

Advanced seminar  
English poetry from manuscript to print

Loyola University Chicago

Fall 2021

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## 1 Course detail

- Course number: ENGL 390-17W (4618)
- Meeting time: W 5:30PM - 8:00PM
- Location: Mundelein 617

## 2 Instructor detail

- Name: Ian Cornelius
- Pronouns: he | his | him
- Office location: Crown Center 447
- Office hours: T 2:00PM - 4:00PM and by appointment
- E-mail: [icornelius@luc.edu](mailto:icornelius@luc.edu)

## 3 Course description and objectives

One consequence of the current digital revolution is an upswell of curiosity about earlier technologies of communication, entertainment, and learning. What was the printed book like in the early days, when that technology was still new, and how were works of literature published, circulated, and read before print? In this seminar we study poems written on either side of the European print revolution – works by Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, and their contemporaries – and we inquire how these poems circulated in their own time and afterwards and why medium matters. Students will learn to read one of the styles of handwriting used by medieval scribes and they will learn to read “Middle English,” the form of the English language used by Chaucer. Themes include the production of manuscript books, the origins and development of print technology, diversity and standardization in the English language, and the emergence of a self-aware tradition of poetry in English.

In this course students will:

- Explore the imaginative possibilities of literary fiction
- Gain an experience of literature written in historical periods and material contexts different from our own
- Study the historical development and innovative uses of literary forms
- Develop skills for understanding and engaging critically with forms of the English language different from the modern standard
- Learn about the writing systems and material forms in which literature circulated prior to the development of industrial printing technologies
- Learn about the transmission of literary texts in manuscript and print
- Become informed and critical users of modern printed editions and on-line texts
- Refine and develop skills of formal expository writing and literary argument
- Conduct research on a topic in literary studies

## 4 Texts

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

1. Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Norton Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*. Edited by David Lawton. New York: W. W. Norton, 2019. ISBN 978-0-393-64350-3. New: \$41.75. Bookfinder.com: [from \\$30.73](#).
2. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Edited and translated by James Winny. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992. ISBN: 978-0921149927. New: \$22.04. Bookfinder.com: [from \\$2.99](#).
3. Spenser, Edmund. *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*. Edited by Andrew D. Hadfield and Anne Lake Prescott. 4th ed. Norton Critical Editions. New York: W. W. Norton, 2013. ISBN 978-0-393-92785-6. New: \$32.00. Bookfinder.com: [from \\$27.50](#).
4. Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Edited by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor. Revised ed. The Arden Shakespeare, Third Series. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016. ISBN 978-1-4725-1838-5. New: \$12.95. Bookfinder.com: [from \\$6.59](#).

Students must acquire physical copies of textbooks and bring them to class. If you purchase your textbook from a source other than the Campus Bookstore, plan ahead and allow for delivery times. Everyone will need a copy of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in advance of the second course meeting. Students who do not purchase a new copy of the Norton *Canterbury Tales* are advised to purchase access to the [on-line resources](#) that accompany new copies of this book. See further, the policy on [alternative editions](#), below.

Other course readings will be distributed on Sakai or as links within this syllabus. Readings distributed as PDF documents should be printed. Students are reminded that course materials should not be shared outside this course without the instructor's written permission.

We use the following on-line reference works:

- [The Oxford English Dictionary](#)
- [The Middle English Dictionary](#)
- [Seeing Speech: An Articulatory Web Resource for the Study of Phonetics](#)
- [The Historical Thesaurus of English](#)
- [Early English Books Online](#)
- [Harvard University's Geoffrey Chaucer Website](#)
- [The Oxford Dictionary of Original Shakespearean Pronunciation](#)
- [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#)
- [The Chicago Manual of Style](#)

These are available at no additional cost to you. Some have been purchased by Loyola University Libraries for your use (for these you will be prompted to authenticate with your UVID); others are served out on the open web by their creators.

## 5 Schedule

The course schedule complies with the [Loyola University academic calendar](#). Assignments are due on the day listed. If there is need to revise the course schedule, I will announce the change in class and on Sakai and publish an updated version of this syllabus.

