Course description: The works of Geoffrey Chaucer connect medieval and modern thought, and his literary techniques set a standard for later traditions of English and American literature. This course provides opportunities for students to explore Chaucer’s relations with English and Continental cultural traditions, and to investigate the critical legacy of his works. The course will begin with an introduction to reading Chaucer’s Middle English. Course work will include three essays (15%, 25%, 30%) and a final exam (30%). Students are expected to attend class, prepared to discuss all assigned readings. Successful completion of this course fulfills three of the six hours required for literature before 1700 in the M.A. program in English, and may be used as an elective in the M.A. or Ph.D. programs in English.

Texts
Recommended: Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy (on reserve)
Cooper, The Canterbury Tales: Oxford Guide (on reserve)

Reading schedule:
8/25 Introduction
9/1 Fisher/Allen, pp. 960-64. Explore as needed pp. 965-69 and endpapers
Parliament of Fowls
Miller, pp. 41-52, 96-105, 336-43 (also see p. 322)
9/8 Fisher/Allen, pp. 3-10, and the General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales
Miller, pp. 3-15, 155-57, 180-83, 215-27, 467-73
9/15 Knight’s Tale [In-class reading quiz]
Miller, pp. 322-35
Recommended: Boethius, Consolation of Philosophy
9/22 Finish Part 1: Miller’s, Reeve, and Cook. Part 2: Man of Law
Recommended: “The Miller and the Two Clerks”
<http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/special/litsubs/fabliaux/miller2.html>
“Bérenger of the Long Arse”
<http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/special/litsubs/fabliaux/berenger.html>

***Paper # 1 due Monday 9/26, before 5 p.m.***
9/29 Part 3: Wife of Bath, Friar, and Summoner
Miller, pp. 365-69, 399-436
10/6 Part 4: Clerk and Merchant
Miller, pp. 136-52
10/13 Part 5: Squire and Franklin
Miller, pp. 121-35
10/20  Part 6: Physician and Pardoner
        Recommended: Read one (or more) of the sources/analogues to PhyT at
        <http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/canttales/physt/>
        and one or more of the essays about the Pardoner’s sexuality at
        <http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/canttales/pardt/>

10/27  Part 7: Shipman, Prioress, Tale of Sir Thopas, Prologue to Melibee, and skim Melibee
        NOTE: 10/28 is the last day for graduate students to drop an individual course via ASAP
        ***Paper # 2 due Friday 10/31, before 5 p.m.***

11/3   Part 7 cont’d: Monk and Nun's Priest

11/10  Parts 8-10: Second Nun, Canon’s Yeoman, Manciple, Parson’s Prologue, Chaucer’s
        Retraction, and skim Parson’s Tale)

11/17  Troilus and Criseyde, Books 1-3
        Miller, pp. 271-99, 309-321

11/24  No CLASS. Thanksgiving holiday

12/1   Troilus and Criseyde, Books 4 & 5
        Review

**Final Paper due Monday, 12/5, before 5 p.m. **
**Final Exam, Saturday, 12/10, 5:00-7:30**

Essays:

Paper # 1, c. 3-5 pp., due on or before Monday, 9/26, before 5 p.m.
With the help of the bibliographic information in Fisher and Allen’s bibliography (at the end of
our text), Allen and Fisher’s The Essential Chaucer (reserve and online), Leyerle and Quick’s
Chaucer: A Bibliographical Introduction (reserve), the MLA bibliography and ABELL (both
online), and, especially, the Chaucer Online Bibliography (online), select a critical essay or
chapter from a critical study that confronts a topic of interest to you. Assess the strengths and
weaknesses of the critic’s argument in light of its own method and approach and your reading of
Chaucer. Why and to what extent is the argument convincing? How and where is it less than
convincing? Formulate your own thesis in response to the author’s argument. Follow MLA
format and please include a photocopy of the piece you assess.

Paper # 2, c. 5-8 pp., due on or before Friday, 10/31, before 5 p.m.
Explore a section, passage, character, or scene from Chaucer’s poetry in light of its sources
and/or analogues, considering Chaucer’s adaptations, omissions, manipulations of conventions,
adjustments of tone, and/or changes of context, etc. How and to what effect(s) does Chaucer use
the material he adapts? Think about these issues and generate your own thesis. Do not try to
treat an entire tale or work of Chaucer’s. Often you can control your topic by narrowing your
focus to a particular passage, using it as an extended example, and thereby achieving depth of
analysis. Be sure, however, to consider any selection in light of its context. For sources and
analogues, see Miller, the notes to the Riverside Chaucer, the notes in Skeat’s edition, and R.
Correale’s Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales (2 vols.). You can/should track
nuances or ambiguities of individual words in The Middle English Dictionary (reference
collection and online). MLA format.
Paper #3, c. 10-15 pp., due Monday, 12/5, before 5 p.m.

A critical/interpretive topic of your choice, focusing on a Canterbury tale, a group of tales, another work of Chaucer’s, a technique or theme of his poetry, etc. Familiarize yourself with the appropriate criticism in books and journals and use it to help build a solid argument for your discussion. I encourage you to discuss topic and resources with me as early as possible. You might well wish to develop your topic from one of your earlier papers from this course. MLA format.

Online Resources: The UTSA Library has a good collection of Chaucer materials, some of which are on reserve (see below). In addition, a number of electronic resources are available:

1) The annotated Chaucer Online Bibliography (1975-present) is available through the UTSA library catalog or at <http://uchaucer.utsa.edu/>. Instructions for use are much the same as the UTSA catalog. Not all of the items in the bibliography are available at the UTSA library. I may, however, have a copy of a given article or book, so please ask. A printed version of this same information is in the individual volumes of Studies in the Age of Chaucer (stacks: PR1901 .S88).

2) Chaucernet, an online discussion group. Send the following message to the following address (nothing in subject field). You will be added to the discussion group, able to ask and answer questions, or just “lurk” while others discuss.
   Address: listserv@listserv.uic.edu
   Message: subscribe chaucer Your Name

3) Websites. There are many valuable websites out there for research in Medieval Studies in general, with subsets for Chaucer Studies. There are also some very bad ones. Below are a few of the good ones:
   Chaucer Metapage: http://englishcomplit.unc.edu/chaucer/
   Harvard Chaucer Pages: http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/index.html
   Labyrinth: http://labyrinth.georgetown.edu/
   ORB: Online Reference Book for Med. Studies:  http://www.the-orb.net/
   Middle English Dictionary: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/ (choose “Look-ups”)

Resources on Reserve (UTSA Library 1604 Campus)

Editions:

Bibliographies:
Source Materials:


Other:

Academic Dishonesty: Students are expected to be above reproach in scholastic activities. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. “Scholastic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act. For more information, see section 203 of the UTSA Code of Conduct at http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html.

Disability Services: UTSA offers support services, including registration assistance and equipment, to students with documented disabilities through the Office of Disabled Student Services, MS Bldg. 2.03.18. Students are encouraged to contact that office at 458-4157 as early as possible in the semester. For more information, see http://www.utsa.edu/disability/.

Important Dates:
Wednesday, August 31, 2011. Census Date: last day for students to drop a course and not have it appear on their transcripts
Friday, October 28, 2011: Last day for graduate students to drop an individual course via ASAP and receive an automatic “W” for the course