ENG L305 / B612: CHAUCER
FALL 2008
PROFESSOR DAMIAN FLEMING

CLASS MEETING: M WF 1:30–2:20PM, CM144
OFFICE HOURS: MW 11AM–1PM (or by appointment)
    Office: CM 133 (in Eng. Dept.)
CONTACT INFORMATION: Office phone: x0192
    Email: flemingd@ipfw.edu

COURSE WEBSITE: http://users.ipfw.edu/flemingd/chaucerf08.html

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
“Father of English Poetry”, or dead guy whose “drasty ryming is nat worth a toord!” (Chaucer’s words)? We’ll develop a sound reading knowledge of Middle English (the language of England c. 1200–1500), then read a bunch of Chaucer’s texts in the original focusing primarily on the Canterbury Tales. We’ll try to contextualize these texts and consider their relevance today and in the history of English literature. No previous experience required.

PLEASE NOTE: this course is rather difficult
ALSO NOTE: Chaucer’s poetry contains much 14th-century fun which may offend certain 21st century sensibilities, such as abundant sexual, scatological, and religious humor

REQUIRED BOOK:

Always bring the text to class; it is necessary for informed discussion; failure to bring your text to class is equivalent to an absence (and you better check out the attendance policy).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
1. Daily attendance and vigorous participation in class fueled by close reading of all assignments
2. Frequent, but relatively short, written assignments
3. Memorization and recitation of the first sentence of the Canterbury Tales in addition to 10 other lines from Chaucer’s works
4. Frequent quizzes testing basic understanding of Middle English vocabulary and syntax and basic reading comprehension
5. Midterm and Final examination
**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

This course is based in active participation; as a result, attendance in class is essential. More than two unexcused absences will drastically affect your grade:

- On your third absence: total participation grade becomes 0%
- On your **fourth absence:** You are no longer part of this class: **final grade: F**

Excused absences (medical/family *emergencies*) require **immediate documentation.**

Unexcused absences are things like non-life threatening illness, car trouble, general sleepiness, and non-emergency doctor appointments.

Excessive lateness will count as an absence.

Regardless of cause, you are responsible for all work missed during absences, including changes to the class schedule announced in class. Please do not contact me for day-to-day information when you miss class.

**RECITATION:**

Each student will MEMORIZE and RECITE two passages of Middle English from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. Everybody will memorize and recite the first sentence of CT on **Monday, Sept 15**.

If you’ve never done anything like this before, I suggest you get started as soon as possible. For the second passage, students may choose any ten lines from the *Canterbury Tales* (or anything else written by Chaucer).

Email me your second passage selection no later than **Monday, Sept 22**.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

Engrave the following on your brain:

**I do not accept any late work**

*Grade for late work: 0%, returned without comment*

*Computer mishaps are never an acceptable excuse for anything*

This is the 21st century. Save frequently; save to removable disks in addition to emailing yourself copies. Don’t be stupid.

Give yourself plenty of time and leeway to get your work done and to deal with bumps in the road should they occur. Pretend, at least for this class, that you are operating in the real world.
EXAMS AND QUIZZES:
We will have a midterm and a cumulative final consisting primarily of translations, short identifications, and brief quotations from the works we have read in class. In the first half of the term we will also have frequent—almost daily—quizzes testing basic comprehension of the night’s reading assignment and Chaucer’s English. Such quizzes will be discontinued in the second half of the term IF student discussion and participation reaches a level which renders them burdensome.

GRADING:
Participation/Memorization: 10%
Writing Assignments: 30%
Exams and quizzes:
Quizzes 30%
Midterm and Final 30%

GRADE SCALE:
A 95–100 Outstanding Scholarship
A 90–94
B+ 87–89
B 84–86 Superior
B– 80–83
C+ 77–79
C 74–76 Average
C– 70–73
D+ 65–69
D 60–64 Lowest passing quality
F below 60

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability, you may be eligible to request accommodations from the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations and should have equal access to learning. If you have any questions or you believe you need accommodations, contact the SSD office, Walb Union 113, Phone/TTD: 260 - 481 - 6657 http://www.ipfw.edu/ssd/

Keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive so it is best to register as soon as possible so that timely arrangements can be made.

