English 310C

Non-Chaucerian Middle English Literature

Spring 1995

Neil Hultin
H.H. 325
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 1:30-3:30

Other times by appointment

The purpose of 310C is to make you more familiar with some of the major works of the English Middle Ages. With the exception of "The Miller's Tale," we will not read any of the poems of Chaucer; instead we will examine texts which, though less well-known to readers, are worthy of our consideration. While it is impossible to do justice to some three-hundred years of writing in 12 weeks, I hope that by the end of term you will have a better idea of the ideas, methods, and concerns of this period in English history.

The texts we will read are written in a variety of English dialects. This means that Canadians at the end of the Twentieth Century must accustom themselves to differences in pronunciation, form, and meaning before they can enjoy the wit, humour, poetic skill, and intellectual keenness of these writers. Nevertheless, as a language, Middle English is not particularly difficult and with a little care at the outset, you should have little trouble with most of it. The introductory sections on language in your text will help considerably and I would suggest that you try reading the verse aloud from time to time. Interpreting a text some six centuries distant is another matter and we will spend the term discussing how we might best understand this significant record of European culture.

Texts:


Requirements:

The requirements for this course consist of two essays, a mid-term and a final examination.

**Essay 1**

Due 25 May: This is a short essay--no more than three typewritten pages or approximately 1000 words. The subject will be a brief discussion of "Sumer Is Icumen In" or "Lenten is Come with love to Town," both of which are in Garbaty. This essay is intended to allow you an opportunity to think about the structure and content of a short lyrical piece. **Weight 20%**

**Essay 2**

Due 11 July. The topics for this essay are open. I would recommend one or more of the texts in Garbaty that we have not considered at any length in class. The length for this essay is not prescribed, but I suggest between 10 and 12 typewritten pages would be appropriate; **Weight 30%**

**Mid-Term:**

Scheduled for 13 June; **Weight 20%**

**Final:**

Scheduled by the university during the normal exam period; **Weight 25%**

**Class participation:**

You are asked to take part in the class--this does not mean that you will be rewarded for "right" and marked down for "wrong answers." On the contrary, class time exists to provide an occasion for you to explore your ideas with the aid of the group. For that reason, it is essential that you keep up with the readings, even if we fall behind in our discussion. **Weight 5%**
READINGS

The assignments in Garbaty are indicated by page numbers; hand-outs will be made available in plenty of time for you to prepare them. The number of works assigned for a given day may seem, at first glance, to be extensive but you will notice that many of the readings are, in fact, quite short. In addition, we will concentrate upon those selections marked with *--but do not ignore the others for they will be of use in our discussion and they may appear on the examinations.

2 May
Introduction: "Aspects of Medieval English Literature" (pp. 1-39---but don't take all of this too seriously; Garbaty has some curious ideas.)

4 May
1. Lyrics on pp. 631-674: *Mirie It Is While Sumer Ilast; Foweleis in the Frith; *Edi Beo Thu; Heuene Queene; Nou Skrinketh Rose; *Annot and Iohon; *Alysoun; A Wayle Whyt; When the Nightingale Sings; *The Man in the Moon; The Irish Dancer; All Night by the Rose; *Maiden in the Moor Lay; *Complaint to a Pitless Mistress; *I sing of a maiden; *Jolly Jankyn; *Jack, The Nimble Holy-Water Clerk; *The Servant Girl's Holiday; *Sir John Doth Play; The Smiths; *The Fox and the Goose; *The False Fox.
*2. Chaucer, Complaint to his Purse (pp. 408-409)

9 May
*3. Havelock the Dane (pp. 181-253)

11 May
*4. King Horn (pp. 142-180)
5. Hind Horn (pp. 489-491)

16 May
*6. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (pp. 254-332)

18 May
*7. The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell (pp. 418-439)
*8. The Marriage of Sir Gawain (pp. 505-513)
9. The Knight and the Shepherd's Daughter (pp. 522-526)

23 May
*10. Sir Orfeo (pp.349-364)

25 May
*11. Sir Launfal (pp. 365-395)
12. Lanval (pp. 340-348)

30 May
*13. Layamon. Birth of Arthur through Last Battle (pp. 56-91)
*14. Alliterative Mort Arthure (pp. 92-119)
*15. Thomas Malory. Mort D'Arthure (pp. 835-859)
16. Geoffreys of Monmouth. Crowning of Arthur through Death of Arthur (pp. 126-139)
17. Lay of the Horn (pp. 334-339)
18. The Boy and the Mantle (pp. 497-504)

1 June
*19. The Tournament of Tottenham (pp. 410-417)
*20. Sir Thopas (pp. 398-407)
*21. Dame Sirith (pp. 442-454)

6 June
*22. Chaucer, Miller's Tale (pp. 455-474)
23. Interludium de Clerico et Puella (pp. 475-477)
8 June
*24. Judas (pp. 481-483)
25. Saint Stephen and Herod (pp. 492-493)
26. Thomas Rymer (pp. 514-517)
*27. Sir Patrick Spens (pp. 518-519)
28. Jonie Cock (pp. 527-530)
*29. Robin Hood and the Butcher (pp. 531-535)
*30. A Gest of Robin Hood (handout)

13 June
**MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

15 June
*31. Bestiary (pp. 538-544)
32. The Fox and the Wolf (pp. 545-553)
33. Richard Rolle. The Nature of the Bee and the Stork (pp. 795-796)
*35. John Lydgate. The Cock and the Jasp (handout)

20 June
*36. The Owl and the Nightingale (pp. 556-602)
*37. Body and the Soul (pp. 603-619)
38. Thomas Clanvoe. The Cuckoo and the Nightingale (pp. 620-629)

22 June
*39. Pearl (pp. 721-754)

27, 29 June, 4 July
*40. Piers Ploughman (translation--you might look at the section on pp. 676-720 to get a feel for the language)

6 July
41. Ancrene Riwle (pp. 756-766)
42. South English Legendary (pp. 767-781)
43. Robert Mannyng. Handlyng Synne (pp. 782-793)
*44. Saint Margaret (handout)

11 July
45. Noah and His Wife, etc. (pp. 863-872)
*46. Brome Abraham and Isaac (handout)

13 July
47. Crucifixio Cristi. (pp. 872-881)
*48. Second Shepherd's Play (pp. 882-906)

18 July
*49. Everyman (pp. 907-931)

21 July
*50. William Dunbar, Golden Targe (handout)

25 July
Conclusion