

English 416-1001 [15732] – Chaucer in Middle English:
Chaucer's Narrative Art: *The Canterbury Tales*
Spring Semester, 2015; TTh 9:00 – 10:15 a.m., LL 150
Professor Richard Newhauser, Office: LL 226B; e-mail: Richard.Newhauser@asu.edu
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Office Hours: TTh 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., and by appointment

Description

A detailed examination of the composition, manuscript presentation, genres, narrative techniques, and cultural contexts of many of the tales in *The Canterbury Tales*, one of the most important and brilliant collections of short narratives produced in the English language. We will read a sample of Chaucer's courtly genres, fabliaux, and religious tales. Our major concentration will be on the comparative study of these narratives in two contexts: first, that of the parallel transmission of closely related stories in various versions throughout medieval Europe, and second, that of the interrelation of tales (and their tellers) within the fragments of Chaucer's fiction of a Canterbury pilgrimage.

Reading List

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Ed. Jill Mann. London and New York: Penguin Group, 2005. [ISBN: 978-0-14-042234-4]

Brown, Peter, ed. *A Companion to Chaucer*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000; reprint, 2002. [Pap. ISBN: 978-0631235903]

Requirements:

Students will be responsible for the content not only of the reading assignments, but also of our discussions in class. Regular attendance and participation in the discussions of *all* texts (not just the text[s] that you are researching for the semester) are prerequisites for passing the course. The door to the classroom will remain open for five minutes after the scheduled time for the class to begin; after that point the door will be closed. If you are late and see that the door has been closed, you have already been marked absent for that day – do not come into the classroom. Two unexcused absences are permissible without any effect on your grade, but three unexcused absences or more will adversely affect the final grade for the course. Absences due to a medical condition must be excused by a statement signed by the physician in charge of the treatment (not a nurse). You may also expect brief quizzes on all reading assignments. Do not use any electronic equipment in the classroom to record the discussion or take notes. The final grade for the course will be composed of individual performance in six areas:

- 1) A Topic Description. All Topic Descriptions (1 page; typewritten; double-spaced; with 1-inch margins, and your name the top of the page; and carefully proofread), which will either be assigned to you or which you will choose yourself *after consultation with me*, are due on

February 5. You *must* meet with me during my office hours (or make an appointment) to discuss your topic. The grade on the Topic Description will account for about 10 percent of your final grade. Two or three students may wish to work together on a series of oral presentations of related topics or literary texts and/or intellectual documents to be held at successive class meetings. To see an example of a well done Topic Description, click on the following link: [Sample 1](#).

- 2) An oral presentation. The presentation (ca. 10-15 minutes) represents the fruits of your initial research on a topic. The presentation should be open-ended and should encourage questions from the rest of the class. The grade on the presentation will account for about 15 percent of the final grade.
- 3) A brief critical book report. The book report (1-2 pages; typed or printed in no larger than size 12 font; double-spaced; with 1-inch margins, page numbers, and your name on every page; and carefully proofread) will deal with one or two major studies (secondary literature) of the topic or text on which your report is based, due on the date of the oral report. The critical book report will emphasize what you find important for your research in the scholarly article or book you are reviewing. Include the bibliography of the book(s) or article(s) you are reviewing at the end of your review. The grade on the critical book report will account for about 10 percent of the final grade. To see an example of a well done review, click on the following link: [Sample 1](#).
- 4) Quizzes. The quizzes will cover each work, including secondary texts, to be read for the semester. The average of all the quizzes will account for about 20 percent of the final grade.
- 5) A short paper. The short paper (5 pages, excluding bibliography; typed or printed in no larger than size 12 font; double-spaced; with 1-inch margins, page numbers, and your name on every page; and carefully proofread) is to be handed in one week *before* the oral presentation. The paper will include an annotated bibliography of 3-5 items (not including Chaucer's texts) which you will have read in preparation for giving the report and writing the paper (for all questions of documentation and references, follow the guidelines available at: <http://www.public.asu.edu/~dedalus/guidetostyle/index.html>). The bibliography may contain only items identified through the resources of the ASU libraries. The short paper for *all* reports to be held on or after March 19 will be due on March 17. The short paper will serve as the basis for your term paper. The grade on the short paper will account for about 20 percent of the final grade. To see examples of all that is required for a good paper, click on the following links: [Sample 1](#), [Sample 2](#).
- 6) A term paper. The term paper (12-15 pages including bibliography; typed or printed in no larger than size 12 font; double-spaced; with 1-inch margins, page numbers, and your name on every page; and carefully proofread) is one in which all of your research on the topic, and all of your own brilliance, are formulated carefully and in the scope which the subject demands. The bibliography must contain another 3-5 items (not including Chaucer's texts) beyond those used in the short paper; only items identified through the resources of the ASU libraries can be used. Term papers must be turned in to me – *together with the copy of the short paper you handed in to me and which I returned to you with my comments* – at the latest on the last day of class. I will not be able to complete your grade for the course (you will receive an Incomplete) unless I receive both papers at the end of the semester. The grade on the term paper will account for about 25 percent of the final grade.

