ENG 3213: Chaucer  
Spring 2012  
Instructor: Mark Allen  
mark.allen@utsa.edu; 458-5358; MB 2.478  
Office hours: MWF 9:30-10:30, and by appointment

Text:  

Course requirements,  
All assigned reading and regular class attendance are required. More than three unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade.  
   a) Recitation, translations, pop quizzes (20%)  
   b) Midterm and final exam (20% and 20%)  
   c) Two papers (15% and 25%)

Course goals: To give students opportunities:  
   a) To increase knowledge and appreciation of early English literary tradition, especially the life and works of Geoffrey Chaucer  
   b) To develop skills in literary criticism and analysis  
   c) To cultivate awareness of how literature, especially early literature, enables us to imagine the world from points of view other than our own

Successful completion of this course fulfills three hours of upper-division ENG credit.

Reading Schedule:  
1/18 Background  

1/23 “Introduction,” pp. 5-8; General Prologue, lines 1-387  
1/25 General Prologue, 388-714 [Bring to class your own prose translation of one of the pilgrims’ descriptions]  
1/27 General Prologue, 715-858

1/30 Knight’s Tale, lines 1.859-1354  
2/1 Knight’s Tale, 1355-1880-2482 [Bring to class your own prose translation of lines 1.1799-1825]  
2/3 Knight’s Tale, 1881-2482

2/6 Knight’s Tale, 2483-3108  
2/8 Miller’s Prologue and Tale  
2/10 Miller’s Prologue and Tale. [Last day for recitation; see below]

2/13 Reeve’s Prologue and Tale.  
2/15 Reeve’s Prologue and Tale  
2/17 Review pp. 5-8, review Cook’s fragment. Discussion of Part 1.
2/20  Introduction to Part 2, pp. 83-84. Man of Law’s Prologue and Tale, 2.1-505
2/22  Man of Law’s Tale, 506-1190. [Paper # 1 due in class]
2/24  Introduction to Part 3, pp. 107-08; Wife of Bath’s Prologue, 3.1-856

2/27  Wife of Bath’s Tale, 3.857-1264
2/29  Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale
3/2   Review

3/5   Midterm exam
3/7   Friar’s Prologue and Tale
3/9   Summoner’s Prologue and Tale

3/12-16 SPRING BREAK

3/19  Introduction to Part 4, pp. 147-48. Clerk’s Prologue and Tale, 4.1-609
3/21  Clerk’s Tale, 4.610-1212
3/23  Merchant’s Prologue and Tale

3/26  Introduction to Part 5, pp. 187-88; Squire’s Prologue and Tale
3/28  Franklin’s Prologue and Tale
3/30  Franklin’s Prologue and Tale

4/2   Introduction to Part 6, pp. 215-16; Physician’s Prologue and Tale
4/4   Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale
4/6   Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale

4/9   Introduction to part 7, pp. 233-35; Shipman and His Tale
4/11  Prioress and Her Tale
4/13  Prologue and Tale of Sir Thopas, and Prologue [only] to Tale of Melibee

4/16  Nun’s Priest’s Prologue and Tale
4/18  Nun’s Priest Prologue and Tale
4/20  Introduction to Part 8, pp. 307-08; Second Nun’s Prologue and Tale
       [Statement of Thesis or Purpose due for paper # 2]

4/23  Canon’s Yeoman’s Prologue and Tale, 8.554-971
4/25  Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale, Part 2, 8.972-1481
4/27  Introduction to Part 9, pp. 333-34; Manciple’s Prologue and Tale

4/30  Introduction to Part 10, pp. 341-42; Parson’s Prologue and Tale, 10.1-132 and 1029-1080; Retraction, 10.1081-1090.
5/2   Review. [Paper number 2 due in class.]

Final exam: Monday, May 7, 1:30-4:00
Recitation. Due on or before February 10

Make an appointment or stop by my office whenever I am available; be prepared to read aloud in Middle English lines 1-18 of the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. Strive for consistent and accurate pronunciation, and for rhetorical effectiveness (rhythm, stopping and starting, meaning). Audio versions of these lines are online: <http://academics.vmi.edu/english/audio/audio_index.html>. Also see the pronunciation tutorial at <http://courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/pronunciation/>. Both of these audio links are available through the Chaucer Metapage (see Resources below). No one knows precisely how Chaucer’s dialect sounded, but your efforts to duplicate what scholars have reconstructed will aid you to read and understand Chaucer’s poetry.

