

English 4410 — Chaucer

T/Th, 3:30–4:50 pm, Language Building 114

Dr. Upchurch, Professor of English
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, LANG 409F, 2:00–3:00 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.

Course Requirements and Grading

- 15% -- Essay 1
- 25% -- Essay 2
- 35% -- Essay 3
- 5% -- Essay 4
- 20% -- Attendance (10%) & Participation (10%)

Attendance & Participation

You are expected to attend class and actively participate. This course is by nature participatory, collaborative, and discussion-based, and you will learn more, perform at a higher level, and have more fun if you come to class and participate actively. Since class attendance and class participation are essential and inextricably linked, I reserve the right to reduce a student's attendance and participation grades. Please note that upon a student's fourth unexcused absence, I will reduce the student's participation grade by 25 points, 30 points upon a fifth unexcused absence. Students who accumulate 6 or more unexcused absences will receive the final grade of "F" unless they withdraw from the class within the period authorized by UNT's academic calendar.

Required Text

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

- *Bring your book to every class or receive a reduction of your participation grade.*

Course Calendar

Due dates for drafts, peer review responses, and final drafts will not change. The schedule of assigned readings may change, however, depending on the pace at which we're able to work productively as a community. If so, I will provide ample notice.

- 1/17 Introduction to the course
- 1/19 Introduction to the course

- 1/24 Fragment I, *Canterbury Tales (CT): The General Prologue*
 1/26 Fragment I, *CT: The General Prologue*
- 1/31 Fragment I (cont.), *CT: The Knight's Tale* (parts I and II)
 2/2 Fragment I (cont.), *CT: The Knight's Tale* (parts III and IV)
2/5 Draft of Essay 1 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas
- 2/7 Fragment I (cont.), *CT: The Miller's Prologue and Tale*
 2/9 Fragment I (cont.), *CT: The Reeve's and The Cook's Prologues and Tales*
2/12 Peer Review Responses to Essay 1 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas
- 2/14 Fragment II, *CT: The Man of Law's Introduction, Prologue, Tale, and Epilogue*
 2/16 Fragment III, *CT: The Wife of Bath's Prologue*
2/19 Final Draft of Essay 1 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas
- 2/21 Fragment III (cont.), *CT: The Wife of Bath's Tale*
 2/23 Fragment III (cont.), *CT: The Friar's and The Summoner's Prologues and Tales*
- 2/28 Fragment IV, *CT: The Clerk's Prologue and Tale*
 3/2 Fragment IV (cont.), *CT: The Merchant's Prologue and Tale*
- 3/7 Fragment V, *CT: The Squire's Prologue and Tale*
 3/9 Fragment V (cont.), *CT: The Franklin's Prologue and Tale*
3/12 Draft of Essay 2 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas
- 3/14 SPRING BREAK
 3/16 SPRING BREAK
- 3/21 Fragment VI, *CT: The Physician's Prologue and Tale*
 3/23 Fragment VI (cont.), *CT: The Pardoner's Introduction, Prologue and Tale*
3/26 Peer Review Responses to Essay 2 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas
- 3/28 Fragment VII, *CT: The Shipman's Tale*
 3/30 Fragment VII (cont.), *CT: The Prioress's Prologue and Tale*
4/2 Final Draft of Essay 2 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas
- 4/4 Fragment VII (cont.), *CT: Chaucer's Prologues and Tales of Sir Thopas and Melibee*
 4/6 Fragment VII (cont.), *CT: The Monk's Prologue and Tale*
- 4/11 Fragment VII (cont.), *CT: The Nun's Priest's Prologue, Tale, and Epilogue*
 4/13 Fragment VII (cont.), *CT: The Second Nun's Prologue and Tale*
- 4/18 Fragment VIII, *CT: The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue and Tale*
 4/20 Fragment VIII (cont.) and IX, *CT: The Manciple's Prologue and Tale*
4/23 Draft of Essay 3 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas
- 4/25 Fragment X, *CT: The Parson's Prologue and Tale and Chaucer's Retraction*

- 4/27 Fragment X, *CT: The Parson's Prologue and Tale* and *Chaucer's Retraction*
4/30 Peer Review Responses to Essay 3 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas
- 5/2 Class Reflection
5/4 In-class Self-Reflection Essay 4
5/7 Final Draft of Essay 3 due by 11:59 pm in Canvas