

# English 4340/5340: Chaucer

**Spring 2010  
(MWF 10:00-10:50)**



*Chaucer portrait from Ellesmere manuscript, ca. 1410*

**Instructor:** Jay Ruud

**Office:** Irby 317I

**Phone:** 450-3674 (or 450-5100 for Secretary)

**Office Hours:** MWF 9:00-10:00, TTh 9:00-12:00 or by appt.

---

## Required Text

- Boenig, Robert, and Andrew Taylor, eds. *The Canterbury Tales*. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2008.
- Barney, Stephan A., ed. *Troilus and Criseyde*. New York: Norton, 2005.

Other assignments will be either online or on reserve in the library.

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: David Wright (Oxford) or Neville Coghill (Penguin) are the best of the lot. Other translations are mainly terrible. Peter Ackroyd's recently published "retelling" of the *Canterbury Tales* is just that—it's not an actual translation.

---

## Chaucer Links

A quick check of the internet shows that Google brings up 6,250,000 sites for the name "Chaucer." That being a few too many for you to look through yourself, I've gleaned some of the most helpful sites for you to link to here:

A good site to use to sift through much of what is on the web is [geoffreychaucer.org](http://geoffreychaucer.org)

The Harvard Chaucer page has a lot of useful stuff at <http://courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/CTlist.html>

The [Chaucer Metapage](#) is a site collaborated on by several medieval scholars interested in Chaucer on the Web. It contains links to all of their personal sites and information.

You can take a look at an online [Middle English Dictionary](#) here

The past two volumes of the [Chaucer Review](#) are available online.

An [annotated bibliography](#) of the first 30 years of the journal *Chaucer Review* is available online.

The [Internet Medieval Sourcebook](#) links to full-text sites for a wide variety of medieval literature.

For a good time, take a look at [Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog](#)

---

## Tentative Course Outline

(subject to change as the semester goes on)

### Week 1:

- 1/15 (F): Introduction. Look at short poems "Truth" and "Complaint to His Purse." Begin brief discussion of Chaucer's life and times.

### Week 2:

- 1/18 (M): NO CLASS: MLK JR. DAY

- 1/20 (W): Continue with *Life and Times* (see Boenig and Taylor 9-14). Begin *Parliament of Fowls* (online).
- 1/22 (F): Finish discussion of *Parliament of Fowls*.

### Week 3:

- 1/25 (M): Begin discussion of *General Prologue* (ll. 1-78). Look especially at the Knight. Discuss Chaucer's language (see Boenig and Taylor, pp. 17-19).
- 1/27 (W): Continue *General Prologue* (ll. 79-207). Look especially at the Squire, Prioress, Monk.
- 1/29 (F): Continue *General Prologue* (ll. 208-476). Look especially at Friar, Merchant, Clerk, Wife of Bath. Parson, Miller, Reeve, Pardoner, Summoner (pp. 31-36).

### Week 4:

- 2/1 (M): Finish *General Prologue* (ll. 477-861). Look especially at Parson, Miller, Pardoner, Summoner.
- 2/3 (W): Begin *Miller's Tale* (pp. 91-102).
- 2/5 (F): Finish *Miller's Tale*. **Quiz #1: Vocabulary.**

### Week 5:

- 2/8 (M): *Reeve's Tale* (pp. 103-110).
- 2/10 (W): *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale* (pp. 261-270). See Jean de Meun, "False Seeming" (p. 470).
- 2/12 (F): *Wife of Bath's Prologue* (pp. 141-155). See also Jean de Meun, "Old Woman" (p. 470).

### Week 6:

- 2/15 (M): *Wife of Bath's Tale* (pp. 157-162).
- 2/17 (W): Begin *Clerk's Tale* (pp. 183-202).
- 2/19 (F): Finish *Clerk's Tale*.

### Week 7:

- 2/21 (M): *Merchant's Tale* (pp. 203-222).
- 2/24 (W): *Franklin's Tale* (pp. 237-252).
- 2/26 (F): *Friar's Tale* (pp. 163-169).

**Week 8:**

- 3/1 (M): *Summoner's Tale* (pp. 170-180).
- 3/3 (W): Begin *Prioress's Tale* (pp. 281-285). See also Rudolph of Schlettstadt, pp. 493-494.
- 3/5 (F): Finish *Prioress's Tale*.

**Week 9:**

- 3/8 (M): *Second Nun's Tale* (pp. 357-366).
- 3/10 (W): Begin *The Nun's Priest's Tale* (pp. 341-353).
- 3/12 (F): Finish *The Nun's Priest's Tale*.

**Week 10:**

- 3/15 (M): **Quiz #2: Chaucer's Style.** Introduction to *The Knight's Tale*. See Boethius, pp. 459-462.
- 3/17 (W): *The Knight's Tale*, part I (pp. 57-63).
- 3/19 (F): *The Knight's Tale*, part II (pp. 64-71).