Paper # 1: 4-7 pp. typed, due in class February 22

Select an isolatable passage from Chaucer's poetry (about 30-50 lines) that strikes you as particularly evocative, interesting, rich, or subtle. Think about what the passage contributes to its context, concentrating on the poetic and narrative devices of the passage (meter, rhymes, allusions, imagery, diction, ironies, puns, ambiguities, etc.) and how they contribute to characterization, theme, or tone. In addition to the notes and glossary in our text, investigate the expansive notes and glossary in the in the Riverside Chaucer (on reserve; explanatory notes in the back of the book). See also the extensive information about vocabulary in Davis’s A Chaucer Glossary (on reserve), the Oxford English Dictionary, and the Middle English Dictionary (both of which are available in print and online). Feel free to do more thorough research in appropriate scholarship and criticism, but in all cases be sure to give credit where it is due.

After exploring these resources (and perhaps discussing your passage with me), explicate the passage, clarifying what it contributes to its context—e.g., how it evokes the character of the speaker(s), how it conveys theme, how it reflects Chaucer’s artfulness, how it adapts its surrounding, etc. Shape an argument that helps you to “unpack” the riches of one or more of Chaucer’s techniques. Avoid passages that include a great deal of back-and-forth dialogue; avoid the descriptions in the General Prologue (they are too rich); start early. MLA format required (one-inch margins, double-spaced, citation techniques, etc.)

Paper # 2, due May 2 in class.

NOTE: you must turn in a statement of preliminary thesis or purpose (paragraph or two) on or before April 20. This statement should be accompanied by an annotated bibliography of 5-10 items that have influenced or helped to shape your ideas to date for your essay or project. To identify useful books and articles, and for model annotations, see the bibliography in the back of our book, the Chaucer Bibliography Online (http://uchaucer.utsa.edu) and/or The Essential Chaucer (on reserve and online at http://colfa.utsa.edu/chaucer/). Journals on our library shelves devoted primarily to critical analysis of Chaucer are Chaucer Review (PR1901.C48) and Studies in the Age of Chaucer (PR1901.S88), but there are many books and other journals that include important and provocative material.

10-15 pp. research paper, on some topic, theme, character, political or philosophical concern, pattern of imagery, source relationship, etc., in an individual Canterbury tale, a comparison of tales, some other Chaucerian work. Consider the influence and/or reception of Chaucer in later literature—by authors such as Shakespeare, Spenser, Woolf, George Eliot, T.S. Eliot, or others.
Explore children’s adaptation of Chaucer, film versions, etc. The choice of the topic is your own, but clear it with me. See me early. MLA format required.

Resources and other concerns

UTSA Library, 1604 campus: We have a good collection of Chaucer materials at PR 1850-1933. Stop by and browse the shelves. Journal articles and other books can be located through the public catalog of the library <http://www.lib.utsa.edu/>. Also on the UTSA public catalog, is a database called Chaucer Bibliography Online <http://uchaucer.utsa.edu>, an annotated bibliography of (nearly) everything published about Chaucer between 1975 and 2008. We have in our library many of the items referred to in this bibliography (but not all of them). If you want to examine something our library does not hold, I may own a personal copy (so ask!), or you may be able to access it through Interlibrary Loan if you get started early enough.

Chaucer MetaPage: A “hub” or “ring” page designed to organize and make easily accessible high-quality Chaucerian materials available on the Internet. It includes links to numerous other sites; especially valuable are its links to bibliography (Click on: Bibliography) and other web pages (Click on: Chaucer Pages). Especially good are the Harvard Chaucer Pages and the Dan Kline’s pages. Also includes links to electronic texts of Chaucer and audio recordings of many of his works (Click on: Chaucer’s Works or on Teaching Chaucer).
Metapage URL: http://englishcomplit.unc.edu/chaucer/.

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 University-wide Dates:
Census date: Wednesday, February 1, 2012. 5:00 p.m.
Drop date: Monday, April 30, 2012