

English 350 Chaucer

Spring 2016

(Guidelines subject to change)

Instructor: John Black

Classroom: PPHAC 116

Class schedule: TTh 2:35-3:45

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Office: Zinzendorf 303

Office Phone: 861-1390

Office Hours: W 1:00-2:00, Th 10:30-11:30, and
by appointment

Bb enrollment code for course: ENGL350SP16

Course Description, Objectives, and Format:

Welcome to English 350! This course is devoted to the study of the works of Chaucer, to an examination of their cultural contexts, and to an exploration of a range of critical approaches relevant to his works. English 350 is grounded in questions: Who was Chaucer? Why is he of such importance in the history of English literature and language? What did he write about and why? What influenced him and what is his legacy? What relevance does his work have for us today? As R. James Goldstein, a professor and scholar of Chaucerian studies, has noted, "Geoffrey Chaucer is a poet of remarkable contradictions. Although his habitual narrative persona was modest and self-effacing, he was also the first English poet who aspired to become a literary classic of lasting fame. Fully immersed in the aristocratic court culture of his day, he also maintained some distance in perspective on his social betters. Interested in serious philosophical issues like free will vs. determinism, he also enjoyed joking about lower bodily functions.... Most of his modern admirers see him as a typically orthodox late-medieval Christian; others insist he is the first modern (or even 'post-modern') English writer, who challenges the common religious and political pieties of his age. After 600 years his work has lost none of its power to charm and to challenge us." For our class, no previous knowledge of the language or the history of the Middle English period is assumed, so we will spend considerable time in the first few classes getting comfortable with the language and the cultural contexts for Chaucer's works.

In this course, you will learn to read the Middle English of Chaucer, study closely selections from Chaucer's works, and examine the contexts in which the works were produced. In doing so, you should further develop an interest in and appreciation for the medieval era and for its role in shaping many of the values we hold today. Through our study of Chaucer and related materials, this course will also allow you to continue establishing your own distinctive approach to literary scholarship. As literature is a representation of reality, understanding it requires you to read closely and to make well-supported interpretations; our discussions and written assignments will help you refine the critical reading, writing and research skills essential not only to reading literature, but also to critical assessment and understanding in general. And, along the way, you'll get to enjoy some great reading! While we'll occasionally use short lectures, audio-visual aids, Blackboard postings, and presentations, our class will consist primarily of reading and discussion: *your preparation and participation are, therefore, essential to the success of the class and to your success in it.*

Assignments and Exams:

*****For English majors: In preparation for creating an English Major Portfolio in your senior capstone seminar, please save both digital and hard copies of your work for this class, including drafts with peer and instructor comments.**

English 350 is an upper-level, major elective course; your work for the class should reflect deliberation and sophistication in thinking and writing. As assignments for the course, you will draft and revise one 12-15 page paper, make oral presentations on your paper and on other course materials, and complete several translation quizzes and other shorter assignments. There will also be mid-term and final exams. Specific requirements for the assignments and exams will be discussed in advance of each. I encourage and expect you to consult with me as you plan and work on your assignments. A library research session, draft workshops, and individual conferences will help you strengthen your writing process. **I do not accept papers that have not been reviewed in the draft workshop process.** Drafts and papers are due in class on the due dates noted on the syllabus. **In addition to the final version of a paper, all preliminary drafts, notes, etc. are to be handed in; otherwise, the assignment is incomplete and will not be accepted. I do not accept or read late papers, except under very unusual circumstances.**

Extra Credit: Learning takes place both in and outside the classroom. To encourage further exploration of the connections in learning between English 350 and the community, students may earn extra credit through confirmed participation (usually in the form of a brief write-up) in various activities related to language, literature, and writing. Up to a total of three points of extra credit can be added at the end of the semester to a student's lowest assignment grade. One hundred points is the maximum total for the course. Some examples of eligible activities are: attending a College or area theater production or poetry/fiction reading, submitting creative work to *The Manuscript*, or a meeting with a Writing Center tutor. Other, similar activities may also be eligible; please confer with me. In April, Moravian hosts its annual Student Scholarship and Creative Endeavors Day (SSCED); a student who presents a paper at SSCED will earn three points. A student who assists with or attends SSCED will earn one point.