### Unit 1 (weeks 1–6): Poetry before print

#### 09-01 (week 1)

Course introductions; Historical varieties of English; Reading books and reading poems; *Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue 1–18

- reading assignment: syllabus
- writing assignment: syllabus [questionnaire](#)

#### 09-08 (week 2)

Introduction to Middle English; Introduction to English speech sounds; Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*: The General Prologue

- reading assignment:
  - *Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue (all; pp. 57–76 in *The Norton Chaucer*)
  - *The Norton Chaucer*, pp. 1–17, 35–45, 52–53, and the [web tutorial on “Reading Chaucer”](#)
  - Mann, “[The General Prologue and Estates Literature](#)”
  - video tutorial on the speech sounds of Modern English: [part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 3](#)
- optional additional readings/resources:
  - [The Canterbury Tales App](#)
  - Horobin and Smith, *[An Introduction to Middle English](#)*, perhaps especially chapters 2 and 4
- writing assignment:
  - [word-study exercise](#) (Sakai forum)

#### 09-15 (week 3)

The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale

- reading assignment:
  - The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale
  - selections from Chaucer’s sources for the Wife of Bath’s Prologue
  - Carruthers, “[The Wife of Bath and the Painting of Lions](#)”
- writing assignment:
  - [Chaucer translation and commentary](#)

#### 09-22 (week 4)

Introduction to medieval manuscripts; Manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*;

Library visit this week? Date and time TBD.

- reading assignment:
  - Ivy, “[The Bibliography of the Manuscript-Book](#)”
  - Harvard METRO, sections on [The Art and Craft of Editing](#), [Features of a Manuscript Page](#), [Types of Script](#), and [How to Read Medieval Handwriting](#)
  - Boffey and Edwards, “[Manuscripts and Audience](#)”
  - “[Chaucers wordes unto Adam, his owne scriveyn](#)”
- writing assignment:
  - manuscript transcription exercise
  - response paper
- Chaucer recitation due this week

## 09-29 (week 5)

Manuscripts and texts of the Wife of Bath’s Prologue

- reading assignment:
  - Harvard METRO, sections on [The Art and Craft of Editing \(part 2\)](#), [Types of Editions](#), [How to Read Variants](#), and [Textual Instability](#)
  - *The Norton Chaucer*, pp. vii-viii (“Preface”)
  - Donaldson, “[Chaucer, \*Canterbury Tales\*, D117: A Critical Edition](#)”
  - Donaldson, “[Some Readings in the \*Canterbury Tales\*](#)” (pp. 99 and 106–107 only)
  - Edwards, “[The Wife of Bath’s Sixth Man](#)”
- writing assignment:
  - manuscript transcription exercise
  - response paper

## 10-06 (week 6)

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; Linguistic diversity

- reading assignment:
  - *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* translated into Modern English by Winny (all)
  - *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* [part 1](#) in Middle English. Use Professor Weiskott’s [cheat sheet](#) for help with vocabulary.
  - Hanna, “[Unlocking What’s Locked: Gawain’s Green Girdle](#)”
- writing assignment:
  - response paper

## Unit 2 (weeks 7–12): Poetry in print

### 10-13 (week 7)

Introduction to early printed books; Chaucer in print

Library visit this week? Date and time TBD.

- reading assignment:

- Werner, from *Studying Early Printed Books*
- Cook, “The First First Folios: Chaucer’s *Works* in Print”
- TBD
- writing assignment:
  - **short essay**
  - post your essay title, abstract, and keywords to Sakai forum

## 10-20 (week 8)

Spenser’s *Shepheardes Calendar*, a sixteenth-century art book

- reading assignment:
  - *Shepheardes Calendar*, selections (Norton Spenser, pp. 503–550); and view the corresponding page scans on [EEBO](#)
  - Helgerson, from *Self-crowned Laureates* (Norton Spenser, pp. 712–16 only)
  - Burrow, [On *The Shepheardes Calender*] (Norton Spenser, pp. 810–16)
  - Staley, [Februarie] (Norton Spenser, pp. 816–23)
- writing assignment:
  - response paper

