

USCDornsife

Department of
English

Engl 420 32709
MWF 11:00-11:50am
THH 203
Units: 4

Professor T. Tomaini
THH 425 W 12-2pm; TH 2-4pm

tmtomaini@gmail.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES: In this course we will discuss both canonical and non-canonical texts of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English Literature. Although we will discuss a variety of issues, the main focus of our discussion will be on uncanny or preternatural issues in medieval poetry. Medieval literature can be deliciously weird, but that weirdness does not exist in a vacuum. We will explore the connections between preternatural issues and important people and events in medieval England to get a comprehensive idea of the mindset of the time and how peoples' attitudes toward various aspects of society were framed by their acceptance of the supernatural as a part of everyday life. In addition, we will focus on the language of the poetry itself: students will learn to read and translate Middle English and will learn the basics of its linguistic structure as it relates to poetry.

TEXTS: Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales: Fifteen Tales and the General Prologue*, ed. V.A. Kolve. W.W. Norton & Co., 2005. ISBN: 978-0-393-92587-6. It is important that you use this edition because it contains important background texts and critical articles. All other texts will be provided as Pdfs or Word documents on Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS: Two papers of 12-15 pages in length (not including bibliography). Topics will be provided, but students must use secondary sources to support their arguments. Papers must employ **at least three** secondary academic sources stemming from the course material (course texts and articles, handout/Blackboard materials, etc.) and outside sources. No public domain sources are acceptable: no Wikipedia (or any Wikis), dictionaries, online encyclopedias, or non-academic web material.

Students **must submit** a prospectus including the paper's topic, thesis, outline, and preliminary bibliography. The prospectus may be submitted via email, but students can make an appointment for a conference to discuss the prospectus if desired. Students may not turn in the paper without having submitted a prospectus for approval of the project.

Late papers will be penalized one full letter grade for each class period after the due date. I only give paper extensions in cases of medical emergency (with doctor's notes) or unforeseen calamity (an immediate need to fly home because of a family emergency, or a natural disaster, such as an earthquake or brush fire (which do occur in Southern California)).

I **do not** give paper extensions for extracurricular activities, sports, Greek Life, work, assignments, exams in or papers due for another class, or the failure to manage one's time properly.

All grades are final. I do not review or change grades after they are issued. Due to time constraints, and because I have many students, I am unable to accept early drafts or rewrites of papers.

QUIZZES: There will be four quizzes on the Middle English material. Quizzes will include both vocabulary and sentence translation.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION: This aspect of your grade is tallied separately from that of your assignments. After three (3) unexcused absences I will begin penalizing your grade. An excused absence means I have advance (or immediate) notice and have given my approval. If you become ill or injured, let me know as soon as possible so I can make sure you don't fall behind. Keep a copy record of your doctors' notes as well. If you are in the band, on a sports team, etc. please let me know when you will be out of town. If you need to leave early or come late because of an important issue (doctor's appointment, court date, job interview, or family issue), or if you need to make or receive an important call for these reasons, just give me as much advance notice as you can. Otherwise, any student who gets up and leaves the classroom without permission in the middle of the session will be marked absent. Class participation is required, and each student will be expected to contribute to an advanced discussion of literature at the senior level.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONICS: Due to increasing problems with students using social media and the Internet in class, my new policy is that **no electronics are allowed** in my upper division courses. **Phones, laptops, and tablets must be turned off and put away.** If I am able to see a student's phone I will not mark that student in attendance until it is put away. Manual notetaking (i.e., the traditional way) helps students process more material and retain it for a longer period of time than electronic notetaking (or browsing Amazon bargains on Buzzfeed during lecture). Moreover, transcribing notes into a Word program from handwritten notes helps processing and retention. Also, the Golden Age of social media is over. It was fun until it wasn't, so let's move on.

Grading Breakdown

Quiz #1	10%
Quiz #2	10%
Quiz #3	10%
Quiz #4	10%
Paper #1	25%
Paper #2	25%
Attendance	5%
Participation	5%
Total:	100%

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 1/8-1/12

M: Intro to the course.

