

# Affective Rhetoric, the Subject, and the Soul

## ENGL 6301 (CRN 30809) — Spring 2017

### MWF 3:00 - 3:50 p.m. in Irby 304

**Professor:** Dr. Katherine E.C. Willis

**Office:** Irby 317D

**Office hours:** MWF 10:00-11:00, 1:00-3:00 and by appt. (no T/Th hours)

**Office ph:** 501-450-5105

**Email:** [kwillis@uca.edu](mailto:kwillis@uca.edu) (*allow 24 hours for response; see etiquette policy below*)

#### HOW TO CONTACT ME:

**Email etiquette:** I will respond to your email within 24 hours (if you do not hear from me in that time window, contact me again). That means you should not email last minute concerns about assignments. In addition, I only respond to emails that follow basic etiquette. That includes the following:

1. Salutation line with my name
2. Decent grammar and spelling
3. Signature line with your name

**Office hours:** My door is open for you during the office hours listed above, so you do not need an appointment to see me then. If you cannot make those times, however, just ask to set up an appointment.

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course is meant to give you an richer understanding of **medieval literature**. Although the English middle ages extend from the sixth to the fifteenth century, we will focus mostly on texts written during the late middle ages, especially those written in **Middle English** (some attention will be given to readings from other time periods and languages). In particular, we will explore **affective rhetoric**, an approach to style that medieval writers used to have a maximum emotional and/or spiritual effect on an audience. We will define affective rhetoric in greater detail based on our readings and learn what kinds of techniques and themes writers used in order to achieve this goal. In addition, we will also discuss the definition and role of **the subject** in medieval literature. Utterly unlike the post-Romantic subject, the medieval subject is *textually* rather than psychologically defined.

Because this is a graduate-level seminar, most classes will be heavily discussion based. The readings will, in part, help prepare you for your graduate exams. The assignments will strengthen your reading, research, and writing skills for other graduate courses and for professional work. In other words, regardless of the type of literature you choose to focus on during your time in the program, this course will be practically useful for you.

**Objectives** — By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- ✓ read and translate Middle English with ease
- ✓ situate medieval literature in cultural and historical contexts

- ✓ identify and explicate major medieval literary conventions and themes
- ✓ understand the medieval approach to rhetoric
- ✓ understand the medieval approach to textual subjectivity
- ✓ lead a seminar discussion with questions and ideas that probe the complexities of a text
- ✓ develop original arguments
- ✓ conduct graduate-level research and writing
- ✓ deliver a professional presentation (suitable to an academic conference in the humanities) and field questions
- ✓ provide critical peer feedback

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

- *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature Vol 1: The Medieval Period*, 3rd ed. (ISBN 9781554812028)
- *Troilus and Criseyde*, ed. Neville Coghill for Penguin (ISBN 0140442391)
- OR: *Troilus and Criseyde*, ed. James Dean and Harriet Spiegel for Broadview Press (ISBN 9781554810055)
- *Confessions*, by Augustine (any edition is acceptable as long as it includes the full text)
- *The Wooing of our Lord and the Wooing Group Prayers*, ed. Catherine Innes-Parker (ISBN 978155113821)
- *The Distaff Gospels*, ed. Madeleine Jeay and Kathleen Garay (ISBN 155115603)
- selections from troubadour poets (Blackboard)
- selections from Bernard of Clairvaux (Blackboard)
- other readings and materials (Blackboard)

### **BUILDING EMERGENCY PLAN:**

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.

### **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 the 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. Students should also familiarize themselves with the Sexual Harassment Policy included in the Student Handbook.

### **DISABILITY SERVICES & ACCOMODATIONS:**

The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Disability Resource Center, 501-450-3613. Any student with a documented disability requiring accommodations in the course should speak with me as soon as possible. Please be aware that it is in all cases the responsibility of the student to initiate such a discussion and to do so well in advance of assignments and activities for which accommodations might be needed. Please refer to the policies and procedures defined by UCA's Disability Resource Center for more details. All information regarding an individual's disability is strictly confidential.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM:**

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.

Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, fabrication, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student.

"Other forms of academic misconduct may include unauthorized collaboration or submitting the same paper or portions of the same paper to two different courses without the consent of both instructors . . . .

The university's academic integrity policy applies to all students enrolled in courses at the University of Central Arkansas. All forms of academic misconduct at the University of Central Arkansas will be regarded as serious" (qtd. from Student Handbook). Students should familiarize themselves with the Academic Policies, related to Academic Integrity and all other academic matters, included in the Student Handbook.

### **CLASSROOM CONDUCT:**

Common courtesy and respect: I encourage you to share your opinions and engage in conversation with your classmates, because the more diverse points of view we consider, the more complete our study will be. However, please be courteous: disagreement can be a great way to start a discussion, but respect your classmates' opinions and their right to express them. Any disruptions or displays of disrespect will result in a serious consideration of your placement in this class.

Students who violate these principles of conduct will be asked to leave the classroom and will not receive credit for in-class work that day.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Your attendance at each class meeting throughout the semester is the foundation of your grade in this course. As the Attendance section of the Student Handbook explains, "A student's official program is regarded as his or her obligation to the institution, full performance of which requires regular and punctual class attendance and active participation. A student is responsible for coming to class prepared, completing any missed work, and knowing the dates and places of required course examinations . . . . Absences that indicate negligence about class attendance may lead to cancellation of registration and a withdrawal grade of WF in the course. In flagrant cases, the student may be suspended from the university. Individual instructors may assign a withdrawal grade of WF for non-attendance to any student but must do so by the deadline date for a student to officially withdraw with a WP or WF specified in the academic calendar for the semester."