## 10-27 (week 9)

Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*

- reading assignment:
  - *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, cantos 1, 2, 7, 8
  - Chaucer’s Tale of Sir Thopas (*The Norton Chaucer*, pp. 373–380)
  - Dolven, “The Method of Spenser’s Stanza” (Norton Spenser, pp. 758–64)
  - Anderson, “Pricking on the plaine” (Norton Spenser, pp. 768–75)
- writing assignment:
  - response paper

## 11-03 (week 10)

**An interlude:** we visit Dr. Werner’s graduate seminar on Textual Criticism for an introduction to digital humanities projects by Loyola faculty

- reading assignment:
  - TBA
- writing assignment:
  - response paper

## 11-10 (week 11)

Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*

- reading assignment:
  - *Hamlet* (all), the Second Quarto text (Arden edition)
- writing assignment:

- response paper

### 11-17 (week 12)

The three texts of *Hamlet*; Printing early modern English drama

- reading assignment:
  - *Hamlet*, the “Folio-only passages” (Arden edition, pp. 495–503)
  - *Hamlet*, the [First Quarto text](#) (all)
  - Murphy, “What happens in *Hamlet*?”
  - Kastan, from *Shakespeare and the Book*
- writing assignment:
  - response paper
- *Hamlet* recitation due this week

## Unit 3 (weeks 13-14): Open days and research presentations

### 12-01 (week 13)

Research presentations; Topics and readings tbd

- writing assignment:
  - annotated bibliography
  - report on a presentation (Sakai forum, due 12-03)

### 12-08 (week 14)

Research presentations; Topics tbd

- writing assignment:
  - post your essay title, abstract, and keywords to Sakai forum
  - report on a presentation (Sakai forum, due 12-10)

The **long essay** is due on the date of the final exam set for this course.

## 6 Assignments

Assignment due dates are listed on the [Schedule](#). For weighting and general criteria of grading, see [Assessment](#).

### 6.1 Sakai forums

Forum assignments are listed on the [Schedule](#); they are few in number, though important to course objectives. Instructions will be supplied one week in advance of the due date.



## 6.2 Formal writing

Students in this writing-intensive seminar will produce formal writing on a weekly basis and discuss their work with peers at selected points during the semester.

Writing 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 (the Assignments tab) in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Observe the following details in regard to the *mise en page* of your text:

- double-spaced text
- a standard 12-point font
- 1-inch margins
- numbered pages

Sources should be cited in [Chicago](#) or [MLA](#) format. Students are encouraged to use reference management software. My preferred application is [zotero](#). It is free and open-source.

Students are invited to talk with me in office hours about any stage of the writing process and encouraged to discuss their writing with peer tutors at the [writing center](#).

### 6.2.1 Short assignments

**6.2.1.1 Translation and critical commentary** This assignment focuses attention on details of Chaucer's language and literary art. Each student will translate a short passage of Chaucer's poetry into good modern English prose and write a critical commentary on the Middle English. The objective in translation is to express Chaucer's meaning as precisely as possible within the vocabulary and idiom of modern English. Assignment instructions explain what is meant by "critical commentary."

**6.2.1.2 Response papers** Response papers provide opportunities to explore and experiment with a variety of critical genres and approaches to literary study. There are eight such assignments, of which you must complete six. If you complete more than six, I will drop the lowest score(s). Each response should be between 1.5 and 2 pages in length. Prompts will be circulated one week in advance.

Once during the semester, each student will circulate their response paper to the entire class as the basis for a [peer interview](#). Students will sign up for this activity in the first week of class. In the week that you circulate your response paper to class, this paper is due 24 hours in advance of our class meeting. All other responses are due at the beginning of class, as stated [above](#).