Attendance and Participation:

Be here: You are expected to attend each class. **Be prompt:** Class begins at am 2:35pm sharp. **Be prepared:** Your first responsibility is to read carefully, re-read, and be prepared to discuss, both orally and in writing, all assignments. You should expect to devote several hours to preparing for each class. (A good rule of thumb for college courses is 2-3 hours outside of class for every hour in class.) **Participate:** Classes become more meaningful the more you engage yourself in them. You are expected to read aloud and to make comments or ask questions on the readings and topics each day. Class time allotted for group work, group discussion, draft feedback, etc. is instructional time, not 'break' time; you are expected to remain focused on the assigned activity for all of the allotted time.

If you know you will be absent from class, please talk to me beforehand. If you are sick, please notify me as soon as possible. *Your absence from more than three classes may affect your final grade. Missing more than five classes may result in your failing the course. If you are tardy or absent, it is wholly your responsibility to determine what was covered in class and what revisions, if any, were made to the syllabus in your absence.*

Other notes:

- One of the qualities I expect and appreciate most in students is **personal integrity**. Students who exhibit this quality are ethical and honest, are engaged in class, turn in thoughtful assignments, are responsive to the world beyond themselves, meet deadlines, and keep me informed of any difficulties or successes they have while in my class.
- *Please arrange to go to the restroom before or after class.*
- *Please silence and put away all cell phones, etc. before coming into the classroom.*
- *Using your laptop or smartphone during class for purposes not related to the course is unacceptable: it seriously undermines your credibility as a student and it distracts others from their focus.*

Office Hours: Students are always welcome in my office. My office hours are times that I have set aside specifically to talk with you – not only about class and assignments, but also about life at Moravian, about something fun and exciting you've done, or whatever. Make use of them. I realize that for some schedules my posted office hours just won't work, so I'm also available by appointment: jblack@moravian.edu.

Other Resources:

- With your work on written assignments, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the help available through appointment at the Writing Center (2nd fl, Zinzendorf). For more information, visit its website at: <http://home.moravian.edu/public/eng/writingCenter/appointments.htm> The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you have mobility impairments and need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.
- Similarly, the librarians in Reeves are very resourceful. Make it a habit of consulting with them when research questions arise. The library webpage (<http://home.moravian.edu/public/reeves>) is an excellent resource, offering live online help and research guides.
- The Academic Support Center (lower level of Monocacy Hall, 610-861-1401) provides many services to help you achieve academic success: <http://home.moravian.edu/public/stusvc/learning/>
- Another important resource that provides help with the demands of college life is The Counseling Center (also at 1307 Main St., 861-1510): <http://home.moravian.edu/public/stusvc/counseling/>

- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center (lower level of Monocacy Hall, 610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism, representing someone else's work as your own, is a breach of personal integrity and a violation of the College's Academic Honesty Policy: consult the *Student Handbook* or consult <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/academic/academic2.html> and read this policy in its entirety. I take the provisions of the Academic Honesty Policy very seriously and am obliged to report any suspected cases of plagiarism, the consequences of which may be failure, suspension, or dismissal from the College. If you plagiarize, you will receive a 'zero' on the plagiarized assignment, which will very likely result in your failure for the course. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism will not be accepted as an excuse. If at any time you have any questions about documenting sources properly (MLA style) or as to whether or not the aid you are receiving is authorized, don't hesitate to ask me. The Reeves Library online research tutorial also addresses the issue: <http://home.moravian.edu/public/reeves/research/tutorials/tutorialsindex.htm> Related to academic honesty is the issue of copyright; please protect yourself by being familiar with and following copyright laws.

Evaluation:

(The instructor will apply both quantitative and qualitative assessments in determining grades for assignments and for the course. Final grades calculated on 10-pt. scale: 90=A-, 80=B-, etc.)

Quizzes.....	15%	Final exam.....	20%
Presentation on Critical Theory.....	10%	Art & Literature Writing Assignment.....	10%
Mid-term exam.....	20%	Informal Writing and Class Participation.....	5%
Research Paper.....	20%	Individual Oral Reading.....	pass/fail

You must complete all these requirements in order to be eligible to pass the course.

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(Syllabus subject to change)

Resources

Required texts:

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Ed. V. A. Kolve and G. Olson. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 2005. Print. ('CT' on syllabus.)

