CHAUCEL

English 427                                      Prof. Laskaya
Winter Term, 2020                                      Office: 357 PLC
MW 2-3:20                                        Hrs: Mon noon-1; Tues 12:30-2:30
CRN 26563 & by appointment
101 Peterson                                        email: laskaya@uoregon.edu

Textbooks:
Other information and materials provided via Canvas
Main Online Resource: The Middle English Dictionary, available to all UO students. Access the Knight Library
Homepage via your uoregon account, or use Library computers to connect to the MED.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: ENG 427 invites students to engage selections from Chaucer’s
Canterbury Tales in their original Middle English (rather than modernized translations). Texts will
include the more familiar comedic tales, like the Miller’s Tale and the but also less familiar elegiac,
philosophic narratives, as well as several highly problematic tales, like the Franklin’s Tale. Often
called ‘the father of English literature,’ Chaucer provides students a chance to engage rigorously
with one of the most influential late medieval English authors. We will also consider what meanings
Chaucer has now, in the twenty-first century, for each of us as individuals but also for our larger
socio-cultural milieu.

The course exposes students to important interpretations of Chaucer’s work produced in our own
time by scholars who read Chaucerian texts quite differently. This means that besides working on
Middle English for the term, students will gain some exposure to, and negotiate the differences
found within, contemporary Chaucerian literary criticism. The course is designed for advanced
undergraduate English Majors and fulfills the upper-division, pre-1500 requirement. (Advanced
students majoring outside English who wish to study Chaucer in Middle English are also welcome;
contact the English Department or Professor Laskaya for more information.)

Close reading, discussion, quizzes, papers, and some informal writing and presentations will
provide the basis for assessment in the course. Discussion, punctuated with occasional lectures, will
focus most class sessions. A few lectures will provide literary, cultural, archival, linguistic and
historical frameworks; however, most work in class—once students gain familiarity with the Middle
English—will be discussion-based. We will probe the text, and our own interpretations, locating
key interpretative questions and reflecting on our own assumptions from several different analytical
perspectives. *Prerequisite: UofO Junior Standing. Students should review course texts the 1st
day of class to be sure Middle English will not present undue difficulty, particularly since we
will move relatively quickly with the ME texts.

REQUIREMENTS:
Regular, steady Attendance; Steady Preparation, Oral reading/ translating.
Participation in class discussions, short presentations & activities.
Informal writing, including two key discussion questions presented in class, as assigned
Quizzes
2 interpretative papers (papers to be submitted electronically via Canvas.)
Final Exam
GRADING:*  
Quizzes, short informal writing/presentations & class activities 30%  
2 Interpretative Papers 40% (20% each)  
Final Essay exam 30%  
*NB: Consistent and full attendance is assumed. Failure to attend class regularly, prepared to participate, will result in a lower final course grade, regardless of grades on written work. All major assignments and requirements must be completed to Pass this course.

CANVAS SITE:  
Syllabus, course assignments, any scholarly materials beyond the textbook, and general course information will be available throughout the term on Canvas. Please check Canvas regularly for announcements, materials, and for the up-to-date schedule.

Notes on Reading Chaucer: Excellent assistance can be found at Larry Benson’s Chaucer Page online: [http://courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/tr-index.htm#list](http://courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/tr-index.htm#list)  
Here you will find close, interlinear translations of most of the Canterbury Tales we are reading. Study aids, like Benson’s, are very helpful, particularly at the beginning of the term as you get used to Middle English. You should not, however, rely heavily on this, since we will translate on-sight in class, and quizzes will often ask you to translate Middle English without aids. One good way to use modern translations is to read through them so you know what is happening in the text and then go back to read the Middle English carefully, line by line or sentence by sentence without translation aids. Reading the text without aids is the only way you can quickly bring yourself up to an efficient and effective level of Middle English proficiency. So, if you use aids, fine; just be sure to challenge yourself more and more to read only the Middle English text.

CLASS POLICIES:

Students with disabilities: If you have a disability, please see me during the first week of the term so we can make appropriate accommodations for your full access to all course activities and requirements.

Class Etiquette: Phones, laptops, tablets, audio players, etc. should be off during class. Our work in class is intended to exercise your brain and its own strengths, so usually we won't use internet sources in class, though some small-group work may be designed to do so. Class discussions & lectures may not be recorded in any manner unless you have a communication-related disability documented with the University and have received permission from the course instructor. Additionally, under Oregon law, recording in-person conversations, including group discussions or presentations, requires the consent of all parties. Should you miss a class meeting, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from your colleagues, so be sure to get to know others in the course who would be willing to help you and whom you would be willing to help. Missing class should, however, be a rare event since active preparation and participation is a course requirement.

