

# CHAUCE

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Tuesdays & Thursdays  
9:30am – 10:45am

Syllabus and Schedule are online at <http://umass.bede.net>  
The online version always supersedes this printed version.

## Course:

John Dryden called Chaucer “the father of English poetry,” and equated him to Homer and Virgil. Chaucer, said Dryden, “is a perpetual fountain of good sense.” This course introduces you to one of the most influential story collections of English literary history, *The Canterbury Tales*. Bawdy, profound, rude, and beautiful—Chaucer’s tales continue to inspire, delight, confuse, and awe their readers. We will read his tales in their original Middle English. We may also read works by Chaucer’s English, French, and Italian contemporaries in order to contextualize his tales. No previous knowledge of Middle English is required. Translations, short paper, and a take-home final exam.

## Attendance:

Please attend classes. University guidelines for absence will be enforced. Check your handbook. My lectures are copyrighted material. Any use of my lectures in written, electronic, or recorded form without my prior consent is illegal.

## Books:

Books are at Amherst Books, 8 Main St., in Amherst. 1) *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson et al. 2) Winthrop Wetherbee, *Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*, 2nd ed., 2003.

## Structure & Objectives:

The focus of the course is Chaucer’s art. In order to appreciate it, you will need to be comfortable reading Middle English. His art just doesn’t scan as well in modern English. **You are also expected to complete your readings and translations prior to each class**—the readings average several hundred lines of Middle English per day.

## Conferences:

Please meet with me at least once during the semester (at the least to check your grades to ensure my gradebook and your grades match up). Please make an appointment to meet at a time convenient to you and I will try to oblige.

## Assignments:

There is one paper, 1500 wds.(35%); three sample translations (30%); and a final exam (35%)

- YOUR PAPER MUST BE HANDED IN AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE DATE DUE. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.
- No electronic submissions.
- ALL MISSED ASSIGNMENTS GET AN “F.” If you foresee being absent, please let me know well beforehand. Check “Policies” in the help section.
- PLAGIARISM GETS AN “F.” This may be for the paper or for the course, at my discretion. Please check your student handbook and university guidelines for more on plagiarism.
- ALL PAPERS MUST BE TYPED OR WORD-PROCESSED. Not doing so reduces your grade by one letter-value (e.g., “C” down to “D”).