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Ed. Kathryn L. Lynch. New York: Norton, 2007. Print. ('DV' on syllabus.)

Other selected materials, as posted to Bb or distributed in class.

Some useful websites for Chaucer studies:

Pronunciation: <http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/pronunciation/>

Audio files of readings of selections from Chaucer's works: see list of links on handout (also on Bb, under "Course Handouts")

Harvard Chaucer Website: <http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/>

Chaucer Metapage: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/chaucer/>

Middle English texts and Modern English translations: <http://www.librarius.com/> and <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~amtower/texts.htm> (esp. for dream visions) and on other sites listed here

Syllabus

Jan.	19	T	Introduction; policies; syllabus; overview of resources for the study of Chaucer
	21	Th	Chaucer's life; canon and chronology of Chaucer's works; Middle English language, pronunciation, and versification (Riverside handout xv-xlv)
	26	T	Introduction (DV xvii-xx); <i>The Book of the Duchess</i> (DV 3-37) (primarily for comprehension)
	28	Th	<i>The House of Fame</i> (DV 39-92) [audio - excerpt online] (primarily for comprehension)
Feb.	2	T	<i>The Parliament of Fowls</i> (DV 93-116) [audio - excerpt online] (primarily for comprehension)
	4	Th	Conclude discussion of dream visions; contexts - Ackerman: "Social and Religious Backgrounds" and "Popular Christian Doctrine" (Bb); introduce theory presentation assignment
	9	T	Introduction (CT xv-xix); <i>The Canterbury Tales -The General Prologue</i> (CT 3-22) [audio - excerpts online]; practice for translation, pronunciation; review Riverside xxix-xxxviii (Bb); introduce art & literature writing assignment
	11	Th	Field Trip - Allentown Art Museum
	16	T	<i>The Canterbury Tales -The General Prologue</i> (CT 3-22) - continued; [audio - excerpts online]; practice for translation, pronunciation; review Riverside xxxviii-xliv (Bb); contexts - Ackerman: "The World View of the Middle Ages" (Bb); art & literature writing assignment due; introduce research paper assignment

Feb.	18	Th	<i>Knight's Tale</i> (CT 23-70) [audio – excerpt online]; in-class worktime on theory presentations (time permitting); discuss mid-term exam
	23	T	<i>Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 102-130) [audio – excerpts online]
	25	Th	Critical essays on <i>Wife of Bath</i> (Bb); presentations on critical theory
Mar.	1	T	<i>Miller's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 71-87) [audio – online]; <i>Reeve's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 88-98)
	3	Th	Mid-term exam
	8	T	No class – Spring Break
	10	Th	No class – Spring Break
	15	T	<i>Clerk's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 154-184) [audio – excerpt online]; <i>Merchant's Prologue, Tale, and Epilogue</i> (CT 185-211); paper topic due
	17	Th	Library research session (meet in Reeves)
	22	T	<i>Franklin's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 212-32); <i>Manciple's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 285-292)
	24	Th	Contexts - Ackerman: “Chaucer, the Church, and Religion” (Bb); paper proposal due
	29	T	<i>Friar's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 131-139); <i>Summoner's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 140-154)
	31	Th	<i>Pardoner's Introduction, Prologue, and Tale</i> (CT 233-247) [audio – excerpt online]; <i>Prioress' Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 248-254)
Apr.	5	T	<i>Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 269-284) [audio – excerpts online]
	7	Th	Draft workshop for paper (bring 2 copies of draft to class) ; review assignment handout and writing rubric; read sample paper in advance of class (Bb); bring copy to class and critique in class
	12	T	From <i>Parson's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 293-305); <i>Chaucer's 'Retraction'</i> (CT 306); review oral presentation skills
	14	Th	No class , in lieu of conferences; individual oral reading (TBA)
	19	T	<i>Cook's Prologue and Tale</i> (CT 99-101); introduce and work on ‘Bethlehem Tales’
	21	Th	Oral presentations on papers ; work on ‘Bethlehem Tales’; discuss final exam
	26	T	Paper due ; work on ‘Bethlehem Tales’
	28	Th	Presentation of ‘Bethlehem Tales’ ; course review and evaluation

The final exam is scheduled for Monday, May 2 from 3:00-5:00pm in PPHAC 116. Plan accordingly.