

**English 4340/5340:
Chaucer**



***9:25-10:40 TTh
Irby 304
Spring 2016***

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Links:

A quick check of Google brings up 8,970,000 hits for “Chaucer.” That being a few too many for you to look through yourself, I’ve gleaned some of the more helpful sites for you to link to here.

- For an online edition of the Middle English dictionary, go to this site http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/med_ent_search.html
 - An extensive aggregator site with links to various kinds of medieval studies materials in more than 40 categories is “The Labyrinth”: <https://blogs.commonsgorgetown.edu/labyrinth/>
 - The “Internet Medieval Sourcebook” is focused on primary texts in Latin and other medieval languages, as well as English translations: <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.asp>
 - The “Chaucer Metapage” offers a number of annotated links to valuable instructors’ web pages, bibliographies, and other useful sites: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/chaucer/>
 - The “Harvard Chaucer Page” includes interlinear translations of every tale, and supplementary materials on language and historical topics, as well as a new “trial version” of a Chaucer glossary. <http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/>
 - The searchable “Chaucer Bibliography Online” includes material from 1975 to the present: <http://uchaucer.utsa.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First>
 - A searchable index with abstracts of the first 30 volumes of *The Chaucer Review* is available online: <http://library.northwestu.edu/chaucer/>
 - *The Chaucer Review* itself is available through the Torreyson Library through JSTOR, and *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* (from 2008 on) through Project Muse. These are the two most important scholarly journals dealing with Chaucer.
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Required Texts:

- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales: Fifteen Tales and the General Prologue*. Ed. V.A. Kolve and Glending Olson. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 2005.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Troilus and Criseyde*. Ed. Stephen A. Barney. New York: Norton, 2005.

It is possible that some of you may want to supplement your reading with “translated” or modernized versions of Chaucer’s text. While I would encourage you not to do so, since it will inevitably take longer for you to get the hang of Middle English that way, I should say that if you ARE going to look at translations anyway, be sure to use a relatively new one: Neville Coghill’s 1951 translation for Penguin is still one of the better translations, capturing the tone of the original pretty well. David Wright’s translation with Oxford is more literal. Sheila Fisher’s recent translation is not bad, and Burton Raffel’s is lively, though sometimes strangely departs from the original. Joseph Glaser’s 2005 translation is

OK, though strangely in tetrameter rather than pentameter verse. Peter Ackroyd's "retelling" of the *Canterbury Tales* is not an actual translation. It really IS a "retelling." That is to say, DON'T USE IT, for the love of God.

Course Description:

The catalog description for this class reads as follows: "For English majors and minors to satisfy upper-division author or elective requirement. Covers Chaucer's major works, generally including *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Canterbury Tales*, viewed against the background of medieval life and thought, focusing on perspectives such as Chaucer's depiction of women, Chaucer's sources, and Chaucer as Christian moralist, allegorist, humorist. Lecture, discussion, writing. Prerequisite: ENGL 2316. On demand."

Course Objectives:

- Students will recognize the sounds and structure of Middle English, and be able to read it aloud.
 - Students will be able to read and understand Middle English texts.
 - Students will know some of the important facts of Chaucer's life and times.
 - Students will appreciate Chaucer's importance in the development of English verse.
 - Students will recognize Chaucer's contributions to the literary depiction of character.
 - Students will understand Chaucer's use of and transformation of traditional medieval literary genres.
 - Students will understand some of the philosophical background of Chaucer's poetry.
 - Students will appreciate Chaucer's literary context, and the writers that influenced him.
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Timetable:

- Wk 1:
 - Th 1/7: Introduction to Chaucer's life and times. [Look at chronology in Kolve and Olson, p. 587]. Consider Chaucer's language in "To Rosemunde." Handout on **Blog assignment**.
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The Canterbury Tales

