Course Description

Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* is a fourteenth-century tale collection whose mixture of formal ingenuity, generic experimentation, and social satire continues to excite admiration and imitation down to our own day. In this course, students will consider many animating features of the work: the multiplicity of voices and social visions; the use and abuse of moral rhetoric; the instability of gender and genre; ideas of authorship and audience; and the emergence of the vernacular as a literary medium in the late medieval period. Our main goal throughout the term is to situate Chaucer’s tales within relevant linguistic, cultural, and political contexts. Ultimately, the course should enable you to sharpen your sense of the vitality, historical difference, cultural dynamics, and ethical demands of early English literature.

Proposed Assignments

- quizzes and short responses (20%)
- language and translation test (10%)
- research paper (30%)
- midterm and final exam (50%)

Proposed Texts

- Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*