**6.2.1.3 Annotated bibliography** The annotated bibliography is a step towards the long essay (see the next section). Consult with me and with [library specialists](#) in selection of sources. The Oxford Bibliographies are a good place to begin research:

- [Geoffrey Chaucer](#)
- [Sir Gawain and the Green Knight](#)

- [Edmund Spenser](#)
- [William Shakespeare](#)
- [Medieval Manuscripts](#)
- [Printing and the Book](#)

Select six sources for annotation and list another six sources that you considered but decided against. Additional instructions will be supplied in due course.

### 6.2.2 Essays

There are two essays. The short essay (5–6pp.) is an exercise in formal expository writing and interpretative argument. Prompts and instructions will be circulated two weeks in advance of the due date.

The long essay (10–12pp.) includes a research component. Prompts and instructions will be circulated before the Thanksgiving break. The [annotated bibliography](#) and the [research presentation](#) are steps towards production of this essay.

## 6.3 Oral presentations

### 6.3.1 Poetry recitations

Each student will memorize two short passages of poetry. The objective in this exercise is to heighten your attention to the words, sounds, and organization of the poetry we read, and to provoke questions about the materiality of works of art in language.

For the first poetry recitation, you will memorize either the first eighteen lines of the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* or the first twenty lines of the Wife of Bath's Prologue. For the second poetry recitation, you will memorize a passage of your choice from one of the texts of *Hamlet*. Your passage should be about ten lines in length. This can be done as a group activity if you select a passage in which two or three characters have substantial speaking parts.

### 6.3.2 Peer interview

Once during the semester, you will interview one of your peers about the content of their most recent response paper. The interviews will be conducted during our class session and should be between five and ten minutes in length. As interviewer, you are responsible for being interested in your interviewee, drawing them out about their writing, exploring lateral connections, and prompting them to elaborate the ideas that they have presented. There will be opportunity for audience participation at the end of each interview.

### 6.3.3 Research presentation

After the Thanksgiving break you will make a presentation to the class on a topic related to your long essay. Your presentation should be about ten minutes in length and supported by slides. Usually a presentation will be followed by class discussion; the best presentations invite thoughtful response from your peers.

## 6.4 Exams

There are no exams in this course.

# 7 Assessment

## 7.1 Weighting of course components

course component	points
participation	80
translation and commentary	10
poetry recitations (2)	20
short essay	40
response papers (6 of 8)	60 <sup>1</sup>
annotated bibliography	10
research presentation	20
long essay	60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>

The participation component includes [attendance](#), the [peer interview](#), occasional posts to the [Sakai forums](#), and participation in class discussion. For descriptions of other course components, including page lengths for essays, see [Assignments](#).

## 7.2 Standards for written assignments

- **A** Advanced understanding of course material; exceptional initiative and innovation in interpretation of literature. Writing is persuasive with a precisely articulated argument, correct and effective presentation of evidence, and near flawless organization and grammatical presentation.
- **A-** As above but with lapses in one or a few areas.
- **B** Good understanding and command of course material; solid literary interpretation and argument. Writing has few flaws in organization and grammar. Alternatively, work shows commendable originality of interpretation and very good understanding of course material, but with lapses in organization and grammar.
- **C** Basic understanding of the course material. Demonstrates initiative in literary interpretation. Writing remains clear on the whole, but makes ineffective use of textual evidence, or contains organizational or grammatical errors that impair the intelligibility or persuasiveness of the argument.
- **D** Minimum credit. Lacks understanding of course material or initiative in literary interpretation. Writing has persistent lapses in coherence, evidentiary support, organization and/or grammar.
- **F** Does not adequately address assignment or course objectives.

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<sup>1</sup>Ten points each, dropping the lowest score(s) if you write more than six. See [Response papers](#).

## 7.3 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

## 8 Policies

### 8.1 Attendance

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. Unexcused absences will be penalized at a rate of ten participation points per absence.

This course makes special provision for absences due to illness or COVID-19 quarantine: see the section on [Public health](#).

