

## **English 440 Literature of the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance Fall 2006**

**Instructor:** Dr. Cornelia Burian

**Office Hours:** Wed 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

**Class Times:** WF 2:30-3:45

**Office:** 515

**Office Phone:** tba

**Class Location:** 809

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**Required Text:** Derek Pearsall, ed. *Chaucer to Spenser: An Anthology*

**Course Description:** This course explores literature of the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance. We will focus on historical and biographical contexts, so that students will gain an understanding of the culture in which these texts were produced. The selection of texts by well-known as well as formerly marginalized writers, among them women, demonstrates the course's commitment to tradition and openness to change.

**Course Objectives:**

1. This course will further students' knowledge of Medieval and Renaissance writers.
2. This course will give students a thorough understanding of Medieval and Renaissance culture and its canonical and non-canonical authors.
3. The class will also help students to further their essay-writing skills by focusing on the rules and conventions that govern academic discourse and many other kinds of writing.

**Method of Instruction:** lecture, small group and partner work

### Course Schedule:

|           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| September | 8   | Introduction to the course  |
|           | 13  | Geoffrey Chaucer, excerpts from <i>The Canterbury Tales: The Miller's Prologue and Tale</i> |
|           | 15  | Chaucer, <i>The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale</i>  |
|           | 20  | Chaucer, <i>The Franklin's Prologue and Tale</i>  |
|           | 22  | Chaucer, <i>The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale</i>  |
|           | 27  | William Langland, excerpts from <i>The Vision of Piers Plowman</i>                          |
|           | 29  | "The Gawain-Poet," excerpts from <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>                     |
| October   | 4   | John Gower, excerpts from <i>Confessio Amantis</i>  |
|           | 6   | Julian (Juliana) of Norwich, excerpts from <i>The Revelations of Divine Love</i>            |
|           | 11  | Margery Kempe   |
|           | 13  | Love Poems (by women?) from the <i>Findern Manuscript</i>                                   |
|           | 18  | Popular Ballads: <i>Robin Hood and the Monk</i>   |
|           | 20  | <b>Midterm Exam</b>   |
|           | 25  | Sir Thomas Malory, excerpts from the <i>Morte D'Arthur</i>                                  |
| November  | 1   | William Caxton, <i>Prologue to Malory's Morte D'Arthur</i>                                  |
|           | 3   | William Dunbar, from <i>The Treatise of Two Married Women and the Widow</i>                 |
|           | 8   | Sir Thomas More, excerpts from <i>Utopia</i>  |
|           | 10  | William Roper, <i>The Life of Sir Thomas More</i>   |
|           | 15  | Sir David Lindsay, excerpts from <i>The Squire Meldrum</i>                                  |
|           | 17  | Sir Thomas Wyatt, selected poems  |
|           |   | <b>Pre-writing work due</b>   |
|           | 22 Writing workshop                             |   |
|           | 24 Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, selected poems |   |
| December  | 6   | Roger Asham, excerpts from <i>Toxophilus</i>  |
|           | 8   | Edmund Spenser, excerpts from <i>The Shepherd's Calendar</i>                                |
|           | 13  | Review for the final Exam; <b>Essay due</b>   |

### Distribution of Marks:

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Essay (1000 words) | 20% |
| Presentation       | 20% |
| Midterm            | 20% |
| Final Exam         | 30% |
| Participation      | 10% |

**Marking Guide:** Your essay will be marked according to these categories:

- 1) Content (insights, depth of thinking, grasp of concepts, understanding of text)
- 2) Organization (focus, paragraph order and structure, logical development)
- 3) Support (persuasive evidence, relevant support, effective use of quotations)
- 4) Language (clarity, concision, word choice, style)
- 5) Professionalism (grammar, punctuation, spelling, word usage, proofreading)

- 90% An essay in the 90s is characterized by superior content, excellent organization, compelling support, elegant language and immaculate mechanics. It moreover reveals a depth of understanding that goes beyond what is ordinarily expected at this level.
- 80% An 80s essay is strong in all categories and essentially error-free. The essay's organization greatly contributes to and reflects the content.
- 70% A 70s essay is either good in all categories or it is excellent in most categories but shows minor weaknesses in others. An essay in this category may be highly original, well-argued and nicely organized, but contain several grammatical and punctuation errors.
- 60% A 60s essay is o.k. in all categories or good in some but weak in others. An essay in this range may offer some insight and show a grasp of some basic concepts under investigation, but is marred by a number of minor errors.
- 50% A 50s essay is weak in most categories and satisfactory in at least one area. Essays that make a less-than-compelling argument, but that are grammatically correct, or papers that show some grasp of the subject matter and a few original ideas, but that are poorly organized or flawed by major mechanical problems are marked in this range.
- 50% A failing mark will be assigned to essays that are weak in all categories. Essays in the F range either do not address the topic at hand, or they contain so many errors that they are unintelligible.

The available letter grades for course grades are as follows:

| <u>Letter Grade</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| A+                  |                    |
| A                   | Excellent          |
| A-                  |                    |
| B+                  |                    |
| B                   | Good               |
| B-                  |                    |
| C+                  |                    |
| C                   | Satisfactory       |
| C-                  |                    |
| D+                  |                    |
| D                   | Minimal Pass       |
| F                   | Failure            |

**Grade Assignment:**

|        |    |       |    |
|--------|----|-------|----|
| 96-100 | A+ | 68-71 | C+ |
| 91-95  | A  | 63-67 | C  |
| 86-90  | A- | 60-62 | C- |
| 82-85  | B+ | 56-59 | D+ |
| 75-81  | B  | 50-55 | D  |

**Guidelines and regulations:**

**University policies and deadlines:** please familiarize yourself with the University College’s calendar. It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar.

**Personal Information:** Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as part of taking this class. Any information collected (I will give out a short “student information sheet” to get to know you a bit – your interests, year of study etc.) will not be disclosed to a third party. For further information, please contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@auc-nuc.ca](mailto:privacy@auc-nuc.ca).

**Important Dates:** The last day to enter a course without permission and/or voluntary withdrawal is September 15 2006. The last day to voluntarily withdraw from a class or change to audit without academic penalty is November 15 2006.

**Pre-writing work:** three weeks before your final essay is due, you must hand in an outline containing your tentative thesis statement and a skeletal plan of your essay’s structure, as well as some textual evidence that you plan to use in support of your argument. Please retain a copy of your pre-writing work as well as the finished essay. The outline will not be marked, but I will return it to you with detailed comments.

**Extensions:** I will only grant extensions under exceptional circumstances (such as serious medical reasons, a death in the family or a severe personal crisis). If you need an extension, please contact me *before* the due date.

**Preparation:** Please come to class well prepared. Quickly skimming the assigned material is not enough!

**Absences:** If you have to be away from class for a good reason (paid work schedule or minor health problems do not constitute good reasons), please get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Please retain this syllabus for your records.

**Please feel free to contact me if you have any concerns during the term.  
Hope you enjoy the class and have a great semester!**

