

ENGL 619-001, Survey of Old and Middle English Literature (Chaucer)

W 3:00 - 5:50

Maximum Enrollment: 35

Room: Greenlaw 319

Description:

This seminar is open to graduate students and advanced undergraduates (which is why it is being offered under the 619 rubric). It will focus on Geoffrey Chaucer, and particularly on his depiction of “love” as he portrays sexual negotiations across a variety of genres: “fine loving” (*fin amors* or “courtly love”) in romance, the bawdy sexuality of the *fabliaux*, the quest for “transcendent love” reflected in works like *Troilus and Criseyde* (which in part echo Dante). We will read selections from *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, and *Troilus and Criseyde*. Important background works include Andreas Capellanus’ *De Amore*, *The Roman de la Rose*, and Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*.

We will read Chaucer in Middle English, but the focus of the course will be literary and cultural, not linguistic (and students are welcome to use translations to help them get started with the Middle English texts). The teaching method will be lecture and discussion. Requirements will include careful reading of the assigned primary texts, participation in class discussions (and thus regular class attendance), and a term project (resulting in a final paper).

Required Texts:

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales Complete, ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000. ISBN 0-395-97823-8.

Troilus and Criseyde, ed. Stephen Barney. A Norton Critical Edition. New York: Norton: 2006. ISBN 0-393-92766-5.

Alternative to the above:

The Riverside Chaucer, 3rd. ed., gen. ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1987. ISBN: 0-395-29031-7. (Note: though this is the “standard edition” of Chaucer’s collected works, in is a large, heavy book. [A smaller, paperback edition of it has been available in the UK.] An advantage of the paperbacks listed first, above, is their portability and relative usability. The Norton *Troilus* is by the same editor who prepared this work for the Riverside Chaucer, has excellent notes, and the great advantage of presenting not only Chaucer’s text but an excellent facing-page translation of Chaucer’s source, Boccaccio’s *Filostrato*, and a number of important articles on the work. I recommend it highly.]

Other Recommended Books:

A Chaucer Glossary, ed. Norman Davis et al. Oxford: Clarendon, 1979. ISBN 0198111711 (pbk.).

[Many students have found this useful, though the glossary and notes in the paperback editions listed above are generally very good.]

Troilus and Criseyde: a new translation, transl. Barry Windeatt. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN 0192832905 (pbk.). [An excellent translation students have found a very useful starting place.]

If anyone is interested in taking a look at the background texts mentioned above, I recommend:

Andreas Capellanus on Love, ed. and trans. P. G. Walsh. London: Duckworth, 1982.

The Romance of the Rose, trans. Charles Dahlberg. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971.

The Consolation of Philosophy. (There are many good translations in paperback, e.g. by: Victor Watts, Penguin Books; P. G. Walsh, OUP.