

Seminar in Medieval English Literature

Section 80

ENGL 216

Spring 2025 Fully Online 4 Unit(s) 01/23/2025 to 05/12/2025 Modified 01/23/2025

Course Information

Course Description

This class is an introduction to the literature of medieval Europe and the methods of studying earlier literature. We will look at linguistic developments, historical backgrounds, textual history and cultural context. Chaucer will be read in the original Middle English. Not to worry! Middle English can be mastered with just a modest effort at learning some new grammatical features.

Course Description and Requisites

Study of selected writings in medieval English literature and their continental sources. With prior permission of graduate advisor may be repeatable once for credit.

Prerequisite: Classified standing or instructor consent.

Note: This course satisfies graduate-level GWAR in this master's program.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

Please do not use AI for your research or writing. Class will involve a lot of active participation and close reading of the assigned texts.

Program Information

This course is particularly useful for the MA Exam, Part Two.

Course Goals

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Use the history of the Middle Ages to make informed analyses of medieval texts.

Learn how to read and translate Middle English.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the MA English program, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research
3. Demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. Demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to
 - a. organize and present material in a cogent fashion,
 - b. formulate and defend original arguments,
 - c. employ effectively the language of their discipline and
 - d. write under time constraints.
5. Demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.

Upon successful completion of the MFA in Creative Writing, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a high level of ability to propose and complete a publishable, full-length work of literature in a primary genre concentration (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or scriptwriting).
2. Demonstrate high level of proficiency to write works of literature in a secondary genre concentration (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or scriptwriting).
3. Demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of literary history, literary theory, and craft and theory of creative writing.

4. Demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the evaluation and interpretation of literary texts.
5. Demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to:
 - a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion;
 - b) formulate and defend original arguments;
 - c) employ effectively the language of their discipline;
 - d) write under time constraints.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Materials

Required Texts/Readings

Selected Old English poems (online)

The Canterbury Tales: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/CT/1:1.2?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>

Njal's Saga, Penguin Classics

The Letters of Heloise and Abelard, Penguin Classics

The Book of Margery Kempe, Penguin Classics

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Requirements and Assignments

Reaction Paper to <i>Old English Poems</i>	15%
Reaction Paper to <i>Njal's Saga</i>	15%
Reaction Paper to <i>Letters of Heloise and Abelard</i>	15%
Chaucer Translation Quiz	15%
Reaction Paper to <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i>	15%
Final Paper	25%

Final Paper of 2,500 words can be on any text and topic but should incorporate linguistic, literary, cultural and historical research and theory into a significant problem of medieval scholarship. Please see me if you want help to articulate your topic or thesis.

Late Policy:

In the case of a documented, genuine and compelling emergency beyond the student's control, late work can be accepted up to one week late. For missed deadlines, there will be a 10% penalty and work must be submitted within one week. Any work later than one week can be accepted with a 20% penalty.

The usual percentages apply:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>		<i>96 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>		<i>93 to 95.9%</i>
<i>A minus</i>		<i>90 to 92.9%</i>
<i>B plus</i>		<i>86 to 89.9 %</i>
<i>B</i>		<i>83 to 85.9%</i>
<i>B minus</i>		<i>80 to 82.9%</i>

University Policies (Required)

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>. Make sure to visit this page, review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.

✓ Grading Information

Course Requirements and Assignments

Reaction Paper to <i>Old English Poems</i>	15%
Reaction Paper to <i>Njal's Saga</i>	15%
Reaction Paper to <i>Letters of Heloise and Abelard</i>	15%
Chaucer Translation Quiz	15%
Reaction Paper to <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i>	15%
Final Paper	25%

Final Paper of 2,500 words can be on any text and topic but should incorporate linguistic, literary, cultural and historical research and theory into a significant problem of medieval scholarship. Please see me if you want help to articulate your topic or thesis.

Late Policy:

In the case of a documented, genuine and compelling emergency beyond the student's control, late work can be accepted up to one week late. For missed deadlines, there will be a 10% penalty and work must be submitted within one week. Any work later than one week can be accepted with a 20% penalty.

The usual percentages apply:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>		<i>96 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>		<i>93 to 95.9%</i>

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A minus</i>		<i>90 to 92.9%</i>
<i>B plus</i>		<i>86 to 89.9 %</i>
<i>B</i>		<i>83 to 85.9%</i>
<i>B minus</i>		<i>80 to 82.9%</i>

University Policies (Required)

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>". Make sure to visit this page, review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Course Schedule

Week <i>(Optional)</i>	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines <i>(If appropriate, add any extra column(s) to meet your needs.)</i>
1	Jan 27	Introduction to course and Old English poetry
2	Feb 3	<p>Read <i>The Wanderer</i>, http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=get&type=text&id=wdr</p> <p>Read <i>The Seafarer</i>, http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=get&type=text&id=Sfr</p> <p>Read <i>The Wife's Lament</i>, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/157730/the-wifes-lament</p>
3	Feb 10	<p>Read <i>The Dream of the Rood</i>, https://sacred-texts.com/neu/ascp/a02_05.htm</p> <p>https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/159129/dream-of-the-rood-translation</p> <p>Read <i>The Battle of Maldon</i></p> <p>https://www.oldenglishaerobics.net/maldon.php</p> <p>https://oldenglishpoetry.camden.rutgers.edu/battle-of-maldon/</p> <p><u>REACTION PAPER TO OLD ENGLISH POETRY DUE</u></p>

Week (Optional)	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines (If appropriate, add any extra column(s) to meet your needs.)
4	Feb 17	Chaucer, <i>General Prologue</i> lines 1-100 (description of the Knight), lines 118-162 (description of the Prioress), lines 285-330 (description of the Clerk), lines 669-714 (description of the Pardoner) https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/CT/1:1.2?rgn=div2;view=fulltext https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/pages/text-and-translations Read <i>The Knight's Tale</i>
5	Feb 24	Finish <i>Knight's Tale</i> if needed, Begin Chaucer, <i>Clerk's Tale</i>
6	Mar 3	Chaucer, <i>Pardoner's Tale</i>
7	Mar 10	Chaucer, <i>Nun's Priest's Tale</i>
8	Mar 17	<u>MIDDLE ENGLISH TRANSLATION QUIZ</u> Read <i>Njal's Saga</i> , Chapters 1-44
9	Mar 24	<i>Njal's Saga</i> , Chapters 45-130
10	Mar 31	<u>Spring Break</u>

Week (Optional)	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines (If appropriate, add any extra column(s) to meet your needs.)
11	Apr 7	<p><i>Njal's Saga</i>, Chapters 131-159</p> <p><u>REACTION PAPER TO NJAL'S SAGA DUE</u></p>
12	Apr 14	<p>Read Heloise and Abelard, <i>Historia Calamitatum</i></p>
13	Apr 21	<p>Heloise and Abelard, <i>Letters</i> 2 – 6</p> <p><u>REACTION PAPER TO HELOISE AND ABELARD DUE</u></p>
14	Apr 28	<p>Read <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i>, Introduction – Chapter 34, pp. 1-122</p>
14	May 5	<p><i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i>, Chapters 35-78, pp.122-227</p> <p><u>REACTION PAPER TO MARGERY KEMPE DUE</u></p>

Week <i>(Optional)</i>	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines <i>(If appropriate, add any extra column(s) to meet your needs.)</i>
15	May 12	<i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i> , Chapters 79- Book II, Ch.10 (end), pp. 228-297 -
	May 16	<u>FINAL PAPER DUE 5:15 pm</u>