

English 4410 — Chaucer

T/Th, 2:00–3:20 pm, LANGUAGE BUILDING 201

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, LANG 409F, 1:00–2:00 pm

Course Description

Although Chaucer is foremost among writers in the English language, reading *The Canterbury Tales* is just plain fun. Part of the pleasure derives from Chaucer's invitation to readers to participate in the game of deciding which pilgrim tells the tale with the best "*sentence*" (meaning) and the "*moost solass*" (most pleasure). While making this decision cannot be the sole focus of the course, it is a helpful one because it encourages us to keep in mind that Chaucer is a talented ventriloquist and that there is really no offended Reeve who insults the Miller with his tale, no actual mouthy Wife of Bath on the lookout for husband number six. This realization, in turn, will compel us to study some of the many facets of Chaucer's literary imagination such as his command of genre, prosody, and theme. Each of us will have a say, though, about who should win, and even if we're bound to disagree, we're likely to finish the course wishing that Chaucer had finished *The Canterbury Tales* and given us more to judge.

Required Text

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. 2nd Edition. Ed. R. Boenig and A. Taylor (Broadview, 2012).

➤ *Bring your book to every class to avoid a reduction of your participation grade.*

Course Requirements and Grading

30% — Essay 1
40% — Essay 2
10% — Essay 3
20% — Attendance (10%) & Participation (10%)

Attendance & Participation

You are expected to attend class and participate actively. This course is participatory, collaborative, and discussion-based, and you will learn more, perform at a higher level, and have more fun if you come and take part in class. Since in-person class attendance and class participation are essential and inextricably linked, I reserve the right to reduce a student's attendance and participation grades. Attendance is taken daily and recorded on Canvas, and all absences lower the attendance grade. After a student's third unexcused, undocumented absence, I will reduce the student's attendance grade for a fourth and a fifth absence by 10 points each. Students who accumulate a sixth unexcused, undocumented absence will receive a final grade of "F" unless they withdraw from the class within the period authorized by UNT's academic calendar. Likewise, students who accumulate a sixth absence in any combination of excused or unexcused absences will receive a final grade of "F" unless they withdraw from the class within the period authorized by UNT's academic calendar. Students are responsible for keeping track of their absences.

Additional Policies

Please consult the Welcome module for additional university policies on Academic Integrity (including the use generative AI writing tools, evidence of which will result in failure for the course), Student Conduct, ADA Accommodation among others.

Course Calendar

Week 1

8/19 Introduction

8/21 *Prelude*

Week 2

8/26 The General Prologue

8/28 The General Prologue

Week 3

9/2 The Knight's Tale (parts I and II)

9/4 The Knight's Tale (parts III and IV)

Week 4

9/9 The Miller's Prologue and Tale

9/11 The Miller's Prologue and Tale

Week 5

9/16 The Reeve's and the Cook's Prologues and Tales

9/18 *Interlude*

Week 6

9/23 The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale

9/25 The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale

Week 7

9/30 The Clerk's Prologue and Tale

10/2 The Clerk's Prologue and Tale

Week 8

10/7 The Merchant's Prologue and Tale

10/9 The Merchant's Prologue and Tale

10/12 First Draft of Essay 1 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas

Week 9

10/14 The Franklin's Prologue and Tale

10/16 The Franklin's Prologue and Tale

10/19 Peer Review Responses to Essay 1 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas

Week 10

10/21 Chaucer the Pilgrim's Prologue and Tale of Melibee

10/23 *Interlude*

10/26 Final Draft of Essay 1 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas

Week 11

10/28 The Pardoner's Introduction, Prologue and Tale

10/30 The Prioress's Prologue and Tale

Week 12

11/4 The Monk's Prologue and Tale

11/6 The Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale

Week 13

11/11 The Second Nun's Prologue and Tale

11/13 The Parson's Prologue and Tale

Week 14

11/18 The Parson's Prologue and Tale

11/20 *Interlude*

11/23 Draft of Essay 2 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas

Week 15

11/25 THANKSGIVING BREAK

11/27 THANKSGIVING BREAK

12/1 *Monday* — Peer Review Responses to Essay 2 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas

Week 16

12/2 Chaucer the Poet's Retraction

12/4 *Postlude*

12/5 Final Draft of Essay 2 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas

12/7 Essay 3 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas