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ENG 3801-001: Chaucer

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English 3801: Chaucer
Spring 2013

Dr. Francine McGregor
3355 Coleman Hall
581-2428
fmcgregor@eiu.edu (M-F 8am – 4pm)

Office Hours: T/Th, 9:30-10:30/ 12:30-1:30 and by appointment

About the Course

Hailed by John Dryden in 1700 as the “Father of English Poetry,” Chaucer is still celebrated as the greatest of the medieval English poets. In fact, some critics find his work so self-aware, so perceptive, so invested in his characters’ humanity that they prefer to consider him a Renaissance, rather than a medieval, writer and thinker. One project of this course will be to consider Chaucer’s relation to his literary and social (to his medieval) contexts in order to ask how he responds to them; in what ways is he commenting on, manipulating, revising, and reflecting his world? As we ask these questions, examining Chaucer as an agent of his ideas, we will also be thinking about the poems as their own agents. Do these poems speak in ways that move beyond authorial intent? What do they say and how do they say it? All critical perspectives are welcome as we explore the rich and complex world of Chaucer’s imagination.

Required Texts:

Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales: Complete, ed. Larry D. Benson

Course Requirements/ Evaluation

1) midterm exam 15%
2) final exam 20%
3) midterm paper 15%
4) final paper 20%
5) class participation (may include short writings and quizzes) 20%
6) running one class discussion 10%
Policies

1) The reading load for this course is heavy and the material challenging, so make sure you allow yourself plenty of time to complete the assigned reading. Keep in mind that if you come to class unprepared, you’ll lose participation credit. On the less punitive side, class is simply a lot more fun and interesting when you know what everyone else is talking about and have ideas of your own to contribute.

2) Much of what you will learn in this course will come from ideas generated in class discussion and so your presence in, and engagement with, the class are essential. Missing more than two classes will lower your final grade.

3) Assignments must be handed in within the first five minutes of class on the day they are due unless we have worked out a prior arrangement. Work handed in after that time will lose half a letter grade for each calendar day it is late. No work will be accepted a week after the deadline.

4) You must successfully complete all work for the course in order to receive a passing grade.

5) You must pass a reading quiz in order to pass the course.

Plagiarism Policy

The following is the English department’s statement concerning plagiarism:

"Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work’ (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including a grade of ‘F’ for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

While I assume I’ll have no need to impose penalties for plagiarism, the ones I consider appropriate are that the student fail the course and be reported to the Judicial Affairs Office. If at any point in your writing for this course (or for another, if you like) you’re uncertain about whether you’re using sources appropriately, please come and talk to me.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please let me know and please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
Syllabus
(I'll notify you in advance of any changes)

Week 1: January
Tues, 8: in class, we’ll read the General Prologue, lines 1 - as far as we can get
Thurs, 10: Editor's introduction to The Canterbury Tales
General Prologue, lines: as far as we got -(tba)

Week 2: January
Tues, 15: General Prologue, lines (tba - end)
Thurs, 17: Time Traveller’s Guide, chapters 1-2 (pp 7-59)
Translation Quiz I

Week 3: January
Tues, 22: Knight’s Tale, lines 859 – 1354
Time Traveller’s Guide, chapters 3-4 (pp 60-101)
Thurs, 24: Knight’s Tale, lines 1355 – 1880
Translation Quiz II

Week 4: January
Tues, 29: Knight’s Tale, lines 1881 - 2482
Time Traveller’s Guide, chapter 5 (pp 102 – 122)
Thurs, 31: Knight’s Tale, lines 2483- 3108
Translation Quiz III

Week 5: February
Tues, 5: the Miller’s Prologue and Miller’s Tale
Time Traveller’s Guide, chapter 6 (pp 123-142)
Thurs, 7: Reeve’s Prologue and the Reeve’s Tale

Week 6: February
Tues, 12: Cook’s Prologue and the Cook’s Tale
Time Traveller’s Guide, chapters 7-8 (pp 143-189)
Thurs, 14: Introduction to the Man of Law’s Tale, Man of Law’s Tale, the
Epilogue of the Man of Law’s Tale

Week 7: February
Tues, 19: The Wife of Bath’s Prologue
Time Traveller’s Guide, chapter 9 (pp 190 – 215)
Thurs, 21: Wife of Bath’s Tale
First Paper is due
Week 8: March
Tues, 26: *Time Traveller’s Guide*, chapters 10-11, and “Envoi” (pp 216-292)
Thurs, 28: **Midterm Exam**

Week 9: March
Tues, 5: Friar’s *Prologue, Friar’s Tale*
Thurs, 7: Summoner’s *Prologue, Summoner’s Tale*

Week 10: March (11-15)
Spring Break – no classes

Week 11: March
Tues, 19: Clerk’s *Prologue, Clerk’s Tale*
Thurs, 21: Merchant’s *Prologue, Merchant’s Tale, Epilogue to the Merchant’s Tale*

Week 12: March
Tues, 26: *Introduction to the Squire’s Tale, Squire’s Tale*
Thurs, 28: Franklin’s *Prologue, Franklin’s Tale*

Week 13: April
Tues, 2: *Physician’s Tale*
Thurs, 4: *Introduction to the Pardoner’s Tale, Pardoner’s Prologue, Pardoner’s Tale*

Week 14: April
Tues, 9: *Shipman’s Tale*
Thurs, 11: Prioress’s *Prologue, Prioress’s Tale*

Week 15: April
Tues, 16: *Prologue to Sir Thopas, Sir Thopas*
Thurs, 18: the *Tale of Melibee*
**Final paper is due**

Week 16: April
Tues, 23: *Prologue of the Nun’s Priest’s Tale, the Nun’s Priest’s Tale, Epilogue to the Nun’s priest’s Tale*
Thurs, 25: Chaucer’s Retraction (p 310)

**Final Exam:** Tuesday, April 30. 2:45-4:45