English 333: Chaucer’s Shorter Poems
Fall 2011: T/Th 2-3:20
Professor Ingrid Nelson: inelson@amherst.edu
Office: Johnson Chapel 14
Office Hours: Tu 11:30-12:30; W 1-2; and by appointment.

Description
A study of Chaucer’s “dream visions” and short lyric poems, which explore topics as diverse as love, death, fame, and politics. This course will introduce students to Chaucer’s poetic style and themes, and to the medieval culture in which he lived. All texts will be read in Middle English (of which no prior knowledge is required).

Required textbooks
All texts are available at Amherst Books.

On Reserve

Assignments
2) Papers. This course requires two formal papers, the first of 5-7 pages, and the second of 7-9 pages. The first paper requires a thesis-driven critical argument on a single Chaucerian text, supported by close-reading. The second paper, also a thesis-driven critical argument supported by close reading, requires the comparison of two Chaucerian texts from the course. Detailed assignments will be provided two weeks before the papers are due.
3) Exam. Because a working knowledge of Chaucer’s English is necessary to analyze and enjoy his poetry, this course includes an exam on Chaucer’s language in the fifth week of class. You will have access to several language learning tools, in the form of out-of-class assignments using the METRO website (see below), in-class language review, and as-needed meetings with Professor Nelson. Please do not hesitate to set up an appointment with me to address your concerns or confusion about the language portion of the course. It is designed to enhance, not obstruct, your pleasure in reading Chaucer!
4) Participation. Attendance, timely completion of the reading and active participation are requirements of this course. More than 2 unexcused absences over the course of the semester will significantly lower your final grade. Excused absences require a doctor’s or college official’s note.

METRO: Middle English Teaching Resource Online
The METRO website, hosted by Harvard University, provides a wide range of self-paced exercises to enable students to learn Middle English. You can access it at http://metro.fas.harvard.edu.
Policy on Turning in Papers and Extensions
All papers must be submitted in class in hard copy. No extensions will be granted except in case of documented emergencies.

Special Accommodations
Students needing special accommodations for test-taking or other assignments should provide a doctor’s note and arrange to meet with me in the first two weeks of class to discuss their individual needs. I am committed to making this course accessible for all students; please do not hesitate to make an appointment with me to discuss any concerns.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments
Sept 6 (Tu): Introduction
Sept 8: (Th): Introduction to Chaucer’s Language; Book of the Duchess: lines 1-557. Contexts: Ovid, from Metamorphoses (pp. 251-57).

Sept 13 (Tu): No class.

Sept 20 (Tu): Parliament of Fowls, lines 1-294; Contexts: Cicero, From Scipio’s Dream (pp. 258-64); Macrobius, From the Commentary on Scipio’s Dream (pp. 265-67); Handout: The Song of Songs. METRO, Chaucer Platform 1, Grammar

Sept 27 (Tu): Exam review. House of Fame, lines 1-508.; METRO, Chaucer Platform 1, Reading.
Sept 29 (Th): Exam on Middle English.

Oct 4 (Tu): House of Fame, lines 509-1090; METRO, Chaucer Platform 2, Diction
Oct 6 (Th): House of Fame, lines 1091-1548; METRO, Chaucer Platform 2, Figures of Speech

Oct 11 (Tu): Fall Break; No class.
Oct 13 (Th): Close reading assignment due. House of Fame, lines 1549-2158; Contexts: From Ovid, House of Fame (pp. 257-58).

Oct 18 (Tu): Troilus and Criseyde, Book 1 (all); METRO, Chaucer Platform 2, Meter and Verse.

Oct 25 (Tu): Handout: Boethius, from The Consolation of Philosophy, Book 1. Prepare for Special Collections.
Oct 27 (Th): First Paper Due (5-7 pages; single text); Visit to Special Collections

Nov 1 (Tu): Troilus and Criseyde, Book 2, lines 1044-1757; Book 3, lines 1-448; METRO, Chaucer Platform 2, Point of View.

Nov 8 (Tu): *Troilus and Criseyde* Book 4, lines 1-805; METRO, Chaucer Platform 2, Syntax.
Nov 10 (Th): *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book 4, lines 806-1701.

Nov 17 (Th): *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book 5, lines 1016-1870.

**Happy Thanksgiving! Enjoy your break.**

Nov 29 (Tu): *The Legend of Good Women*: Prologue (lines 1-579); Excerpts from *Romance of the Rose*, esp. description of flower and the end.
Dec 1 (Th): *The Legend of Good Women*: Dido, Philomela. Ovid, from *Heroides* (pp. 245-51).
Virgil, from *Aeneid* (pp. 231-44);

Dec 6 (Tu): Short poems. From *Dream Visions*: “ABC,” “Merciless Beaute,” “To Rosemounde,”; Handouts: “Complaint of Venus,” “Complaint to Pity”

Dec 13 (Tu): **Second Paper Due (7-9 pages; two texts)**. Wrap-up and Review.