Participation is part of your course grade, but in a larger sense, all of our other assignments and activities will require you to build on what happens in class. In other words, irregular attendance will affect not just participation but will also hinder your ability to complete major assignments and activities.

If you are absent or late for any reason, it is your responsibility *first* to acquire notes from a classmate and, second, to come see me with questions and concerns.

### **LATE WORK POLICY:**

If you are unable to submit work on time due to an excused reason, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to document your reason and to make timely alternative arrangements (be aware that some in-class activities may not be possible to make up). Late work is never acceptable for unexcused reasons. As the Student Handbook specifies in the section on Attendance, "Make-up examinations and assignments are required only for valid absences as determined by the faculty member. Students who miss an examination or assignment without a valid excuse may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment."

Excused reasons include (but are not limited to): official university-sanctioned athletic or organizational events (requires appropriate documentation), severe illness, death of a family member, court appearances, jury duty.

Unexcused reasons include (but are not limited to): computer/printer malfunctions, traffic problems, family vacations/travel, or forgetfulness.

### **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 through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:**

Below is an overview of the grade components for this course and the weight assigned to each. The descriptions for each category are an overview; any further requirements/details and information about grading will be distributed separately in assignment sheets. Be sure to save all of your work during the semester.

- 15%**     **Participation:** Come to class each day prepared to write and to discuss. Because this is a seminar course, our success as individuals and as a group depends upon your consistent, active, and vocal participation. Good participation means being regularly present *and* active in class, engaging with me and your classmates in generative, constructive discussion, and being prepared for each day of class (i.e., you completed the reading, finished the assignments, arrived with the text in hand, etc). See the rubric online.
- 15%**     **Translations:** Regularly throughout the semester, you will be required to produce your own, original translations of specific passages from Middle English into fluid modern English prose. Some of our texts include translations. You should use them as a *trot*, but the translation should be your own work. You will be graded on the completion, accuracy, and quality of your translations.
- 20%**     **Seminar leadership:** Multiple times throughout the semester (probably 7-9 times), you will be required to lead the seminar discussion for at least the first half of class. You will prepare a handout with a concise paragraph of summary at the start, followed by a series of at least 5 substantial, analytical questions about the reading. After the class has moved through your questions, I will follow up with commentary and additional questions. You will be graded on your level of preparation, the depth and relevancy of your questions, and your ability to lead the class effectively and in a timely manner.
- 25%**     **Research paper:** Your research paper should be 12-15 pages in MLA formatting. It should use at least 2 medieval primary sources (one we have read together + one we have not) and at least 5

current scholarly secondary sources. Your thesis should advance a focused, original argument, which the rest of the paper should substantiate with an organized progression of supporting ideas. Specific and relevant information from primary and secondary sources must be used evenly and substantially. You should meet with me as soon as possible to discuss your thesis.

- 20%**     **“Conference” presentation:** You will present your research paper to the class in the format of a typical conference presentation (17-20 mins.). The goal of the presentation is to explain your thesis, supporting ideas, and evidence clearly and persuasively to the audience. You should either include a handout or use powerpoint. Your presentation will be graded on the quality of both content and delivery.
- 5%**     **“Conference” presentation Q&A and feedback:** You will be expected to respond to your classmates’ presentations with good questions as well as critical feedback.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Readings and assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day on which they are listed. Some days below specify other materials you are required to bring. *Note: I reserve the right to change the schedule below if it will help the class. I will announce any changes in class and via email.*

Jan. 13	Syllabus, introductions, and first day matters.
Jan. 16	<i>Martin Luther King, Jr. day — no classes</i>
Jan. 18	Quick and dirty history of the middle ages. No reading.
Jan. 20, 23, 25	Primer on reading Middle English. Reading posted on Blackboard.
Jan. 27, 30	Augustine’s <i>Confessions</i>
Feb. 1, 3, 6	Bernard of Clairvaux’s sermons. Selections posted on Blackboard.
Feb. 8, 10, 13	<i>The Wooing of our Lord and the Wooing Group Prayers.</i>
Feb 15, 17	<i>Textual Subjectivity</i> , by A.C. Spearing. Reading posted on Blackboard.
Feb. 20, 22, 24	Julian of Norwich’s <i>A Revelation of Love</i>
Feb. 27	Piers Plowman
March 1, 3, 6	Chaucer’s <i>Prioress’s Tale</i>
March 8	Research paper assignment and library resources.
March 10, 13, 15	Chaucer’s <i>Clerk’s Tale</i>
March 17	Chaucer’s <i>Pardoner’s Tale</i>
March 20-24	<i>Spring Break — No Class</i>

March 27, 29	Chaucer's <i>Pardoner's Tale</i> , cont.
March 31, April 3	Troubadour poetry. Selections on Blackboard.
April 5, 7, 10, 12	Chaucer's <i>Troilus and Criseyde</i>
April 14, 17	<i>The Distaff Gospels</i>
<b>April 19</b>	<b>DUE: research papers.</b> Prepare for conference presentations.
April 21	"Conference" presentations
April 24	"Conference" presentations
April 26	"Conference" presentations
April 28	<i>No class — Study day</i>
<b>Friday May 5</b>	<b><i>Final Exam from 1:00-3:00 p.m.</i></b>