Syllabus:

1. T 1/13: Introduction to Chaucer's biography and language, Chaucerian bibliography; Video: The Canterbury Tales (<http://library.lib.asu.edu/record=b5405561>)
2. Th 1/15: Introduction to Chaucer's biography and language, transmission of the tales; *Companion*, pp. 235-50, 428-42; Video: The Canterbury Tales (<http://library.lib.asu.edu/record=b5405561>)
3. T 1/20: Fragment I: The General Prologue; *Companion*, pp. 397-413
4. Th 1/22: Fragment I: The General Prologue
5. T 1/27: Fragment I: The Knight's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 23-39
6. Th 1/29: Fragment I: The Knight's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 349-59;
7. T 2/3: No class
8. Th 2/5: Fragment I: The Miller's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 90-113; all topic descriptions due today
9. T 2/10: Fragment I: The Reeve's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 251-65
10. Th 2/12: Fragment II: The Man of Law's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 180-94
11. T 2/17: Fragment II: The Man of Law's Tale, _____;
12. Th 2/19: Fragment III: The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, _____; _____; *Companion*, pp. 480-94
13. T 2/24: Fragment III: The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, _____; _____; *Companion*, pp. 133-48
14. Th 2/26: No class
15. T 3/3: Fragment III: The Friar's Tale, _____;
16. Th 3/5: Fragment III: The Summoner's Tale, _____;

(3/8 – 3/15: Spring Break: No class)

17. T 3/17: Fragment V: The Squire's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 58-74; short paper for all reports to be held on or after March 19 due today
18. Th 3/19: Fragment V: The Franklin's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 281-95
19. T 3/24: Fragment IV: The Clerk's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 75-89;
20. Th 3/26: Fragment IV: The Merchant's Tale, _____; _____; *Companion*, pp. 443-58
21. T 3/31: Fragment VI: The Physician's Tale, _____; _____; *Companion*, pp. 378-96
22. Th 4/2: No class
23. T 4/7: Fragment VI: The Pardoner's Tale, _____; _____; *Companion*, pp. 414-27
24. Th 4/9: Fragment VIII: The Second Nun's Tale, _____; The Canon's Yeoman's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 266-80
25. T 4/14: Fragment VII: The Shipman's Tale, _____; _____;
26. Th 4/16: Fragment VII: The Prioress' Tale, _____; _____; *Companion*, pp. 352-54; Fragment VII: The Monk's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 218-34
27. T 4/21: Fragment VII: The Nun's Priest's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 360-77
28. Th 4/23: Fragment VII: The Nun's Priest's Tale, _____; *Companion*, pp. 360-77; Fragment X: The Parson's Tale; Retraction, _____
29. T 4/28: Film: *The Canterbury Tales*, conceived and directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini

30. Th 4/30: Film: *The Canterbury Tales*, conceived and directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini; Final Paper due today (with the copy of the short paper you handed in to me earlier in the semester)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY!

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

Plagiarism is generally defined as using another's words, ideas, materials or work without acknowledging the source. You are responsible for knowing how to use someone else's work how to acknowledge that source properly.

You might want to read an article about plagiarism at US universities that appeared in *The New York Times* in 2010:

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/02/education/02cheat.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&hp