### 8.2 Alternative editions

No two editions are exactly the same. The [textbooks](#) adopted for this course and on sale at the Campus Bookstore are selected on criteria of cost, quality, and availability. These editions form the basis for class discussions; their glosses and commentary are necessary adjuncts to the primary text.

Students must acquire physical copies of textbooks. In recognition that some students may already own editions of the literature read in this course, I have compiled a [bibliography of acceptable alternatives](#) to the editions officially adopted. Consult me before using an edition not on this list. In several cases the acceptable alternatives are more expensive than the editions at the Campus Bookstore. Your text of *Hamlet* must be of the second quarto, not a modern conflation of the second quarto and the first folio.

### 8.3 Revisions

The short essay may be revised for a higher grade. The revision will be due one week after return of marked essays. Response papers and other short writing assignments are not eligible for revision, but you can replace a low grade on a response paper by writing more than the minimum number. See the sections [Response papers](#) and [Weighting of course components](#).

### 8.4 Late work

If illness or another event in your life prevents you from completing a written assignment on time, 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.

In the week that you circulate your [response paper](#) to class, this paper is due 24 hours in advance of our class meeting. This is the most important deadline in our course, for our class session depends on the content you supply. Missing this deadline will result in a penalty of up to 40 participation points.

The other deadline that commands rigorous respect is the one for the final essay. The University requires me to report grades within 72 hours of our scheduled final exam. If your final essay is late, I might not be able to give you credit for it.

### 8.5 Academic integrity

Loyola University Chicago takes seriously the issues of plagiarism and academic integrity. This course abides by the relevant policies of the University's [Undergraduate Studies Catalog](#)

Plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the plagiarized exam or assignment and the incident will be reported to your dean. If you are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism, consult the Writing Center's guide on [Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism](#). 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

### 8.6 Privacy

The instructor of this class will not record class sessions. Any change to this policy will be announced and properly documented in class, on Sakai, and by revision of this syllabus.

Students may record class sessions only with formal written approval from the Student Accessibility Center. See the section [Accommodations and assistance](#).

## 8.7 Public health

If you contract a potentially contagious illness you should not attend class meetings during the period in which you are contagious. Notify me at the earliest convenient opportunity; I will help you get caught up. Absences due to illness or COVID-19 quarantine are not charged against your participation score.

In response to changes in COVID-19 infection rates and following guidance of national, state, and city authorities, the University may relax the universal masking requirement currently in place. We will comply with University regulations in this and all other matters of public health.

## 8.8 Communication

Students are invited to come speak with me during regular [office hours](#). No appointment is required. If a schedule conflict prevents you from visiting regular office hours, email me to request an alternative time.

Outside of office hours email is the best way to reach me. I aim 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.

## 8.9 Diversity, inclusion, and equity

Loyola University provides equal opportunities in education without regard to, and does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, family responsibilities, familial status, gender identity or gender expression, marital status, national origin, personal appearance, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, source of income, veteran's status or any other factor prohibited by law. Learning to respect others is an important part of education; students in this course will refrain from profanity and insult, but we also have positive responsibilities in this regard. Each member of our course has a responsibility to create an environment in which all may flourish.

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 fine. The goal is to create an affirming environment for all students.

## 8.10 Accommodations and assistance

Loyola University Chicago provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). Professors will receive an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with their professor individually to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential.

Please note that in this class, software may be used to audio record class lectures in order to provide equal access to students with disabilities. Students approved for this accommodation use recordings for their personal study only and recordings may not be shared with other people or used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as part of the class activity. Recordings are deleted at the end of the semester. For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or [SAC@luc.edu](mailto:SAC@luc.edu) or visit the [SAC website](#).

Additional assistance is available from the following campus offices:

- [Coordinated Assistance & Resource Education \(CARE\)](#) 773.508.8840
- [Wellness Center](#) 773.508.2530

## 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.

## 10 Questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire to help me get to know you.

Your preferred name:

Pronouns:

Year in school (e.g., junior):

Majors or minors other than English:

Languages other than English:

Career goals:

Hobbies:

What do you hope to learn in this course?

I wish my professor knew ...