

Fall/Winter 2017-2018

AP/EN 3506 6.0A (Y)

CHAUCER

Course Director:

Elizabeth Pentland
Office: 208D Stong College
Email: pent@yorku.ca

Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Thursdays 2:30-5:30pm

Description:

This course will introduce students to the poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1342-1400), best known today for his lively portrait in *The Canterbury Tales* of a group of pilgrims engaged in a storytelling contest. In addition to its rich social commentary, Chaucer's collection of tales covers great variety of styles and genres, from high-minded stories of chivalry and religious piety to churlish and satirical tales of adultery and revenge. As we read these tales (in the original Middle English), we will explore the workings of Chaucer's language, his taking up of literary genres and traditions, and how his writing responds to the major social, political, and religious issues of the day. During the second half of the course, we will turn to *Troilus and Criseyde*, a story of love and betrayal that unfolds against the backdrop of the siege of Troy. We'll examine this work in relation to Chaucer's principal sources (including Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* and Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*), and ask what the poem can tell us the about Chaucer's attitude to the classical past as well as the politics of sex and love in his own time. As the course draws to a close, we will take time to consider Chaucer's literary afterlife: how did his works transform English poetry, and in what ways does he remain relevant for us today?

Category:

C

Area:

4

Period:

1

Historical Requirement:

Period I (pre-1700)

Requirements:

Translation exercises (Fall term) (10%)
Short Essay (Fall term) (10%)
Midterm test (15%)
In-class Essay (Winter term) (10%)
Final Essay (Winter term) (15%)
Participation (15%)
Final examination (3 hours) (25%)

Reading List:

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, 2nd ed., edited by Robert Boenig and Andrew Taylor (Broadview Press, 2012)

Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, edited by James M. Dean and Harriet Spiegel (Broadview Press, 2016)

Laurel Amtower and Jacqueline Vanhoutte (eds.), *A Companion to Chaucer and his Contemporaries* (Broadview Press, 2009)

[NB: these texts have been specially bundled (at a reduced price) for students in this course]

Open To:

Yr 3, 4