- Wk 2:
 - Tu 1/12: Begin *General Prologue* (Kolve and Olson 3-12, ll. 1-378). Look especially at Knight, Prioress, Friar, Cook. Handout and **assignment on Chaucer's language**.
 - Th 1/14: Continue *General Prologue* (Kolve and Olson, 12-16, ll. 379-541). Look especially at Wife of Bath and Parson.
- Wk 3:
 - Tu 1/19: Finish *General Prologue* (Kolve and Olson, 16-23, ll. 542-858). Look especially at Miller and Pardoner.
 - Th 1/21: *The Knight's Tale*, part I (Kolve and Olson 23-34).
- Wk 4:
 - Tu 1/26: *The Knight's Tale*, parts II and III (Kolve and Olson 34-48).
 - Th 1/28: *The Knight's Tale*, part IV (Kolve and Olson 58-71). **QUIZ #1 ON VOCABULARY**.
- Wk. 5:
 - Tu 2/2: *The Miller's Tale* (Kolve and Olson 71-88).
 - Th 2/4: *The Reeve's Tale* (Kolve and Olson 88-99).
- Wk. 6:
 - Tu 2/9: *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale* (Kolve and Olson 102-130).
 - Th 2/11: *The Friar's Tale* (Kolve and Olson 131-140).
- Wk. 7:
 - Tu 2/16: *The Summoner's Tale* (Kolve and Olson 140-154).
 - Th 2/18: *The Clerk's Tale* (Kolve and Olson 154-185).
- Wk. 8:
 - Tu 2/23: *The Merchant's Tale* (Kolve and Olson 185-211).
 - Th 2/25: *The Franklin's Tale* (Kolve and Olson 212-233).
- Wk. 9:
 - Tu 3/1: *The Pardoner's Tale* (Kolve and Olson 233-248).
 - Th 3/3: *The Prioress's Tale* (Kolve and Olson 248-254).
- Wk. 10:
 - Tu 3/8: Begin *The Man of Law's Tale*, part I (online). **Paper assignment handed out**.
 - Th. 3/10: Finish *The Man of Law's Tale*, part II (online). **QUIZ #2 ON CHAUCER'S STYLE**.
- Wk. 11:
 - Tu 3/15: *The Nun's Priest's Tale* (Kolve and Olson 269-285). **Take home #1 assigned**.
 - Th 3/17: *The Second Nun's Tale* (online)
- Wk. 12: NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK
- Wk. 13:
 - Tu 3/29: Read *The Tale of Sir Thopas* (Kolve and Olson 255-260), *The Parson's Prologue* (Kolve and Olson 293-294); summary of *The Parson's Tale* (handout); and *Retraction* (Kolve and Olson 306-307). **TAKE-HOME #1 (CANTERBURY TALES) DUE**.

Troilus and Criseyde

- Th 3/31: Begin *Troilus and Criseyde*, book I (Barney 9-67) and Barney's Introduction to the poem (ix-xxvii).
 - Wk. 15:
 - Tu 4/5: Finish *Troilus and Criseyde*, book I.
 - Th 4/7: *Troilus and Criseyde*, book II (Barney 68-149).
 - Wk. 16:
 - Tu 4/12: *Troilus and Criseyde*, book III (Barney 149-225. **Take-home #2 assigned.**
 - Th 4/14: Begin *Troilus and Criseyde*, book IV (Barney 225-311).
 - Wk. 17:
 - Tu 4/19: Finish *Troilus and Criseyde*, book IV
 - Th 4/21: *Troilus and Criseyde*, book V (Barney 311-427). **TAKE-HOME #2 (TROILUS AND CRISEYDE) DUE.**
 - F 4/22: **PAPER ASSIGNMENT DUE** by 4:30.
 - **Final Exam:** Comprehensive. *Tuesday, April 26, 8:00-10:00.*
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Assignments:

- There will be two **quizzes**, one on Chaucer's vocabulary (on January 28) and one on Chaucer's style. These will be worth 25 points apiece. You will receive a handout of vocabulary words that you should memorize for quiz #1. The only way to study for quiz #2 is to do all of the reading and get a feel for what Chaucer sounds like, metrically and tonally.
- There will be two **Take Home Exams**, one on *The Canterbury Tales* (due March 29) and one on *Troilus and Criseyde* (due April 21). These will take the form of a single essay question and are worth 100 points apiece. To assure that I don't get some answers that are a single paragraph and others that are 20 pages, I'm putting you on your honor to spend 90 minutes on the essays (no more!).
- You will be asked to maintain a **blog** on the Web CT site, in which you assume the character of one of the Canterbury pilgrims. For the blog, you will need an initial introduction of your character, and you will be required to post before each class period beginning with January 21 (our beginning class on *The Knight's Tale*), where, as your character, you should give a reaction to the reading. One additional blog entry should be made regarding one of the supplementary reading assignments having to do with your character's tale. A more detailed assignment will be given separately. The blog is worth a total of 150 points.
- For 100 points, in order to help you to get the feel of Middle English, I want you to **memorize and ultimately recite** 16-20 lines from your character's tale (i.e., the one you choose for your blog). I give you some flexibility to ensure that you stop the recitation at a full stop, not in the middle of a sentence. You may do the recitation to the entire class on the day we look at your tale if you're feeling histrionic, or you may do a you-tube clip that you show to the class if you're feeling creative (it needs to be a clip that shows you reciting, not reading, the

