

Paper 2: Research Paper on Chaucer's Love Poetry

Content: Write an 8-10-page-paper (plus a works cited/works consulted page) on any work on the syllabus. You may also write on a comparative topic that affects more than one work, but make sure that it is a well-focused and limited topic that you can deal with adequately.

Suggestions for Topics

1. If you want to continue with the research you did in Paper 1 and now apply it and your analysis to a Chaucerian work, you can do that. Please consult with me first.
2. Applying medieval theories of love to one or more of Chaucer's works, discuss Chaucer's adherence or deviation from those theories (see bibliography on medieval love on the website).
3. Examine how Chaucer dealt with Love in War in one or more of his works.
4. If you are versed in modern critical approaches, apply one of them to one or more of Chaucer's works. Choose from Feminism, New Historicism, Marxism, Post-Colonialism, Psychoanalysis, Queer Theory, etc.
5. What is the difference between the Temple of Venus, the House of Fame, and the House of Rumor in *HF*? Discuss the significance of these locales in the poem as a whole and/or compare with other poems' locales.
6. Contrast the roles of Venus and Nature in *PF* or examine the figure of Venus in one or more works.
7. Chaucer calls *TC* "litel myn tragedye" (line 1786). Discuss the poem as a tragedy. What definition of tragedy would Chaucer be working from?
8. Discuss one of the *TC* main characters: Criseyde, Pandarus, or Troilus.
9. Compare Chaucer's poem with Boccaccio's *II Filostrato*, OR Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, OR Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (Shakespeare should be available in the library; the others are in our book).
10. Discuss the roles of Fortune, Fate, and the Furies in the *TC*.
11. Discuss Chaucer's use of the Trojan story, or of classical literature and mythology in the poem. You might also consider comparing *TC* with "The Complaint of Mars," or "The Knight's Tale," if you know it.
12. Is *TC* the "first novel in English literature," as has been alleged (by Kittredge)? To consider this question you will have to think about the novel as a genre and define it in your paper. OR consider Chaucer's narrative technique in the poem.

13. Consider the Prologue of the *Legend of Good Women* as a dream vision, OR compare its use of the dream vision form with one of the earlier poems. (Compare the two versions, if you like.)

14. Consider the *LGW* as a collection of tales restoring the reputation of women in love. Are they successful? OR consider the tales as secular Saints' legends ("seintes legende[s] of Cupide).

15. Compare the Prologue of *LGW* to the Prologue of Osbern Bokenham's *A Legend of Holy Women* (PR1840.B5 L4413 1992).

16. Chaucer's use of his classical sources in the *LGW*. Focus on selected legends.

17. **A topic of your choice to be cleared with me first.**

Format: I will **NOT ACCEPT** papers that do not follow the guidelines outlined in the online *Guide to Style* containing the format guidelines of the *MLA*, plus instructions on writing papers, sample introductory paragraphs with developed theses, frequent errors in critical writing, and a list of tools for the literature student. Review documentation procedures and follow the distinctions outlined for shorter and longer prose quotations. Persistent errors in format will result in lower grades.

Sources: You should draw on a minimum of 5 scholarly sources to support your thesis; this means you might actually have to look at 10 to find 5 useful ones. Only one of those sources should be an online source, such as a respectable website. In case of doubt, run the source by me first. Full-text databases are **NOT** considered online sources, as they usually only make regular scholarly journal articles available online. You should consult scholarly books and journals. Start with the *International MLA Bibliography* (NOT the Index of Periodicals) in and/or the *International Medieval Bibliography* in the UNM database system. Links to those and others are on the class website. After you identify potential books and articles in these databases, you need to check if they might be available through one of the online full-text resources or in the stacks in the form of essay collections. If not, you can order them through Interlibrary Loan (ILL): <http://illiad.unm.edu/illiad/logon.html>. Articles come through in a few days as pdf files, but you clearly must plan ahead. You should also search **Libros** for books on your topic, and you might try **WorldCat** in the database section. It lists all books published, while Libros only contains what UNM has.

Structure: I would like to reiterate that you are writing a **formal** paper, both in content and in style. Thus, your paper needs an introduction providing a context and a precisely phrased thesis at the end of the first paragraph (see especially #2-3 in *Guide to Style*). I encourage you to edit, revise, and proofread your papers, striving for coherence, grammatical correctness, and good transitions. **First drafts rarely hold up to critical scrutiny. I am available in office hours or via email to discuss ideas, outlines, and drafts of your paper with you before it is due.** Sample papers for this assignment can be accessed on the class website with a UNM netid and password.

Due Dates: Email proposal: Tuesday, 11.18.2008; bring final paper to class: Thursday, 12.4.2008.