

Advanced seminar

English poetry from manuscript to print

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Loyola University Chicago

Fall 2022

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1 Registrar information

1.1 Course information

- Course number: ENGL 390-01W (5820)
- Meeting time: Tu 2:45PM - 5:15PM
- Location: Mundelein 515

1.2 Contact information

- Name: Ian Cornelius
- Pronouns: he | they
- Office location: Crown Center 411
- Office hours: W 10:00AM - 12:00PM
- E-mail: icornelius@luc.edu

2 Course description and objectives

In this advanced seminar we examine some pre-industrial technologies of communication, entertainment, and learning, with a focus on English poetry written in the centuries before and after the introduction of print technology into Europe. What was the printed book like in the early days, when presses were not yet powered by coal, and how were works of literature published, circulated, and read before print? We study poetry 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, the transmission of texts, variants and versions, and the emergence of an English monolingual literary culture (replacing the multilingual literary culture of medieval England). Assessment is by midterm and final essays (the latter an independent research project), short written assignments, and class presentation.

In this course students will

- Explore the imaginative possibilities of literary fiction
- Study literature written in material contexts different from our own
- Develop skills for understanding and engaging critically with (1) some forms of the English language different from the modern standard and (2) some writing systems and material forms in which literature circulated prior to the development of industrial printing technologies
- Engage critically with 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

3 Texts

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

- David Lawton, ed. *The Norton Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019)
- Sarah Werner *Studying Early Printed Books, 1450-1800: A Practical Guide* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2019)
- William Shakespeare *Hamlet*, ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, Revised edition, The Arden Shakespeare, Third Series (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016)
- William Shakespeare *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*, ed. Neil Taylor and Ann Thompson, The Arden Shakespeare, Third Series (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006)

Students must acquire 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](#). Course texts and some useful alternative editions have been placed on reserve in Cudahy Library.

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.

4 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. See [Version Information](#).

4.1 Orientations (weeks 1–2)

08-30 Course introduction

Pre-industrial cultures; rethinking the anthropocene

Reading assignment:

- This syllabus
- “The Biggest Picture,” *The Economist*, October 30, 2021 [pdf scan](#)
- David Graeber and David Wengrow *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021), 1–3 [pdf scan](#)

Writing assignment:

- [questionnaire](#)

09-06 Writing systems and speech sounds

Rethinking “literature”; introduction to English speech sounds and writing systems; historical varieties of English; introduction to Middle English

Reading assignment:

- Andrew Robinson “Writing Systems,” in *The Oxford Companion to the Book*, ed. Michael F. Suarez, SJ and H. R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3–18, <https://www-oxfordreference-com.flagship.luc.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606536.001.0001/acref-9780198606536-e-0001>
- University of British Columbia video tutorials on the speech sounds of Modern English: [part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 3](#)
- Wayne O’Neil “English Orthography,” in *Standards and Dialects in English*, ed. Timothy Shopen and Joseph M. Williams (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop Publishers, 1980), 63–83 [pdf scan](#)
- Simon Horobin and J. J. Smith *An Introduction to Middle English*, Edinburgh Textbooks on the English Language (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.flagship.luc.edu/lib/luc/detail.action?docID=5011612>, chaps 2 and 4

Writing assignment:

- [Sakai blog](#)

4.2 Poetry before print (weeks 3–7)

09-13 Reading Chaucer in Middle English

Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*: The General Prologue; historical dictionaries of the English language; discourse analysis and narrative style

Reading assignment:

- *Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue (all; pp. 57–76 in Lawton *The Canterbury Tales*)
- [The Norton web tutorial on “Reading Chaucer”](#)
- Lawton *The Canterbury Tales*, 1–17, 52–53
- Helen Fulton “Voice of Authority: Free Indirect Discourse in Chaucer’s General Prologue,” in *Medieval Literary Voices: Embodiment, Materiality and Performance*, ed. Louise D’Arcens and Sif Ríkharðsdóttir (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022), 37–55 [pdf scan](#)

Writing assignment:

- [response paper](#)

09-20 The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale

Reading assignment:

- The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale (pp. 181–210 in Lawton *The Canterbury Tales*)
- Edna Edith Sayers “Experience, Authority, and the Mediation of Deafness: Chaucer’s Wife of Bath,” in *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations*, ed. Joshua R. Eyler (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2010), 81–92, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.flagship.luc.edu/lib/luc/reader.action?docID=513937&ppg=94>

Writing assignment:

