



"The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne": Geoffrey Chaucer and the Medieval world

Start date 06 March 2020 **End date** 08 March 2020

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ

Tutor Dr Scott Annett **Course code** 1920NRX034

Director of ISP and LL Sarah Ormrod

For further information on this course, please contact the Lifelong Learning team Zara Kuckelhaus, Fleur Kerrecoe
shortcourses@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 764637

To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Dr Scott Annett

Dr Scott Annett is an experienced teacher of medieval literature, having taught courses in both the Faculty of English and the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages at the University of Cambridge. He has experience working on authors as diverse as Chaucer, Marie de France, Dante and the Gawain Poet. Indeed, the relationship between medieval English and medieval Italian literature is one of his primary research interests. Dr Annett enjoys working on texts written in various languages (Latin, English, Italian and Anglo-Norman), as well as attending to the complex theological, philosophical and literary questions posed by authors of this time.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

- 19:00 Dinner
- 20:30 – 22:00 **Session 1: An Introduction to Chaucer and the General Prologue**
- 22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

- 07:30 Breakfast
- 09:00 – 10:30 **Session 2: Chivalry and courtly love (The Knight's Prologue and Tale)**
- 10:30 Coffee
- 11:00 – 12:30 **Session 3: Sex and social class (The Miller's Prologue and Tale)**
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 16:00 Free
- 16:00 Tea
- 16:30 – 18:00 **Session 4: Female independence and "auctoritee" (The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale)**
- 18:00 Free
- 18:30 Dinner
- 20:00 - 21:30 **Session 5: What does it mean to be noble? (The Clerk's Prologue and Tale)**
- 21:15 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

- 07:30 Breakfast
- 09:00 – 10:30 **Session 6: Death and the root of all evil (The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale)**
- 10:30 Coffee
- 11:00 – 12:30 **Session 7: Chaucer's as the "father of English poetry?" (The Monk's Prologue and Tale)**
- 12:45 Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

This course explores Chaucer's writing, focusing on the *Canterbury Tales*. Particular attention will be paid to medieval culture and to Chaucer's place within a broader medieval context.

Session 1: An Introduction to Chaucer and the General Prologue

Session 2: Chivalry and courtly love (The Knight's Prologue and Tale)

Session 3: Sex and social class (The Miller's Prologue and Tale)

Session 4: Female independence and "auctoritee" (The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale)

Session 5: What does it mean to be noble? (The Clerk's Prologue and Tale)

Session 6: Death and the root of all evil (The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale)

Session 7: Chaucer's as the "father of English poetry?" (The Monk's Prologue and Tale)

Content:

This course presents an opportunity for those new to Chaucer and medieval literature to learn more about the wonderful, witty and subtle storytelling to be found in *The Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer's work provides a fascinating insight into the medieval world, allowing students to explore the theological, political and cultural tensions within England (and Europe) at the time. Indeed, Chaucer's extremely varied career as a poet, diplomat and civil servant provided him with access to medieval society in all of its diversity, whilst at the same time bringing him into contact with groundbreaking European literary works such as Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Students will enjoy exploring the complex and often surprisingly contemporary, questions posed by Chaucer's great work and throughout this course the experimental and *avant-garde* nature of *The Canterbury Tales* will be emphasized. Throughout the various Prologues and Tales, the multifaceted and nuanced voices of Chaucer's characters combine to interrogate, challenge and explore a range of key issues. As part of this course, students will reflect upon the independence of women, the nature of chivalry, and social class (and nobility) in medieval England, as well as sex, greed and the extent to which Chaucer might be considered to be a moral (or amoral) writer.

Presentation of the course:

This course will take place primarily through group discussions, guided by the lecturer. All students will be encouraged to participate fully in discussion of the texts and the issues surrounding them, and may be invited to prepare informal individual presentations on particular aspects of a text or historical issue.

As a result of the unit, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of medieval literature and in particular Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* within its cultural and historical context;
- Show awareness of critical and theoretical approaches to literature from the period;
- Develop keener close reading skills, particularly when engaging with texts in medieval texts;
- Articulate and discuss the broader concepts of the course and the relationships between the texts, particularly Chaucer's writing and later texts.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

Required reading

- “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, “The Knight’s Prologue and Tale”, “The Clerk’s Prologue and Tale”, “The Miller’s Prologue and Tale”, “The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale” in Chaucer, Geoffrey,
- *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. by Jill Mann (London: Penguin Books, 2005) *

Supplementary reading

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Andrew, Malcolm	<i>Critical Essays on Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales</i>	(Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991)
Bisson, Lillian M	<i>Chaucer and the Late Medieval World</i>	(Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998)
Boitani, Piero, and Jill Mann	<i>The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer</i>	(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
Brown, Peter	, <i>Chaucer at Work: The Making of the Canterbury Tales</i>	(London: Longman, 1994)
Cooper, Helen	<i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	• (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
McTaggart, Anne	<i>Shame and Guilt in Chaucer</i>	• (New York: Palgrave, 2012)
Pearsall, Derek	<i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	(London: Allen & Unwin, 1985)
Wallace, David	<i>Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy</i>	(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997)
Wright, David	<i>The Canterbury Tales: a verse translation</i>	(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Website addresses

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee, lunch and dinner will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 15 January 2020