

English 416

Final Paper

Due in my mailbox.

Topic



GEOFFREY CHAUCER

During our reading of *The Canterbury Tales*, we noticed that the pilgrimage begins with an everyday meal at a tavern and ends with a sacred meal at a church. This distinction between the **sacred and the profane**, between the **physical and the spiritual**, between the **body and the soul** occurs throughout the *Tales*. We've also seen the theme manifested in images of **fruit and chaff**, **truth and rhetoric**, **appearance and reality**.

In your final paper, trace one of these themes in one of the *Tales*. Describe how (a small number of) images, characters, settings, phrases, and so forth maintain (or disrupt) this major theme. As you write, please try to focus on particular images and words, rather than writing generally about abstractions.

(To put the question another way: using our categories of *mimesis*, *poesis*, and *pathos*, how does Chaucer represent the thematic tension described above? What methods, images, characters, settings, and phrases does he use? And what effect do they have on you?)

- 5 to 7 pages, more if you need them.
- Due last day of exams in my mailbox.