

# Poems of Geoffrey Chaucer

Loyola University Chicago, Spring 2020

## 1 COURSE INFORMATION

Course number: ENGL 322-016

Meeting time: TuTh 4:15PM–5:30PM

Location: Mundelein Center - Room 507 until 10 March. Thereafter on-line via Zoom.

## 2 INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Ian Cornelius

Office location: Crown Center - Room 411

Office hours: TuTh 10:00AM–12:00PM until 24 March. Thereafter by appointment.

E-mail: [icornelius@luc.edu](mailto:icornelius@luc.edu)

Pronouns: he, him, his

## 3 TEXTS

The following texts are required for this course and available for purchase at the Loyola University Chicago Lakeshore Campus Bookstore:

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Edited by David Lawton, W. W. Norton & Company, 2019. [abbreviated as ‘CT’ in the schedule of readings.]

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Edited by Kathryn L. Lynch, W.W. Norton & Company, 2006. [abbreviated as ‘DV’ in the schedule of readings.]

Guillaume de Lorris, and Jean de Meun. *The Romance of the Rose*. Translated by Frances Horgan, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Additional readings will be posted on Sakai.

## 4 COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This course is an exploration of the writings of Geoffrey Chaucer, one of the great literary innovators in the English language. Writing at a time when English commanded little respect as a language of literature, Chaucer crafted a unique and compelling poetic voice, surrealistic fictional worlds, and an inclusive vision for literary fiction. In this class we read many of Chaucer's most important poems, including his unfinished masterpiece, the *Canterbury Tales*. For the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer created a diverse cast – women and men, poor and rich, profane and devout – who regale one another with boundary-pushing stories. Topics include gender, sexuality, class, faith, honor, and fictionality.

Our study of Chaucer's poetry is supplemented by selections from his sources, especially *The Romance of the Rose*. We read Chaucer's poetry in its original language, called "Middle English"; learning to read this past form of English takes work, but the reward is an unusually fine-grained and intimate experience of literature.

Assignments include a critical commentary and translation, two essays, a class presentation, a midterm exam and final exam. This course fulfills the pre-1700 English major requirement.

Objectives:

- To explore the imaginative possibilities of literary fiction and poetic verse.
- To gain an experience of literature written in a historical period and material context different from our own.
- To develop skills for understanding and appreciating a form of the English language different from the modern standard.
- To refine skills of formal expository writing, self-expression, and literary argument.

## 5 COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings and assignments are due on the day listed. If there is a need to revise this course schedule, I will announce the change and post the revision on Sakai. The official LUC academic calendar is available here: [www.luc.edu/academics/schedules](http://www.luc.edu/academics/schedules).

date	topic	assignment
Tu 1/14	Introduction	read this syllabus
Th 1/16	General Prologue	CT pp. 57–76; dictionary exercise 1 (forum)
Tu 1/21	Knight's Tale I	CT pp. 58–59, 76–86; dictionary exercise 2 (forum)
Th 1/23	Knight's Tale II	CT pp. 86–97
Tu 1/28	Knight's Tale III–IV	CT pp. 97–122; translation exercise (forum)
Th 1/30	Miller's Prologue and Tale	CT pp. 69, 122–38
Tu 2/4	Reeve's and Cook's Prologues and Tales	CT pp. 65, 70–71, 138–50; <b>translation and commentary assignment due</b>

date	topic	assignment
Th 2/6	The Prologue and Tale of Sir Thopas and the Tale of Melibee	CT pp. 373–418
Tu 2/11	Man of Law's Prologue and Tale	CT pp. 64, 152–80
Th 2/13	visit Cudahy Library Special Collections and Archives	CT pp 17–31
Tu 2/18	The Parliament of Fowles	DV pp. 97–116; <b>first essay due</b>
Th 2/20	The Book of the Duchess	DV pp. 6–37, 251–57
Tu 2/25	Legend of Good Women (Prologue, Cleopatra, and Thisbe)	DV pp. 122–45
Th 2/27	<b>midterm exam</b>	study, study, study
3/2–3/6	<b>spring break</b>	
Tu 3/10	<i>The Romance of the Rose</i>	pp. 3–110
Th 3/12	class canceled	
Tu 3/17	<i>The Romance of the Rose</i>	pp. 111–224
Th 3/19	<i>The Romance of the Rose</i>	pp. 154–335
Tu 3/24	Wife of Bath's Prologue	CT pp. 67–68, 183–202
Th 3/26	Wife of Bath's Tale	CT pp. 202–210
Tu 3/31	Friar's and Summoner's Prologues and Tales	CT pp. 61–63, 71–72, 210–32
Th 4/2	cont'd; begin Clerk's Tale	"
Tu 4/7	Clerk's Prologue and Tale	CT pp. 63–64, 235–63
Th 4/9	Franklin's Prologue and Tale	CT pp. 64–65, 308–28
Tu 4/14	Pardoner's Prologue	CT pp. 72–73, 337–41; essay prospectus (forum)
Th 4/16	Pardoner's Tale	CT pp. 341–51
Tu 4/21	Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale	CT pp. 59–60, 440–55
Th 4/23	Maniciple's Prologue and Tale, Parson's Prologue, and Chaucer's Retractions	CT pp. 68–70, 491–03, 570; <b>second essay due</b>
Tu 4/28	<b>final exam, 4:15PM–6:15PM</b>	study, study, study

Students must take the final exam on the date set by the university.

## 6 ASSIGNMENTS

### 6.1 attendance and participation

Each class session is an exercise in literary reading. To meet course objectives, you must attend class and be prepared to engage in discussion. Arrange your schedule to be present

for the entire session. If you must miss a class for any reason, or if you must arrive late or leave early, inform me in advance by email.

