

UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN: FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES/GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of English: Ph. D. Programme in English Literature

ENG 2201941

Medieval Literature

2010-2011

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1. Content:

In line with the Course Description in the Department of English Study Plan for the Ph. D. Degree in English Literature, the course will consist of "an in-depth study of the major texts and authors that make up the Medieval Period, both Old English and Middle English (up to 1485). Some attention will be paid to the linguistic features of Old English and Middle English: the texts written in the former being read in translation, whereas those written in the latter in Middle English itself. The focus, however, will be placed on analyzing the main ideas and stylistic features that make Medieval texts what they are, differentiating them from those of other literary periods. The selected material shall be representative of the era, but great emphasis will be placed on Chaucer" (end of quotation).

Allowance will be made for the fact that Old English in particular, but also Middle English, will be relatively new to most students. There is also the consideration that the Period spanning over 800 years (c.700-c.1500) is by far a longer stretch than any other literary period in English. We therefore have to be highly selective. But the major works will be covered in some detail and the "characteristic features" of Old and Middle English literature will be explored. Prime emphasis will be placed on the texts themselves but attention will be paid to critical appraisals through secondary sources and students' own insights. These will include background material on the medieval world picture as well as on social, religious and political considerations pertaining to an understanding of the texts.

2. Process:

There will be no "formal" lectures except in the introductory session and Week VIII. From Week II, one or more students will make a presentation on a poem(s) or prose item(s) representing a certain genre or stylistic feature. The other students will be expected to have read the material covered by the presentation and stand ready to make comments, ask questions and introduce their own appraisal of the works in question. The Instructor will guide the discussion, interrupt where necessary and ensure that the sessions achieve a measure of cohesiveness though tempered by variety and debate. Presentations should be typed and made available to the other students. Research papers will be assigned in consultation with individual students. These are expected to be of a high calibre and to reflect students' own personal convictions. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will lead to automatic failure in the course. Students will be expected to observe the style and format of papers published in international journals. The MLA Style Sheet is a good place to start.

3. Evaluation:

Midterm test:	30%
Presentations:	10%
Research paper:	20%
Final examination:	40%

4. Code of Ethics:

Students should adhere to University policy on attendance, punctuality, non-smoking, academic integrity and all other aspects pertaining to an orderly conduct of University life.

5. Texts:

Much of the material, especially in Old English, will be gleaned from Vol. I of The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Ed. M. Abrams et. al. 7th ed. (New York : Norton, 2000) or 8th ed. (2006) if available. Supplementary texts will be provided by the Instructor.

6. Weekly Schedule:

Wk I	Introduction; scope; overview of material to be examined; course methods and requirements; main features of Old English (samples provided by the Instructor); overview of the medieval world picture; Anglo-Saxon England.
Wk II	Bede (discussion of the English translation of his Ecclesiastical History of the English People); Caedmon's Hymn; The Dream of the Rood.
Wk III	Beowulf
Wk IV	Beowulf
Wk V	The Wanderer; The Wife's Lament; The Battle of Maldon.
Wk VI	The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle; prose writers Aelfric and Wulfstan.
Wk VII	Midterm test
Wk VIII	Middle English: pronunciation; grammar; dialects; overview
Wk IX	Layamon's Brut; Ancrene Rewle; Poema Morale; The Owl and the Nightingale.
Wk X	Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.
Wk XI	Piers Plowman.
Wk XII	Prologue to the Canterbury Tales; The Nun's Priest's Tale.
Wk XIII	The Clerk's Tale; the Pardoner's Tale; Chaucer's Retraction; short poems and lyrics.
Wk XIV	The Second Shepherd's Play; Morte Darthur; The Cock and the Fox.
Wk XV	More Chaucer; retrospective.
Wk XVI	Final examination.

P.S. Some modification will probably be made to the above schedule depending on student progress and availability of critical material. Should students have been exposed to Chaucer in previous courses, further amendments will be made. In this case, Gower's Confessio Amantis will be looked at in some detail.

7. Suggested Reading and Reference List:

- Aers, David, ed. *Medieval Literature, Criticism, Ideology and History*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986.
- Andersen, George K. *Old and Middle English Literature from the Beginnings to 1485* (Vol. I of A History of English Literature). New York: Colliers Books, 1966.
- Baugh, Albert C. and Thomas Cable. *A History of the English Language*. 5th ed. Prentice Hall, 2002.
- Blake, Norman. *The English Language in Medieval Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Brown, Peter, ed. *A Companion to Medieval English Literature*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- Burnley, David. *A Guide to Chaucer's Language*. London: Macmillan, 1983.
- Burrow, J. A. ed. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972.
- Burrow, J. A. *A Book of Middle English*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Davis, Norman et. al. eds. *A Chaucer Glossary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.
- Dyer, Christopher. *Standard of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England c.1200-1520*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Finucane, Ronald. *Miracles and Pilgrims; Popular Beliefs in Medieval England*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.
- Freeborn, Dennis. *From Old English to Standard English*. London: Macmillan, 1992.
- Hilmo, Maidie. *Medieval Images, Icons, and Illustrated English Literary Texts*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004.
- Howard, Donald. *Chaucer and the Medieval World*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987.
- Johnson, David and Elaine Treharne, eds. *Readings in Medieval Texts: Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Ker, W. P. *Epic and Romance: Essays in Medieval Literature*. New York: Dover Publications, 1957.
- Lewis, C. S. *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Morrall, John. *Political Thought in Medieval Times*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980.
- Powell, James. *Medieval Studies: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992.
- Sisam, Kenneth, ed. *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955.
- Wallace, David, ed. *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; revised paperback edition, 2002.
- Wrenn, C. L. *A Study of Old English Literature*. London: Harrap, 1967.
- P. S. Students will be encouraged to make extensive use of the Internet and the University Library for additional (or substitute) reading.