay section. Both sections will carry approximately the same weight toward the exam grade.

Reading:

You will read aloud to me in my office 20-25 lines from any work of Chaucer we have read this term. The reading must be done before the last week of classes. At any time during the semester, you are welcome to come to my office to complete this requirement or to practice reading (i.e., reading for a critique of your effort and help with the sounds rather than a grade at that time). The practice reading, of course, is not required.
Jan.  9  Introduction to the course; sounds of Middle English
       11  Backgrounds; sounds (cont.)
       13  Reading Middle English
       16  King’s Birthday—No Classes
       18  Reading Middle English, Chaucer the man and poet
       20  *The Book of the Duchess*
       23  *The Book of the Duchess*
       25  *The Book of the Duchess*; courtly love
       27  *The Parliament of Fowls*
       30  *The Parliament of Fowls*

Feb.  1  *Boece*, 816-18, 826-31, 835-37, 845-49
       3  *Boece*, 856-59, 880-85, 886-96, 899-903
       6  *Canterbury Tales*, “General Prologue” (selected)
       8  “Miller’s Tale”
       10 “Reeve’s Tale”
       13 “Wife of Bath’s Prologue”
       15 “Wife of Bath’s Tale”
       17 Lincoln’s Birthday—No Classes
       20 “Friar’s Tale”
       22 “Summoner’s Tale”
       24 “Clerk’s Tale”  PAPER I DUE
       27 “Clerk’s Tale”
Mar. 1 Midterm Exam
3 "Merchant’s Tale"
6 "Merchant’s Tale"
8 "Franklin’s Tale"
10 "Canon’s Yeoman’s Prologue and Tale"
13-17 Spring Break--No Classes
20 "Pardoner’s Tale"
22 "Pardoner’s Tale"
24 "Nun’s Priest’s Tale"
27 "Prioress’s Tale"
29 "Parson’s Tale"
31 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book I

Apr. 3 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book I
5 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book II
7 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book II
10 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book III
12 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book III
14 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book III
17 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book IV
19 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book IV
21 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book V
24 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book V
26 Summary Discussion
28 Catch-up Day/Review

PAPER II DUE

FINAL EXAM--TBA