

CHAUCER FINAL EXAM

SPRING 2008

7 to 10 pages due **Wednesday 21 May**, 4:00 pm in my Bartlett mailbox. You *must* complete this exam if your grade is C- or below. Otherwise, you can choose between this exam and a final paper, both due 21 May.

I. Examples. *Two to three sentences each. Do all. The aim here is to cull information.*

1. Give ten examples of characters (including pilgrims) who are compared to animals. Name the pilgrims and the animals.
 2. Which adjectives are used to describe Islam? Give several examples.
 3. On the road to Canterbury, how many geographical landmarks (including towns) do we see? Name them.
 4. Which characters are from the north of England?
 5. Name a dozen saints who are invoked by pilgrims. Since each saint is the saint *of* something (a saint of earaches, a saint of lost causes, and so on), also list what each named saint is the saint *of*. (For example, "St. Jude, saint of lost causes.")
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II. Short Answers. *Five to eight sentences each. Do all. The aim here is to connect information to possible themes. Questions 3 and 4 concern poesis.*

1. Which pilgrims does Harry Bailey speak with most? Give line numbers for proof. Why do you think he speaks with these pilgrims most often?
2. List and describe five architectural settings. In each of your descriptions, suggest how the setting might act as a symbol for the theme of the story they are in.
3. Which tales (not prologues) do you find the most realistic? Name a few, choose one, and explain some poetic devices that Chaucer uses to make that one realistic.
4. List some of the cuckolds from the tales we have read. How do you react to them before and after they are cuckolded? How does Chaucer effect your reaction?
5. How do the examples offered by the Monk differ from those of the Manciple? What might this say about their respective jobs?

6. We spoke about how the pilgrimage begins with a meal at a tavern and ends with a meal at a church. What relationship do the Knight and the Parson have to these liminal points?
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III. Long Answers. *One page each. Answer four. The aim here is to describe a theme briefly, then give examples of how it plays out in one or more tales.*

1. Sovereignty. Briefly discuss the theme of sovereignty in Chaucer. How is a desire for sovereignty over others fulfilled or compromised in the *Tales*? Give general examples from several tales, and very specific examples from one tale.
2. Tradition and Innovation. The *Tales* brim with images of the old and the new, of tradition and innovation, of the old order and the new order. How do tradition and innovation complement or oppose each other in the *Tales*? Give very specific examples from several tales.
3. Social classes. The *general Prologue* to the *Tales* has been called an estates satire. As the pilgrims travel along, tensions between social classes erupt. How does the interaction between social classes operate in one specific tale? Choose the tale and discuss.
4. Prologues and Beginnings. Not only does the *Canterbury Tales* begin with a prologue, but each tale does, as well. Looking specifically at *poesis*, describe how Chaucer constructs his beginnings. Compare several prologues.
5. Bodies and Souls. There is much made in the *Tales* about the relationship between a character's outward appearance and his or her inner qualities. Describe some of the pilgrims whose bodies reflect their inner life, and some of the pilgrims whose bodies mask their inner life. How can you tell? Give very specific examples.
6. Love and Sex. Like the Manciple, Chaucer distinguishes between Dionysian ecstasy and Apollonian restraint. A number of the *Tales* contrast relationships based on true love with relationships based on physical desire. What do various pilgrims say? Give very specific examples from a number of tales, *or* choose one tale only.

Thank you all for a wonderful class. I came to appreciate *The Canterbury Tales* much more during our discussions and through your papers. For that I am grateful. Have a great summer. To those of you who are graduating, good luck!—SH