**Week 11: NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK (3/20-3/28)****Week 12:**

- 3/29 (M): *The Knight's Tale*, part III (pp. 71-80)
- 3/31 (W): Finish *Knight's Tale*, part IV (pp. 81-87).
- 4/2 (F): *Tale of Sir Thopas* (pp. 286-290)

**Week 13:**

- 4/5 (M): Read *Parson's Prologue* (pp. 393-394); Summary of *Parson's Tale* (handout); *Retraction* (p. 455).
- 4/7 (W): Read *Troilus and Criseyde*, book I and Barney's Introduction to the poem (pp. ix-xix, and 9-67)
- 4/9 (F): Finish *Troilus and Criseyde*, book I.

**Week 14:**

- 4/12 (M): Begin *Troilus and Criseyde*, book II (pp. 69-149).
- 4/14 (W): Finish *Troilus and Criseyde*, book II.

- 4/16 (F): Begin *Troilus and Criseyde*, book III (pp. 149-223).

#### **Week 14:**

- 4/19 (M): Finish *Troilus and Criseyde*, book III.
- 4/21 (W): Begin *Troilus and Criseyde*, book IV (pp. 223-331)
- 4/23 (F): [Shakespeare's Birthday—Happy Birthday to the second greatest writer in the English language]. Finish *Troilus and Criseyde*, book IV.

#### **Week 15:**

- 4/26 (M): Begin *Troilus and Criseyde*, book V (pp. 331-427).
- 4/28 (W): Finish *Troilus and Criseyde*, book V. **Quiz #3: Troilus and Criseyde.**
- 4/30 (F): NO CLASS: STUDY DAY

FINAL: Paper will be due Monday, May 3, by 4:30. The final exam is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5, at 2:00-4:00.

---

### **Assignments**

- 1. There will be three quizzes given in class: one on Vocabulary on February 5; one on Chaucer's Style on March 15; and one on *Troilus and Criseyde* the last day of class, April 28.
- 2. A research paper will be required. Minimum 8 pages, with an annotated bibliography attached, containing a minimum of 4 scholarly sources. Graduate students should write a 12-page paper with at least 6 scholarly sources. The assignment will be placed on Blackboard. The paper is due on the Monday of exam week (May 3).
- 3. There will be a comprehensive final on Wednesday, May 5, at 2:00-4:00.
- 4. Class discussion is expected and required. You are expected to be in class every day with the assignment read (in Middle English). Any absence will mean no credit for class participation for that day. 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, everybody 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. Absences will inevitably reduce the class participation portion of your grade. Any more than 6 absences will result in your being dropped from the class with a "WF" grade.
- 5. Keep a READING JOURNAL in which you comment on, question, and otherwise respond to the readings. You should write a journal entry each day on the reading assignment. Post your journal entries on the Blackboard Bulletin Board by 9:00 A.M. on the day of the class during which we will be discussing

the text on which you comment. You should try to take a few minutes before class and read one another's journal entries (and reply to any that you feel compelled to—such online discussions will enhance your journal grade). These entries may raise some issues to discuss in class.

- 6. Graduate students will have extra meetings with the instructor to discuss additional readings pertaining to Chaucer and medieval literature.
- 

## Grades

Final grades in the course will be based on a point system, with a 1000 total possible points. A running total of points will be available on the Blackboard site for the course online. The following list equates total points with letter grades:

- 900-1000 pts.=A
- 800-899 pts.=B
- 700-799 pts.=C
- 600-699 pts.=D
- 0-599 pts.=F
  
- Point values--Undergraduates
  - Three quizzes together: 240 points (80 points each)
  - Paper: 250 points
  - Annotated bibliography: 50 points
  - Class Participation: 160 points (Your presence is worth 3 points a day by itself—coming in late or leaving early loses you 1 point. Contribution to discussion is worth up to 2 points per day.)
  - Reading journal: 100 points (entries will be worth UP TO 4 points per day—2 points for an average entry, 3 for a particularly thoughtful one, 1 additional point for thoughtful answers to other students)
  - Final Exam: 200 points
- Graduate Students:
  - Three quizzes together: 210 points (70 points each)
  - Paper: 260 points
  - Annotated Bibliography: 50 points
  - Class Participation: 140 points
  - Extra discussion/assignments: 140 points
  - Final Exam: 200
  
- 
- Late papers, tests, and quizzes will be docked one letter grade.
- 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.

- **OTHER POLICIES:** Important academic policies and the campus Sexual Harassment policy are detailed in your Student Handbook. Consult the handbook for specifics.
- **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 450-3135.

---

**One last thing:**

An excerpt from Chaucer's little known "Cell-Phone User's Tale":



Please take the hint.