W: Converting the masses: Scripture in Anglo-Saxon. Old English Bible selections, riddles

F: Anglo-Saxon dream/vision poetry. *The Dream of the Rood* (Blackboard)

WEEK 2: 1/15-1/19

M: **NO CLASS. MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY**

W: Anglo-Saxon dream/vision poetry. *The Wanderer* (Blackboard)

F: The Norman invasion and changes in the English language. Anglo-Norman poetry in translation. Faerie lore: Marie de France, *Yonec* (Blackboard)

WEEK 3: 1/22-1/26

M: Marie de France, *Yonec*

W: Faerie lore: Marie de France, *Eliduc* (Blackboard)

F: Marie de France, *Eliduc*

WEEK 4: 1/29-2/2

M: Intro to Middle English; The Memento Mori tradition. The legend of The Three Living and the Three Dead. John Audeley, "The Three Dead Kings" (Blackboard).

W: The legend of The Three Living and the Three Dead. John Audeley, "The Three Dead Kings" (Blackboard).

F: The legend of The Three Living and the Three Dead. John Audeley, "The Three Dead Kings" (Blackboard). Article: Stephen Gordon, "Dealing with the Undead in the Later Middle Ages," from *Dealing with the Dead: Mortality and Community in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Thea Tomaini. Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2018.

WEEK 5: 2/5-2/9

M: Middle English Psalms selections.

W: Intro to the Cycle Plays. The Guilds and public performance.

F: Cycle Play selection (Blackboard) **Middle English Quiz #1.**

WEEK 6: 2/12-2/16

M: Intro to Chaucer's England. From Norton Critical edition

(hereafter *NCE*), Thomas Wimbeldon, "On the Estates"; and "Wycliffite Estates Criticism." Intro to Chaucer's English. **PROSPECTUS DUE.**

W: *The Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue.

F: *The Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue.

WEEK 7: 2/19-2/23

M: **NO CLASS. PRESIDENTS' DAY**

W: *The Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue.

F: The Miller's Tale; discussion of fabliaux; *NCE*: "The Three Guests of Heile of Bersele."

WEEK 8: 2/26-3/2

M: The Miller's Tale

W: The Wife of Bath's Prologue; discussion of *confessio*; discussion of anti-marriage tracts: *NCE*: Jean de Meun, From "The Romance of the Rose"; Theophrastus, From "The Golden Book on Marriage"; Walter Map, From "The Letter of Valerius to Ruffinus, against Marriage."

F: The Wife of Bath's Prologue **PAPER #1 DUE.**

WEEK 9: 3/5-3/9

M: The Wife of Bath's Tale; discussion of the faerie narrative.

W: The Wife of Bath's Tale

F: The Wife of Bath's Tale **Middle English Quiz #2**

3/12-3/16 NO CLASSES. SPRING BREAK.

WEEK 10: 3/19-3/23

M: *NCE*: John Gower, The Tale of Florent

W: John Gower, The Tale of Florent

F: John Gower, The Tale of Florent

WEEK 11: 3/26-3/30

M: The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell (blackboard)

W: The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell (blackboard)

F: The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell (blackboard)

WEEK 12: 4/2-4/6

M: The Friar's Tale. The medieval world and the devil

W: The Friar's Tale; *NCE*: Robert Rypon, "A Greedy Bailiff."

F: The Franklin's Tale. Discussion of astrology and magic. **Middle English Quiz #3**

WEEK 13: 4/9-4/13

M: The Franklin's Tale

W: The Pardoner's Prologue. Discussion of the relic trade and the business of miracles.

F: The Pardoner's Tale. The figure of the mysterious stranger. **PROSPECTUS DUE.**

WEEK 14: 4/16-4/20

M: The Pardoner's Tale; *NCE*: "The Hermit, Death, and the Robbers."

W: The Prioress' Prologue and Tale; *NCE*: Pope Gregory X, "On Christian Mistreatment of Jews."

F: The Prioress' Tale; Article: Mary Leech, "The Corpse of Public Opinion," from

Dealing with the Dead: Mortality and Community in Medieval and Early Modern Europe, ed. Thea Tomaini. Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2018.

WEEK 15: 4/23-4/27

M: The Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale

W: The Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale; Discussion of animal fables. *NCE*: from Aesop's Fables

F: **Middle English Quiz #4**; Chaucer's Retraction. Chaucer's Dead Body—really!

FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE ON MONDAY MAY 7, 2018 BY 12 NOON IN MY BOX IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OFFICE, THH 404.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Statement on Student Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.