

Essay Topics

Please hand in your essay during the seminar in Week 1, Term 2 (11 January 2018)

- The opposition between ‘experience’ and ‘auctoritee’ structures much of Chaucer’s poetic thought. In what ways is the opposition explored in his early dream visions? Discuss at least two works among the following: *Book of the Duchess*; *House of Fame*; *Parlement of Foules*.
- Explore Chaucer’s construction of his narrator-persona in at least three poems studied this term.
- While the ostensible subject of nearly all of Chaucer’s early poetry studied this term is ‘love’, his real interest actually focuses on the complexities of ‘language’. Discuss at least two works.
- In what ways does Chaucer’s poetry explore, interrogate, or critique traditional medieval constructions of gender? Discuss at least two works.
- Both the *Roman de la Rose* and Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* are ‘central medieval writings that Chaucer comprehensively imbibed by translating into English’ (Alcuin Blamires, 2007). In what ways does either of these two poems structure Chaucer’s poetic thought and poetic method? Discuss at least two of Chaucer’s works studied this term, and their relationship to either the *Rose* or the *Consolation*.
- Analyse Chaucer’s use and manipulation of classical sources and/or traditions in any two the poems we studied this term.
- Examine how Chaucer’s poetry deliberately plays with the conventions of multiple literary genres and/or traditions. Discuss at least three works.
- In Chaucer’s poetry, ‘the element of play [...] does not preclude seriousness, but often challenges the reader to distinguish with any certainty between *ernest* and *game*.’ (Malcolm Andrew). Discuss at least two works.
- Devise a question/title of your own, by prior consultation with your Tutor.