Chaucer

Many students are familiar with Chaucer's outrageous characters, wry humor, and social satire from *The Canterbury Tales*. But there is much more to the "first English poet" than the Miller and the Wife of Bath. Chaucer was an astoundingly prolific writer, one who tried his hand at all sorts of literary experiments. He wrote "dream visions" in the style of Classical and French works, poems reflecting the influence of the great Italian writers Dante and Boccaccio, and a major romance set during the Trojan War. *The Canterbury Tales*, too, evidences Chaucer's amazing versatility. When read more extensively, the *Tales* not only showcases a variety of literary forms but also provides insight into the expectations of the different audiences of Chaucer's time.

That said, not everything Chaucer wrote is great work of art. As a writer with an experimental temperament and the luxury of a civil service job, he left a number of works unfinished and pursued others primarily as exercises in form. But almost everything he wrote is interesting, and studying this author lets us see how the "failures" among his works might be just as provocative as the proclaimed masterpieces.

Required Texts:
The Canterbury Tales: Fifteen Tales. Ed. V.A. Kolve. (Norton, ISBN # 978-0393925876)
Dream Visions and Other Poems. Ed. Kathryn Lynch (Norton, ISBN # 978-0393925883)

A Note on Language and Editions:
Get the specific editions listed above (make sure the ISBN # is the same) in print form. Electronic books and online texts do not work well in class discussion. We will begin the semester with some practice reading Middle English, so that you will be able to read Chaucer's work in it's original language. There are Modern English translations available online. You can use these to help you read the required editions. But you must bring the required editions to class with you.

Coursework:
You are first and foremost required to read and take notes on the assigned texts before we discuss these in class. The remaining requirements are:

- active participation in class (15 points)
- 6 unscheduled quizzes or short writing assignments (30 points)
- 5 page essay (20 points)
- annotated bibliography (10 points)
- 8-10 page research essay (25 points)

You must complete both essays and the annotated bibliography to pass the course. The shorter essay and the bibliography are due at the beginning of the class period scheduled. If late, they will be penalized 2 points the first day and 2 points per day every day after the initial deadline. The research essay will not be accepted late. Quizzes cannot be rescheduled if missed; to allow for chance absence, I will drop one quiz grade from the final average. Note that there will be no extra credit options in this class.

Grading:
Grades are based on a 100 point scale.

For class participation, you get a point for every day you say something about the reading, respond to another student's remarks, or verbally contribute to small group discussion (up to 15 points).

Quizzes are worth five points each. These will include some translation of Middle English. The grade will reflect your familiarity with the content of the assigned reading, your use of specific textual evidence to support your answer, the thoroughness of your answer, and the clarity of your explanation.

Essays will be graded on the thoroughness and precision of your textual analysis, the clarity and organization of your arguments, and the quality of your writing and research.

Academic Integrity/Ethics:
All written work submitted for credit in this class must be produced by you for this class and must be in your own words. Any language you use from other sources, including your own previous work, must be properly cited. Familiarize yourself with WVU's plagiarism policy: http://studentlife.wvu.edu/studentconductcode.html.

Attendance:
You are allowed two absences with no penalty, after that, your class participation grade will suffer. At six absences, you will fail the course. In general, I do not care why you are absent or late and will not accept any notes. The only exceptions to this are for military service or university activities such as class field trips. If you are more than 5 minutes late, this will count as half an absence.

If you miss a class, do not ask me if you missed anything important. You did. You missed class. Read the text assigned for that class, and, if you have questions about it or want to discuss your interpretation, come to my office hours to talk with me.

Disability Accommodation:
Students requiring specific kinds of support should discuss these needs with me at the beginning of the semester. Quizzes will require writing by hand, without access to laptops, tablets, or cell phones. If this is a problem for you, let me know at the beginning of the semester, so we can make alternate arrangements.

Contact Info:
I encourage you to take advantage of my drop-in office hours: Wednesday 1:00-3:00 in 335 Colson Hall. You can also make an appointment to see me at other times. You can email me through ecampus or at Lara.Farina@mail.wvu.edu. Check your university email for notifications: if I make any important announcements in class, I will also email these.

Please note that I cannot email grades. This is against the University's privacy policy.

Conduct:
I expect all members of the class to be respectful of each other and me, regardless of religious, social, or political differences. I will not condone discriminatory remarks regarding race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, health, economic status, etc. Disruptive behavior may impact your class participation grade and, if egregious enough, result in your expulsion from the class. Be mindful that the best way to participate in class is to *both talk and listen* to what others have to say. I don't expect class members to agree, but I do expect that you will acknowledge other points of view.

Schedule:

* Check your university email regularly for announcements and study questions.

Th. 1/15   Introduction to Chaucer's language, "To Rosemounde"

Tu. 1/20   "Merciless Beauty," "The Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse,"
           "Chaucer's Words to Adam" (ecampus); Chaucer Bio on *Luminarium*
           (http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/chaucerbio.htm)
Th. 1/22   Secondary sources re the General Prologue, *Canterbury Tales* pp. 311-340

Tu. 1/27   CT, General Prologue, lines 1-528
Th. 1/29   CT, General Prologue, lines 529-858

Tu. 2/3   CT, The Knight's Tale, in Modern English
           (http://english.fsu.edu/canterbury/knight.html)
Th. 2/5   CT, The Knight's Tale, passages in Middle English

Tu. 2/10   CT, The Miller's Prologue and Tale
Th. 2/12   CT, The Cook's Tale; French & Italian fabliau (ecampus)

Tu. 2/17   CT, The Friar's Prologue and Tale
Th. 2/19   CT, The Summoner's Prologue and Tale

Tu. 2/24	CT, The Wife of Bath's Prologue, secondary sources pp. 379-385
Th. 2/26	CT, The Wife of Bath's Tale
Tu. 3/3	Strohm, "A Married Man"; Desmond, from *Ovid's Art and…* (ecampus)
Th. 3/5	CT, The Franklin's Tale
Tu. 3/10	CT, The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale
Th. 3/12	Dinshaw, "Eunuch Hermeneutics," pp. 566-585; Stockton, from *Playing Dirty* (ecampus)
Tu. 3/17	Chaucer's Retraction, CT review
Th. 3/19	**Five page essay due (on fragments and wholes)**

Spring Break

Tu. 3/31	excerpts from the *Romance of the Rose* (ecampus)
Th. 4/2	Dream Visions, The Parliament of Fowls; Medieval Bestiary
Tu. 4/7	Dream Visions, Prologue to The Legend of Good Women
Th. 4/9	LGW: The Legend of Dido; from Virgil and Ovid, pp. 231-251
Tu. 4/14	Dream Visions, The House of Fame, lines 1-1090
Th. 4/16	Dream Visions, The House of Fame, lines 1091-2158; Evans, pp. 229-231
Tu. 4/21	Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog (http://houseoffame.blogspot.com/)
Th. 4/23	Bryant, "Playing Chaucer" (ecampus)
Tu. 4/28	**Annotated Bibliography Due**
Th. 5/7	**Research Essay Due @ 11:00 am**