

# Geoffrey Chaucer

Loyola University Chicago, Spring 2021

draft 2021-01-15

## 1 course information

Course number: ENGL 447-102 (95135)

Meeting time: Friday 4:00PM–6:30PM and by appointment

Location: online via Zoom

## 2 instructor information

Name: Ian Cornelius

Office hours: TuTh 1:00PM–3:00PM

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

Pronouns: he, him

## 3 texts

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

Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Translated by Joel C. Relihan. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2001. ISBN 978-0-87220-583-3

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Norton Chaucer*. Edited by David Lawton, W. W. Norton & Company, 2019. ISBN 978-0-393-60347-7

Guillaume de Lorris, and Jean de Meun. *The Romance of the Rose*. Translated by Frances Horgan, Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-19-954067-9

Additional readings are linked from the **zotero** library for this course:

<https://www.zotero.org/groups/2703694/chaucer-luc-engl-447/library>.

## 4 description & objectives

A study of the poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer, one of the great innovators in literary English. Our focus is on the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer's unfinished masterpiece; we also read the early dream poems. Topics include Chaucer's sources and his uses of them, his language and poetic forms, and the books that transmit his works. We also take up questions of voice, character, narrative, and theme: the surrealistic fictional worlds of Chaucer's dream poems, his inclusive vision for literary fiction in the *Canterbury Tales*, and his persistent exploration of relations between women and men. Students will produce a translation of and critical commentary on a passage of Chaucer's poetry, deliver two presentations, construct an annotated bibliography, and write a researched essay (or equivalent final project focused on teaching). Objectives are:

- explore the imaginative possibilities of literary fiction and poetic verse.
- gain an experience of English-language literature written and disseminated in a multilingual culture prior to both the standardization of English and the mechanical reproduction of text.
- learn to read and analyze Chaucer's English.
- gain an orientation within scholarly discourses on Chaucer's works and the reference resources available for study of them.
- prepare to conduct independent scholarly research on Chaucer's works and/or teach his works in undergraduate or high-school contexts.

## 5 assignments & assessment

Students will complete the course readings and assignments and participate in discussion. If you fall behind or must miss a class session, be in touch by email and speak with me in office hours. Due dates for presentations and written assignments are listed on the course schedule. Grade components are as follows:

1. **general participation** (30%).
2. **translation and critical commentary** (10%), described in a separate assignment sheet.
3. **presentation of an on-line reference resource** (10%). Select one resource from among those curated by the New Chaucer Society (<https://newchaucersociety.org/resources/>) or posted to the "reference" folder in the **zotero** library (linked in section 3, above). Prepare slides or a "walk-through" of the resource. Draw out connections between your resource and course readings. Speak for five minutes and give us a two-minute exercise to complete at the end of your presentation. No duplicates, please.
4. **annotated bibliography** (10%), described in a separate assignment sheet.
5. **presentation of course materials** (10%). Each seminar participant will take responsibility for directing about half an hour of discussion. There are two options: claim a topic and reading on the course schedule or propose a topic and reading for the weeks marked 'tbd' on the schedule.
6. **final essay *or* course plan** (30%). Details to follow.

## 6 schedule

Changes are likely; the file posted on-line will be kept current. Topics and readings marked ‘tbd’ will be set in consultation with seminar participants.

Readings are from *The Norton Chaucer* unless stated otherwise. Bibliographic details for *The Norton Chaucer* and other required texts are listed in section 3, above. Bibliographic details for all other course readings, and links to full texts, are posted to the **zotero** bibliography.

date	topic	assignment
01-22	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read the syllabus</li> <li>• create a zotero account</li> <li>• Canterbury Tales, General Prologue, ll. 1–18 and the web tutorial on “Reading Chaucer”</li> <li>• <i>The Norton Chaucer</i>, pp. ix–xi, 51–53, 55–65</li> </ul>
01-29	Romances of antiquity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Troilus</i>, part 1 only (and always read Lawton’s headnotes)</li> <li>• The Knight’s Tale</li> <li>• <i>The Norton Chaucer</i>, pp. 16–26 (“Chaucer’s Reading” and “Chaucer and Translation”)</li> </ul>
02-05	<i>Fabliau</i> and the idea of the Canterbury Tales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Prologue</li> <li>• Miller, Reeve, Cook (Prologues and Tales)</li> <li>• Mann, “The General Prologue and estates literature”</li> <li>• Patterson, “No man his reson herde”</li> <li>• <b>translation and critical commentary due</b></li> </ul>
02-12	SPRING BREAK	CLASS DOES NOT MEET
02-19	Dream vision 1 Reference resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Book of the Duchess</i></li> <li>• Gray, Oxford DNB article on Chaucer</li> <li>• Galloway, “Geoffrey Chaucer” (Oxford Bibliography)</li> <li>• <b>presentations on reference works</b></li> </ul>

date	topic	assignment
02-26	Sources: <i>Consolatio philosophiae</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i> (Relihan trans.), books 1–3</li> <li>• <i>Troilus</i>, 3.1744–71 and the “Boethian” lyrics (“The Former Age,” “Fortune,” “Truth,” “Gentilesse,” and “Lak of Stedfastnesse”)</li> <li>• <i>Boece</i>, 2 p.2, 2 p.3, 2 m.5 and 2 m.8</li> <li>• Wetherbee, “The <i>Consolation</i> and medieval literature”</li> </ul>
03-05	Sources: <i>Le Roman de la Rose</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Romance of the Rose</i> (Horgan trans.), pp. 1-110, 154–224, 319–335</li> <li>• Middle English <i>Romaunt of the Rose</i>, ll. 1–146 and ll. 1439–1705</li> <li>• Kamath, “The <i>Roman de la Rose</i> and Middle English poetry”</li> </ul>
03-12	Dream vision 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The House of Fame</i></li> <li>• <i>The Parliament of Fowls</i></li> <li>• <i>The Legend of Good Women</i>, Prologue, ll. 308–497</li> <li>• Minnis, “Sweven in ryme” (pp. 36–55 in <i>The shorter poems</i>)</li> <li>• Boffey and Edwards, “Manuscripts and audience”</li> </ul>
03-19	Portraits 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale</li> <li>• an anthology of sources</li> <li>• Carruthers, “The Wife of Bath and the painting of lions”</li> <li>• Dinshaw, “The Wife of Bath and her glossators”</li> </ul>

date	topic	assignment
03-26	Text and transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Wife of Bath's Prologue in the Ellesmere manuscript</li> <li>• <i>Riverside Chaucer</i> Explanatory and Textual notes to the Wife of Bath's Prologue</li> <li>• Donaldson, "Chaucer, <i>Canterbury Tales</i>, D117"</li> <li>• Hanna, "'Chaucer's Scribe' and his <i>Canterbury Tales</i>"</li> <li>• <b>annotated bibliography due</b></li> </ul>
04-04	EASTER BREAK	CLASS DOES NOT MEET
04-09	Portraits 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale</li> <li>• Patterson, "The Pardoner's dilemma"</li> <li>• Camargo, "How (not) to preach"</li> </ul>
04-16	tbd	(more Canterbury Tales?)
04-23	tbd	(more Canterbury Tales?)
04-30	tbd	(Shakespeare adaptation?)