

Department of English & Writing Studies

**English 3316E (001)**  
**Love in the Middle Ages**  
Fall/Winter 2023-24

**Antirequisites:** The former English 3116E.

**Prerequisites:** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

Love may seem like a universal emotion, but as Chaucer notes:

Ek for to wynnen love in sondry ages,  
In sondry londes, sondry ben usages.

If people express their love differently in different ages and lands, does it follow that they also *feel* love differently? This course will explore a variety of expressions and experiences of love in the medieval period, including romantic, erotic, familial, divine, and platonic. Focusing on the literature of late medieval England, we will place this English literature within a broader European context. We will also consider the historical context of these various expressions—such as laws and customs concerning courtship, marriage, and childrearing—as well as the many philosophical questions that the experience of love provokes. While exploring this most fundamental of emotional states, we will learn to read and enjoy Middle English literature.

**Objectives:**

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Read and pronounce Middle English with sufficient competency that they can examine the content, themes, rhetoric, and prosody of Middle English literature;
- Describe and explain the literary and aesthetic expectations of a variety of medieval genres, including (but not limited to) lyric, romance, fabliaux, hagiography, and dream vision;
- Construct and present a complex argument about one or more Middle English texts which demonstrates mastery of the points above, and is firmly placed within existing theoretical and critical debates about the literature.

### Course Materials

The following texts are **required** and may be purchased from Western's Bookstore. You may also order online and the Bookstore will ship these textbooks directly to you. Go to the Bookstore website to place your order: <https://bookstore.uwo.ca>

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Second Edition. Ed. Robert Boenig and Andrew Taylor. Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2012. (CT)

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Ed. Kathryn L. Lynch. New York: Norton, 2007. (DV)

*Middle English Romances*. Ed. Stephen H.A. Shepherd. New York: Norton, 1995. (MR)

Custom Courseware: Love in the Middle Ages.

**\*\*Middle English texts can vary widely between different editions, so please obtain these editions\*\***

**\*\*The FINAL EXAM in this course will be *open-book*: you will be allowed to bring in ONLY the required textbooks on this list, with any notes or glosses you have made in the margins.\*\***

### Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

#### **Reading responses (15%)**

You will be required to submit 5 reading responses over the course of the year, each worth 3% of your course grade. You will have a choice of dates for submission. Reading responses will be assessed on a pass/fail basis. See **Reading Responses** instruction sheet for details.

#### **Attendance and Class Participation (10%)**

To receive full marks for attendance and participation, you must attend almost every class and you must come to class prepared, having read the assigned material. Roughly half of your participation mark will be based on taking your turn in the note-taking rota (see below, Additional Information).

#### **Essay 1 (15%)**

Your first essay will be due on **Friday, Nov 24, 2023**. Topics and instructions will be available in the Assignments folder on OWL.

#### **Essay 2 (30%)**

Your second essay will be due on **Friday, March 29, 2024**. Topics and instructions will be available in the Assignments folder on OWL.

#### **Final exam (30%)**

The final exam will consist of essay questions and will cover material from the entire year. The date of the exam will be set by the Registrar's Office later in the year. You will be permitted to bring all required textbooks, annotated in your own hand, with you into the exam. No other notes will be allowed.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

### Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

### Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

### Additional Information

#### **Policy on Digital Devices:**

There are no digital devices allowed in the classroom: no cell phones and no laptops except for those of the designated note-takers. Each class session will have two designated note-takers who will be responsible for typing notes and sending the document to me at the end of class. I will post the notes for the class on OWL. All students will take turns as designated note-taker. See our OWL site for the note-taking schedule.

#### Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the

accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

The full policy is set out here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

**Religious Accommodation:**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author or source, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

The use of ChatGPT and all other artificial intelligence programs is strictly prohibited in this course. Any assignments that have been produced with the assistance of artificial intelligence will be considered instances of plagiarism.

**Plagiarism Checking:**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support & Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Timetable

(Subject to change)

**Sept 7: Fall Term Classes Begin;** Chaucer, “Merciless Beauty” (handout, DV); “Adam Sciveyn” (handout, DV) (read together in class)

Week 1 (Sept 12-14): *General Prologue* (CT)

Week 2 (Sept 19-21): *The Knight’s Tale* (CT)

~Our class on Tuesday, Sept 19, will be held in Special Collections in the Weldon Library~

Week 3 (Sept 26-28): *The Miller’s Tale* (CT)

October

Week 4 (Oct 3-5): *The Reeve’s Tale, The Cook’s Tale* (CT)

**Oct 9: Thanksgiving**

Week 5 (Oct 10-12): *Lai le Fresne* (CW)

Week 6 (Oct 17-19): *Sir Launfal* (MR)

Week 7 (Oct 24-26): *Sir Orfeo* (MR); excerpt from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (OWL)

**Oct 30-Nov 5: Fall Reading Week**

Week 8 (Nov 7-9): *Havelok the Dane* (MR)

Week 9 (Nov 14-16): *The Weddyng of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell* (MR)

Week 10 (Nov 21-23): *The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale* (CT)

~Essay 1 Due Friday, Nov 24~

Week 11 (Nov 28-30): *The Clerk’s Tale* (CT)

Week 12 (Dec 5-7): *The Franklin’s Tale* (CT)

**Dec 8: Fall Term Classes End**

**Jan 8: Winter Term Begins**

Week 14 (Jan 9-11): Marian lyrics, Passion lyrics (CW)

Week 15 (Jan 16-18): *The Prioress’s Prologue and Tale* (CT)

Week 16 (Jan 23-25): Excerpts from Julian of Norwich and *Legenda aurea* (CW)

Week 17 (Jan 30-Feb 1): Prologue to *Legend of Good Women* (DV)

Week 18 (Feb 6-8): *Legend of Dido, Legend of Cleopatra* (DV)

Week 19 (Feb 13-15): *Parliament of Fowls* (DV)

**Feb 19-23: Winter Reading Week**

Week 20 (Feb 27-29): *The Nuns' Priest's Tale* (CT)

Week 21 (Mar 5-7): *The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale* (CT); McAlpine, "The Pardoner's Homosexuality and How it Matters" (OWL)

Week 22 (Mar 12-14): Excerpt from *The Book of Margery Kempe* (CW); Hsy, "Be More Strange and Bold: Kissing Lepers and Female Same-Sex Desire in *The Book of Margery Kempe*" (OWL)

Week 23 (Mar 19-21): Medieval love on film

~Bibliography for Essay 2 due Thursday, Mar 21~

Week 24 (Mar 26-28): Essay SOS

~Essay 2 due on Friday, March 29~

Week 25 (Apr 2-4): Exam review, course wrap-up

**Apr 8: Winter Term Classes End**

Apr 11-30: Final Exam Period