passage); or you can do it privately in my office if you're feeling nervous. In any case, you need to try for accurate Middle English pronunciation and show a feel for the meter of the lines. Putting some actual expression into the reading would be a plus, too. Preferably, these should be done at the time we look at your tale, but realizing that's a little bit of a burden for those of you doing one of the first tales, they will be due by a week from the day we finish with your tale.

- **Class participation** is expected and required, and is worth 150 total points. You should be in class each day with the assignment read (in Middle English) and ready to discuss it. You might look at (and respond to) other people's blogs, which may raise some issues to discuss during class. We will do some reading aloud each day to get the feel of Middle English—it WILL get better as the semester goes on (and remember everyone else is in the same boat as you, so don't be too self-conscious, even if your Middle English accent "is nat worth a toord" as Harry Bailey would say. Any absence will mean that you do not receive credit for the class discussion for that day and will correspondingly reduce the class participation portion of your grade. ***Any more than 6 absences for the semester will result in your being dropped from the class for non-attendance.***
 - There will be a comprehensive **final exam** at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, April 26.
 - A **research paper** will be required. Minimum of 8 pages and a bibliography containing at least 4 scholarly sources (i.e., journal articles or books). At least one of these scholarly sources should be one of the essays listed as supplementary readings (which you may already have blogged about). Thus it may make sense (but it is not required) that you write your paper about your blogging character's tale. A more detailed assignment will be forthcoming on March 8. The paper is due by the end of the day on Friday, April 22, but you are welcome to hand it in on the last day of class (April 21) or earlier.
 - **Late paper policy:** Late papers or tests will be docked one letter grade. This is not compounded—if it's a day late, it's docked one letter grade. If it's three weeks late, it gets docked one letter grade. So, if it's late, take the time to make it good.
 - ***If you are a graduate student,*** see me for additional expectations.
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Grades and Other Policies

- Final grades for the course will be based on the following formula:
 - Vocabulary Quiz=25 pts.
 - Style Quiz=25 pts.
 - Blog=150 pts
 - Recitation=100 pts
 - Class participation=150 pts.
 - CT Take-Home=100 pts.
 - TC Take-Home=100 pts.
 - Final Exam=150 pts.
 - Paper=200 pts.
 - **Total=1000 pts.** For the final grade, 900 or more points will be an A, 800-899 a B, 700-799 a C, and so on.
 - **Note:** *A running total of points will be available on the WebCT site. The running total for class participation and for the blog is a “raw score,” which should not be taken in itself as the ultimate number of points you are getting in that area. It will be converted to a score on a 150-point scale at the end of the semester.*

1. **Attendance Policy:** Attendance is necessary. Your grade in class participation will be seriously damaged by non-attendance, since you cannot participate if you are not there. Your paper and test grades will also suffer, since you will have missed a good deal of information and discussion of the literature. Any more than 6 absences will result in my dropping you with a W grade.
2. **Academic Integrity:** The student handbook contains the following statement:
 - The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

In accordance with this policy, PLAGIARISM or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the assignment involved and/or an F in the course. (Plagiarism is representing the work of another as your own. This would include taking the words *or ideas* of a published source without giving that source proper credit; giving credit to a published source but representing the source's words as your own (i.e., not putting the author's ideas into your own words, or not using quotation marks around quotations); or using the work of other students and passing it off as your own.

3. **Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need accommodation under this act due to a disability, contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 450-3613.
4. **Building Emergency:** An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.
5. **Title IX disclosure:** If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>. **Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*
6. **Class Evaluations:** Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction [insert date] through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.
7. **Other Policies:** Important academic policies and the campus Sexual Harassment policy are detailed in your *Student Handbook*. Consult the handbook for specifics.