

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:

De Lorris, *Romance of the Rose* (Oxford, 9780199540679)
Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* (Oxford, 9780199555079)
Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales (W.W. Norton, 978-1324000563)
Agabi, *Telling Tales* (Canongate, 9781782111573)

Online: *The Open Access Companion to the Canterbury Tales*,
<https://opencanterburytales.dsl.lsu.edu/>

A Note on Language and Editions:

It will help to have the specific editions listed above (make sure the ISBN # is the same), preferably in print form. We will begin the semester reading works translated into modern English and practicing reading Middle English. We will then turn to reading Chaucer's work in its original language. Modern English translations are available online: best are interlinear ones as you can find here:

<http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/tr-index.htm> .

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 (20 points)
- 5 unscheduled quizzes or short writing assignments (25 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. Unacknowledged copying of sources, whether online, in print, or student papers, is plagiarism *regardless of your intentions*. Plagiarism or submission of work done by someone else is grounds for receiving an "Unforgivable F" for the class.

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, often 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.

Support:

If you are under stress, having a difficult time balancing your responsibilities, or dealing with distressing events, I would encourage you to make use of the Carruth Center on the Evansdale Campus: <https://carruth.wvu.edu> . You can talk to a counselor or get referrals to care-providers there. If you experience discrimination, harassment, threats, or violence, the Carruth Center will put you in touch with the appropriate resources (you will have a choice as to whether or not you want to officially file a claim).

Contact Info:

I encourage you to take advantage of my drop-in office hours: Tuesday 3:00-4:30 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.

Tu. 1/8 Introduction to Chaucer's language, "To Rosemounde"

Th. 1/10 *Open Access Companion*: Holsinger, "Chaucer's Difficult Lives"

& Kennedy, "Every Day Life in Late Medieval England"
Chaucer, short poems

- Tu. 1/15 *The Romance of the Rose*, pp. 3-42 (de Lorris)
- Th. 1/17 *The Romance of the Rose*, pp. 43-61 (de Lorris), and 62-71 (Jean de Meun's continuation)
- Tu. 1/22 *The Romance of the Rose*, pp. 191-224 (the Old Woman's Advice)
- Th. 1/24 Other Dream Vision sources: Boethius, Dante, Macrobius (PDF)
- Tu. 1/29 Chaucer, *The Book of the Duchess* (PDF)
- Th. 1/31 Chaucer, *The Parliament of Fowls* (PDF)
The Medieval Bestiary: <http://bestiary.ca/>
- Tu. 2/5 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Books 1 & 2
- Th. 2/7 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book 3
- Tu. 2/12 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book 4
- Th. 2/14 *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book 5
- Tu. 2/19 **5-page paper due** at the beginning of class; peer review
- Th. 2/21 No class. Read *Open Access Companion*: Phillips, "English Society c. 1340-1400"
- Tu. 2/26 *Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue
Telling Tales, "Author Biographies"
- Th. 2/28 CT, The Knight's Tale, in Modern English
(<http://english.fsu.edu/canterbury/knight.html>)
Telling Tales, "Emily"
- Tu. 3/5 CT, The Miller's Prologue and Tale
Telling Tales, "The Kiss"
- Th. 3/7 CT, The Cook's Tale; French & Italian fabliau (PDF)
Telling Tales, "Roving Mic"
- Spring Break
- Tu. 3/19 No Class

- Th. 3/21 CT, The Franklin's Tale
Telling Tales, "Makar"
- Tu. 3/26 CT, The Wife of Bath's Prologue
- Th. 3/28 CT, The Wife of Bath's Tale
Telling Tales, "What do women like bes'?"
- Th. 4/2 CT, The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale
Telling Tales, "Profit"
- Tu. 4/9 CT, The Prioress's Tale
Telling Tales, "Sharps an Flats"
- Th. 4/11 CT, The Nuns' Priest's Tale
Telling Tales, "Animals!"
- Tu. 4/16 **Annotated Bibliography due**
- Th. 4/18 CT, The Tale of Sir Thopas;
Telling Tales, "Artful Doggerel,"
- Th. 4/25 Draft workshop
- 4/30 Research Paper due @ noon**