- [Chaucer translation and commentary](#)

09-27 Handwritten books

Introduction to medieval manuscripts and late medieval English handwriting; how to transcribe and why

Library visit: meet in [University Archives & Special Collections](#), Cudahy Library room 217

Reading assignment:

- G. S. Ivy “The Bibliography of the Manuscript-Book,” in *The English Library Before 1700: Studies in Its History*, ed. Francis Wormald and C. E. Wright (London: Athlone Press, 1958), 32–65 [pdf scan](#)
- Harvard METRO, sections on [The Art and Craft of Editing](#), [Features of a Manuscript Page](#), [Types of Script](#), and [How to Read Medieval Handwriting](#)
- Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, Maidie Hilmo, and Linda Olson *Opening up Middle English Manuscripts: Literary and Visual Approaches* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 3–5 [pdf scan](#)

Writing assignment

- [response paper](#)

Poetry recitation due this week

10-04 Manuscripts and texts of *The Canterbury Tales*

Reading readers; that neither babies nor texts are found under cabbage plants

Reading assignment:

- Harvard METRO, sections on [The Art and Craft of Editing \(part 2\)](#), [Types of Editions](#), [How to Read Variants](#), and [Textual Instability](#)
- Kerby-Fulton, Hilmo, and Olson 16–19 [pdf scan](#)
- Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards “Manuscripts and Audience,” in *A Concise Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Corinne J. Saunders (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 34–50 [pdf scan](#)

Writing assignment

- manuscript transcription exercise
- [response paper](#)

10-11 (fall break; class does not meet)

10-18 Alisoun of Bath in the multiverse

Variant readings and marginal annotations; Chaucer’s books, Jankyn’s book, Alisoun’s narrative

Reading assignment:

- An anthology of sources for and annotations to The Wife of Bath’s Prologue
- E. T. Donaldson “Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, D117: A Critical Edition,” *Speculum* 40, no. 4 (October 1, 1965): 626–33, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2851399>
- Ralph Hanna “*Compilatio* and the Wife of Bath: Latin Backgrounds, Ricardian Texts,” in *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 247–57, 319–21 [pdf scan](#)

Writing assignment

- [response paper](#)

4.3 Poetry in print (weeks 8–12)

10-25 Printed books

Introduction to early printed books

Library visit: meet in [University Archives & Special Collections](#), Cudahy Library room 217

Reading assignment:

- Adrian Johns “The Coming of Print to Europe,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Leslie Howsam, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 107–24, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139152242>
- Werner *Studying Early Printed Books*, 8–25, 102–17

Writing assignment:

- [midterm essay](#)
- post your essay title, abstract, and keywords to the Sakai blog

11-01 Chaucer in print

Typefaces and formats; title pages, prefaces, and other paratexts

Reading assignment:

- Werner 34–55, 86–88, 98–99
- An anthology of Caxton’s prefaces [pdf scan](#)
- Megan L. Cook “The First First Folios: Chaucer’s *Works* in Print,” in *The Poet and the Antiquaries: Chaucerian Scholarship and the Rise of Literary History, 1532-1635* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 17–43 [pdf scan](#)

Writing assignment:

- [response paper](#)

11-08 Shakespeare in print

How plays got printed; “good” and “bad” quartos; *Hamlet* in 1604/5

Reading assignment:

- *Hamlet*, second quarto text, act 1
- David Scott Kastan *Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), chap. 1 [pdf scan](#)

Writing assignment:

- [response paper](#)

11-15 *Hamlet* in 1604/5

Reading assignment:

- *Hamlet*, second quarto text, acts 2–5

Writing assignment:

- [response paper](#)

11-22 The three texts of *Hamlet*

Variants, versions, and literary meaning; Gertrude in 1603

Reading assignment:

- *Hamlet*, the “Folio-only passages” (Arden edition, pp. 495–503)
- *Hamlet*, the first quarto text

- Andrew Murphy “Introduction: What Happens in *Hamlet*?” in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, ed. Andrew Murphy, Blackwell Concise Companions to Literature and Culture (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007), 1–14 [pdf scan](#)

Writing assignment:

- [response paper](#)

4.4 Synthesis (weeks 13-14)

11-28 Research presentations

Writing assignment:

- [annotated bibliography](#)
- report on a presentation (Sakai blog, due 12-03)

12-06 Research presentations

Writing assignment:

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

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

5 Assignments

5.1 Exams

There are no exams in this course.