Please do not come and go from class during our 80-minute sessions to get water, visit the restroom, answer emails or phones or texts. Be sure to do these things before and after class or during a short break, if we have one. We are a very small class in a discussion-designed classroom, so people coming and going can interfere with student learning. I find people coming and going during class very distracting, so it does interfere with teaching. Of course, if you desperately require the restroom, do slip out. But this should be very rare. See me if you have any concerns or needs.
**Tutorial help**: Students with tutoring needs may use services offered by the University of Oregon’s Teaching and Learning Center (TLC): [https://engage.uoregon.edu/services/](https://engage.uoregon.edu/services/)  Any other assistance you receive on papers—organizing your paper, identifying your main points, proofreading, editing and/or revising it—must be cleared with the professor. However, as you work to understand readings and lectures, talking and reviewing with your colleagues outside of class is encouraged; this is different from directly assisting one another with a specific essay assignment. Thinking with others about our texts and our class sessions can help strengthen your understanding. If you have questions, please see me.

**Academic Integrity**: The University of Oregon values academic honesty. Students are informed of the University’s policies and expectations about conduct and academic honesty when they matriculate. You are here because you clearly have the ability to engage your own mind in rigorous intellectual work. If you need a quick review of our campus community's assumptions about academic integrity and conduct, see the Conduct Code on the UO website: [https://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct](https://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct)

The two formal paper assignments will be analytical; they will not require outside research except as provided or recommended within an assignment. You may find yourself curious about something or wanting more information at times; great—read on, and bravo for curiosity! However, no student will receive higher grades simply because he or she has read beyond course materials or used research in papers or exams. Please consult the UO library's website: [https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism/styleguides](https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism/styleguides) for information on documentation, should you need it, and for discussions of how to avoid plagiarism. See me if you have any concerns about documentation and/or academic honesty. For this course, an honest and obvious effort to document is absolutely critical and far more important than commas, abbreviations, or 'correct' formatting. Either MLA or Chicago Style provide acceptable resources and formats for advanced work in literature.

**Course policy on Academic Integrity**: All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. Any use of sources (ideas, quotations, and paraphrases) beyond our lectures and discussion must be properly documented. In other words, rely on your own grey matter, and wrestle well, yourself, with the course material. Protect the integrity of your own work and that of others’. In cases of clearly established plagiarism or cheating, a final course grade of “F” will be recorded, and all incidents will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct, as required by the University.

**SCHEDULE** *(subject to change; see updates on CANVAS)*

**Week one**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>Intro to course &amp; one another; starting to read Middle English (ME/PDE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>GP (General Prologue) esp opening, desc of Monk and Prioress; frame</td>
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**(Over the weekend, reread the General Prologue thoroughly. Come to class ready to work on the grammar and vocabulary of Middle English found in the GP. Complete homework.)**
**Week two**

M 1/13   GP work on grammar, vocabulary, themes, images, Harry Bailly, Chaucer the Pilgrim-narrator; Homework due in class.
W 1/15   Knight's Tale (Knight’s Portrait in GP; KT, part one). Quiz #1

**Week three**

M 1/20   No Class, Martin Luther King Day
W 1/22   KT part II & III Quiz #2. Discussion questions/presentation group 1

**Week four**

M 1/27   KT part III & IV. Quiz #3. Discussion questions/presentation group 2
W 1/29   KT part IV; tale concluded

**Week five**

M 2/3    Miller’s Portrait in GP, Prologue and Tale
W 2/5    Miller’s Tale. Quiz #4
*H 2/6    **Paper #1 due via Canvas by 6 pm**

**Week six**

M 2/10   Wife of Bath’s Portrait in GP; WofB’s Prologue
W 2/12   Wife of Bath's Prologue. Quiz #5. Discussion questions/presentation group 3

**Week seven**

M 2/17   Wife of Bath’s Prologue & Tale, Discussion questions/presentation group 4
W 2/19   Pardoner’s Portrait; Prologue Quiz #6. Discussion questions/presentation group 5

**Week eight**

M 2/24   Pardoner’s Prologue & Tale. Quiz #7. Discussion questions/presentation group 6
W 2/26   Pardoner's Prologue & Tale scholarship discussion.
**H 2/27   **Paper #2 due via Canvas by 6 p.m.**

**Week nine**

M 3/2    Franklin's Portrait; Prologue and Tale. Quiz #8
W 3/4    Franklin’s Prologue and Tale.

**Week ten**

M 3/9    Second Nun’s Prologue & Tale. Quiz #9
W 3/11   Parson’s Tale (selections) and Retractions

**FINAL EXAM: Thursday, March 19th 2:45-4:45 pm in our regular classroom.**

**(Be sure to plan ahead; exceptions to our exam period will only be allowed as required by UO policy.)**