

EL 201.02: Medieval English Literature
 Class Time: M, 14-16:00; W 10-11:00
 Office Hours (TB 440): TBA, By appointment
 Email: j.kismetbell@boun.edu.tr



Course Description

This course will introduce students to a wide range of medieval literary and natural philosophical texts, with Geoffrey Chaucer our primary focus. In addition to recognizing and appreciating medieval (Middle English) forms and genres, literary conventions and strategies, themes, plots, and characters, we will read a number of texts focused on an often-confusing medieval “style of thought.” Throughout, we will draw our attention to various aspects of English life in the Middle Ages, including feudal structures and courtly culture, the diversity of religious experience and the development of a standard English vernacular. This background information will offer students a fuller understanding of Chaucer’s legacy as well as help students recognize and appreciate medieval sensibilities, which began to change during and after the renaissance.

Texts and Resources

The course packet will be available at the Boğaziçi University library copy shop. Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* is available for purchase at the Pandora Bookstore on North Campus. Supplemental information will be available on my website:
www.jamesonkismetbell.com

Course Requirements

Your final course grade will be based on the following percentage distribution:

*Participation and Attendance: 10%

This is a lecture and discussion-based class. Everyone is encouraged to join actively in the conversations and debates. In order to participate, you need to be present; therefore, full attendance is expected. Those who do not attend 75% of the class will not be allowed to take the final exam.

*Quizzes and Assignments: 25%

*Midterm: 30%

*Final Exam: 35%

Semester Schedule

Week 1

Sept 24 Introduction
Sept 26 cont.

Week 2 *Philosophy and Allegory*

Oct 1 Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (Book II) (6th c.)
Oct 3 cont.

Week 3 *Body, Allegory, Natural Philosophy, Gender*

Oct 8 Anonymous, *Physiologus* (2nd- 12th c.)
Oct 10 Marie de France, *Chevrefoil* (12th c.)

Week 4 *Body, Allegory, Natural Philosophy*

Oct 15 Anonymous, *The Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* (12th c.)
Oct 17 cont.

—**First Writing Assignment**—

Week 5 *Breton Lays, Romance*

Oct 22 Anonymous, *Sir Orfeo* (14th c.)
Oct 23 cont.

Week 6 *Women Writers/Ecstatic Visions*

Oct 29 (Republic Day) No Class
Oct 31 Hildegard v. Bingen, *Liber Divinorum Operum* (Book III) (12th c.)

—Midterm—

Week 7

Women Writers/Ecstatic Visions

Nov 5
Nov 8

Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margerie Kempe* (Book I) (15th c.)
cont.

Week 8

Medieval Drama

Nov 12
Nov 14

Anonymous, *Everyman* (15th c.)
cont.

—Second Writing Assignment—

Week 9

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* (15th c.)

Nov 19
Nov 21

“Prologue”
cont.

Week 10

Nov 26
Nov 28

“The Miller’s Tale”
cont.

—Memorization Proposal is due—

Week 11

Dec 3
Dec 5

“The Wife of Bath’s Tale”
cont.

—Third Writing Assignment—

Week 12

Dec 10
Dec 12

“The Pardoner’s Tale”
cont.

Week 13

Dec 17
Dec 19

“The Nun’s Priest’s Tale” and/or “The Prioress’ Tale”
cont.

—Fourth assignment: Memorization—