FOR ALL STUDENTS: No retroactive accommodations can be made. If you feel that you have an issue which may affect your ability to succeed in this class, you must come see me before you’ve defaulted on the class. Hopefully, any issue can be resolved, but no issue can be resolved after the fact.
ACADEMIC HONESTY:

**USING ANOTHEW PERSON’S WORDS OW IDEAS WITHOUM ATTRIBUTION IS PLAGIARISM.**
Plagiarism will earn you an F for the course, and possible expulsion from the University. If you borrow an idea or quote from another author, you must cite where you found the material. If you have any questions about citing sources, please **ASK** before your turn in an assignment. I am happy to help, or visit the Writing Center. [http://www.ipfw.edu/casa/writing/](http://www.ipfw.edu/casa/writing/)

CONCERNING TEXT-MESSAGING IN CLASS

**SCHEDULE:**

**NOTE:** This schedule is subject to change; missing class is **NOT** an excuse for not knowing about changes to the schedule (see above: attendance).

I have only sketched the semester so I can make adjustments based on the class’s progress

AUG M 25 Intro to class
W 27 Intro to language and historical background
Visit these websites to help with pronunciation:

Harvard Chaucer Page:
[http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/](http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/)
see esp. “Teach Yourself Chaucer” and “Chaucer’s Language”

Here’s a great website with a lot of useful stuff:

You may very well prefer to read GP from his electronic edition; if you do so, have your own book open so you can take notes and have brilliant things to say in class. See under “Sounds” for a big selection of audio files of Middle English

F 29 More on Language
Start in on the General Prologue

LABOR DAY

SEPT W 3 Read "Historical Chaucer"
Practice reading Middle English aloud a lot
**Quiz** on General Prologue, lines 1–35
Divvy up the pilgrims
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<th>Date</th>
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| F 5  | GP  | Be an expert on a Pilgrim (2 each)  
Hand in detailed, typed notes  
concerning two pilgrims; note  
profession (and explain what it is),  
dress, demeanor, characterization;  
satire? Praise?  
Read "The Two Voices"  
**Quiz** on GP lines 1–150 |
| M 8  | GP  | **Quiz** on entire GP |
| W 10 | Knight’s Tale  
**GP Writing Assignment due** |
| F 12 | KT  | Read "A Poet there was"  
**Quiz** Knight’s Tale 1–100 |
| M 15 | KT  | Memorization Day 1  
Memorize and recite GP lines 1–18 |
| W 17 | Miller’s Tale |
| F 19 | MT  | **Quiz** on Miller’s Tale |
| M 22 | Reeve’s T/CookT  
**MT Writing Assignment Due** |
| W 24 | WB Prol  
**Quiz** on WB Prol |
| F 26 | WB Prol |
| OCT W 1 | Friar’s Tale  
**WB Writing Assignment Due** |
| F 3  | **Quiz** on FriarT |
| M 6  | Summoner’s Tale |
| W 8  | **Quiz** on SumT  
Read “The Dramatic Principle” |
| F 10 | MIDTERM exam |
| FALL Recess |
| W 15 | Clerk’s Tale  
Friar/Summoner **Writing Due**  
**Quiz** on ClerkT |
<p>| F 17 | (Cornell) |
| M 20 | Merchant’s Tale |
| W 22 | Clerk’s <strong>Writing Due</strong> |
| F 24 | <strong>Quiz</strong> on MerchT |
| M 27 | Franklin’s Tale <strong>Quiz in FrankT</strong> |
| W 29 | Read “The Marriage Group” |
| F 31 | |</p>
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<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Pardoner’s Tale Marriage Group <strong>Writing Due</strong></td>
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<td>Quiz on PardT</td>
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<td>Nov 7</td>
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<td>Prioress’s Tale</td>
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<td>Quiz on PrioressT</td>
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<td>Nov 14</td>
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<td>Sir Topas/Melibee Prioress <strong>Writing Due</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 19</td>
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<td>Nun’s Priest’s Tale</td>
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<td>Nov 24</td>
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<td>Manciple’s Tale <strong>Writing Due</strong></td>
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<td>Dec 1</td>
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<td>Dec 3</td>
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<td>Parson’s Tale</td>
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<td>Dec 5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Read “The Parson’s Tale and The Quitting”</td>
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<td>Dec 8</td>
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<td>Chaucer’s Retraction</td>
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<td>Dec 10</td>
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<td><strong>Final Writing Assignment Due</strong></td>
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**FINAL Exam: Monday, Dec. 15; 1pm-3pm**