5.2 Formal writing

5.2.1 General instructions

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.

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](#).

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 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.

5.2.2 Essays

There are two essays. The midterm essay (5–6 pages) 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 final essay (10–12 pages) includes a research component. Prompts and instructions will be circulated before the Thanksgiving break. The [annotated bibliography](#) and the [research presentation](#) are steps toward production of this essay.

5.2.3 Other formal writing

5.2.3.1 Translation and critical commentary This assignment focuses attention on details of 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.”

5.2.3.2 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](#).

5.2.3.3 Annotated bibliography The annotated bibliography is a step toward the final essay. Consult with me and with [library specialists](#) in selection of sources. The Oxford Bibliographies are a good place to begin research:

- [Geoffrey Chaucer](#)
- [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.

5.3 Oral presentations

5.3.1 Poetry recitation

Each student will memorize and recite the first eighteen lines of the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*. 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.

5.3.2 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.

5.3.3 Research presentation

After the Thanksgiving break you will make a presentation to the class on a topic related to your final 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.

5.4 Sakai blog

Blog assignments are listed on the [Schedule](#). They are few in number but important to course objectives. Instructions will be supplied one week in advance of the due date.

6 Assessment

6.1 Course components and points

The following table summarizes course components and points assigned to them.

| course component | points |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| participation | 100 |
| translation and commentary | 10 |
| poetry recitations | 10 |
| midterm essay | 40 |
| response papers (6 of 8) | 60 ¹ |
| annotated bibliography | 10 |
| research presentation | 10 |
| final essay | 60 |

| course component | points |
|------------------|------------|
| TOTAL | 300 |

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

6.2 Standards for formal writing

- **A** Comprehensive understanding of course material; innovative, inquisitive, persuasive interpretation of literature; precisely articulated argument; correct and effective presentation of evidence; 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 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 and 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.

6.3 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 |

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

7 Policies

7.1 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: see [Public Health](#).

7.2 Communication

Students are invited to 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.

7.3 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. Practicing respect for others is an important part of education. 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. 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 us. 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.

7.4 Alternative editions

No two editions are exactly the same. The [textbooks](#) adopted for this course 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. For *Hamlet* you must have two texts, the first quarto and second quarto. The 2006 edition of the Arden Shakespeare *Hamlet* (second quarto text) is an acceptable alternative to the 2016 edition. If you own a modern editorial conflation of the second quarto and the first folio of *Hamlet* and do not wish to purchase another edition of this play, borrow an appropriate edition from the library or through Interlibrary Loan. Plan ahead.

In recognition that some students may already own editions of Chaucer's poetry, I have compiled a [bibliography of acceptable alternatives](#). Consult me before using an edition not on this list. In several cases the acceptable alternatives are more expensive than the edition at the campus bookstore.

7.5 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.

7.6 Revisions

The midterm essay and translation and critical commentary may be revised for a higher grade. Revisions are due one week after return of marked essays. **Response papers** are not eligible for revision, but you can replace a low grade on a response paper by writing more than the minimum number.

7.7 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 in which 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.

7.8 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 must be supplied with an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with their professors individually to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or SAC@luc.edu or visit the [SAC website](#).

Please note that lectures in this class may be recorded to provide equal access to students with disabilities. Such recordings may be made only as directed by SAC. 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. Recordings must be deleted at the end of the semester.

Additional assistance is available from the following campus offices:

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

7.9 Privacy

The instructor of this class will not record class sessions. Any change to this policy will be announced and properly documented. Students may record class sessions only with formal written approval from the Student Accessibility Center. See the section [Accommodations and Assistance](#).

7.10 Public health

Masks are not presently required in this classroom. Students are invited to mask at any time and requested to do so if they have contact with someone who has COVID-19, the flu, or another airborne illness. Your professor will mask if, for instance, their domestic partner contracts a cold. Do not be alarmed by this.

Please get tested regularly. If you contract COVID-19 you should not attend class meetings during the “isolation period” [defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). The CDC has similar advice for the [flu](#). If you are isolating due to illness, notify me at the earliest convenient opportunity; I will help you get caught up. Absences due to illness 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 re-institute a universal masking requirement. We will comply with University regulations in this and all other matters of public health.

7.11 Statement of intent

By remaining in this course, students agree to accept this syllabus and abide by its policies. Students will be informed of any changes to the syllabus.

8 Version information

Version information for this syllabus is available on [GitHub](#).

9 Questionnaire

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

- 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 ...