## **6.2 poetry recitation**

Each student will memorize the first 18 lines of the *Canterbury Tales* and recite these lines in office hours during the second or third week of the semester. The objective in this exercise is to sharpen your understanding of Chaucer's language and art.

## **6.3 on-line forums**

You will contribute occasionally to an on-line forum. Forum posts will be concentrated at the beginning of the semester and in advance of essays. Details will be announced in due course.

Everyone will write one post responding to an in-class presentation.

## **6.4 presentation and annotated bibliography**

Once during the semester, you will make a brief presentation to the class. This should be about 10 minutes in length. Presentations are short reports on a topic relevant to our reading of Chaucer, supported by presentation slides and outside research. On the day of your presentation you will submit presentation slides and an annotated bibliography via Sakai. Usually a presentation will be followed by class discussion; the best presentations invite thoughtful response from your peers. Details and suggested topics will follow. I encourage you to talk with me in office hours about presentation topics.

## **6.5 translation and commentary**

Each student will select a passage between 10 and 15 lines in length, translate it into good modern English prose, and write a critical commentary on the passage. Assignment instructions will explain what I mean by "critical commentary." The objective in translation is to express Chaucer's meaning as precisely as possible within modern English. This exercise aims to focus attention on details of Chaucer's literary art and improve your understanding of his language.

## **6.6 essays**

There are two essays. These are exercises in formal expository writing and interpretative argument. I will circulate prompts at least one week before the due dates listed on the syllabus. The first essay should be 4 pages in length; the second includes a research component and

should be about 8 pages in length. Essays should be double-spaced in a common 12-point font such as Times New Roman. Sources should be cited in MLA format.

Students are encouraged to talk with me in office hours about their essays and writing process, and encouraged to seek help from the writing center. To make an appointment at the writing center, visit this page: [www.luc.edu/writing](http://www.luc.edu/writing).

Library specialists are helpful in the research stage of the final essay. For details, visit <http://libraries.luc.edu/specialists>.

Essays should be submitted in two forms, paper and electronic. Paper copies are due at the beginning of class. An identical electronic copy should be uploaded to Sakai in Microsoft Word or PDF format.

If illness or another event in your life prevents you from completing an essay on time, you must alert me promptly by email. Do not wait for me to contact you. I will usually accommodate late work, provided that you have a legitimate reason for requesting an extension. Unexcused late work will be marked down and cannot be revised for a higher grade.

## 6.7 exams

There will be a midterm and final exam. These test your knowledge and understanding of course materials and skill as a reader and interpreter of literature. The midterm exam will ask you to identify and translate passages. The final exam will include a short essay.

# 7 GRADING

## 7.1 grade schema

This course employs the ‘quintile system’, as follows:

letter grade	minimum percentage
A	86.6
A-	80
B+	73.3
B	66.6
B-	60
C+	53.3
C	46.6
C-	40
D+	33.3
D	20
F	0

## 7.2 grade components

course component	points
participation	50
poetry recitation	10
on-line forum	20
class presentation	40
translation and commentary	40
midterm essay	60
final essay	80
midterm exam	40
final exam	60

## 8 POLICIES

### 8.1 course materials

Every student must acquire physical copies of the textbooks and bring them to class. Write in your books: this improves memory, comprehension, and your ability to participate in class discussion. Your notes will also be a valuable resource in preparation for essays and exams.

Readings distributed via Sakai as pdfs should be printed. Course materials distributed via Sakai should not be shared outside this course without the instructor's written permission.

### 8.2 academic integrity

Loyola University Chicago takes seriously the issues of plagiarism and academic integrity. Plagiarizing a paper will result in a grade of "zero" for that exam/paper, and the incident will be reported to your dean. If you are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the university guidelines on this issue. If you are still uncertain, please ask me. Below is an excerpt from the English Department's statement:

"The English Department wishes to make it clear here that no distinctions should be made between the following acts and that all should be regarded as serious and wrong:

- Copying from a published or on-line source, or a source in any medium, without proper documentation
- Purchasing a pre-written paper
- Letting someone else write a paper for you or paying someone to do so
- Submitting as your own someone else's unpublished work, either with or without permission"

The full statement is available here (follow the link to “the use and misuse of sources,” under “Helpful resources”): <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml>

Additional information here:

[http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml)

## **8.3 communication**

Learning to respect the rights and opinions of others is an important part of education. Students in this course will refrain from profanity and insults and allow classmates to voice their views without fear of ridicule.

Students are always welcome to speak with me during my regular office hours. Outside of office hours email is the best way to reach me. I make every effort to respond to email messages within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. I ask that you also respond promptly to any messages I may send.

An additional note on names and gender pronouns: using appropriate names and gender pronouns honors and affirms individuals of all gender identities and gender expressions. Misgendering and heteronormative language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Therefore, during our first class, as we introduce ourselves, you may choose to share your name and gender pronouns. If you do not wish to be called by the name listed on the roster, please inform the class. If you prefer to introduce yourself by name only, without pronouns, that is also completely fine. The goal is to create an affirming environment for all students.

## **8.4 accommodations and assistance**

Please contact me early in the semester if you have a documented disability that will require special accommodations in this course. I will make every effort to make accommodations as directed by the Student Accessibility Center (<http://www.luc.edu/sac/>). Additional assistance is available from the following campus offices:

Coordinated Assistance & Resource Education (CARE)

<http://www.luc.edu/dos/services/coordinatedassistanceresourceeducationcare/>  
773.508.8840

Ethics Hotline

<http://luc.edu/sglc/aboutus/>  
855.603.6988

Wellness Center

<http://www.luc.edu/wellness/>

## **9 STATEMENT OF INTENT**

By remaining in this course, students agree to accept this syllabus and abide by the guidelines outlined in it. Students will be consulted should there be a necessary change to the syllabus.

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