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ENG 5001-001: Chaucer: Current Approaches

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English 5001.001: Chaucer: Current Approaches
Fall 2012

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   Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Contemporary Approaches* (CA)
   Derek Pearsall, *The Canterbury Tales*

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

August  22: Introduction to the course: Reading Chaucer Today
   *General Prologue to CT* (opening sentences), *Book of the Duchess* (begin reading together)

29: *Book of the Duchess*
   “France,” CA, pp. 25-46

Sept.  5: *House of Fame*
   “Dream Poems,” CA, pp. 159-78
   Response paper #1

12: *General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, esp. lines 1-269, 445-855
   “England,” CA, pp. 47-64

19: *Knight’s Tale*

26: *Miller’s Tale, Reeve’s Tale, Cook’s Tale*
   “Language in Use,” CA, pp. 99-115
   Response paper #2

Oct.  3: *Man of Law’s Tale*
   “Colonialism, Latinity, and Resistance,” CA, pp. 116-31

10: *Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale*

17: *Friar’s Tale, Summoner’s Tale*
   “Humor in Perspective,” CA, pp. 135-58
   Response paper #3

24: *Clerk’s Tale, Merchant’s Tale*
   “Gender and Sexuality,” CA, pp. 179-98

31: *Squire’s Tale, Franklin’s Tale*
   “Italy,” CA, pp. 3-24

Nov.  7: *Pardoner’s Tale*
   “Manuscripts and Scribes,” CA, pp. 67-82
   Response paper #4

14: *Shipman’s Tale, Prioress’s Tale, Tale of Sir Thopas*
   “Literary History,” CA, pp. 199-214
Course Description

Chaucer is one of the great poets, those whose language and wide-ranging interests have delighted and instructed readers across many centuries. Each generation, though, has its own Chaucer, as critics respond to his thought and expression according to the tenor of their own time. We will read some of Chaucer's poetry (dream poems and large selections from the Canterbury Tales) in conjunction with essays treating current directions in Chaucer scholarship. Our goal will be to explore both what the poet wrote and how our contemporary moment determines the significance of his poetry.

Requirements: careful reading of the literature and criticism, active participation in discussion, various formal and informal reports and presentations, and a substantial seminar paper.

Course Requirements and Grading

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

- Response Papers (4 @ 10 pts. each) 40 points
- Seminar Paper 50 points
- Presentations, Participation, etc. 10 points

Course Grade: A= 90-100; B= 80-89.99; C= 70-79.99; No Credit= below 70

Response Papers. Papers will be about 2-3 pages long and, depending on the reading, will either develop an original idea about the primary text or respond to a critical essay.

Seminar Paper. The paper will be about 10-12 pages long, and will develop an original idea that shows awareness both of a primary text (or texts) and of current scholarship related to that text.

Presentations. Participants will occasionally direct portions of class and will present their seminar papers in a forum at the close of the semester.

Course/University Policies

Typing. Papers must be typed (double-spaced with one-inch margins). I recommend proofreading twice, and urge you to use a computer if possible.

Honor Policy. I believe education is based on trust. 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 is 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.”