

DENB 2405

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2005

COURSE II

PAPER A3 (a) CHAUCER, LANGLAND AND GOWER

Wednesday, 25 May, 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

2005

Time allowed – Three hours

Answer *two* questions. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the quotations and questions.

Trinity Term 2005

Do *not* turn over until told that you may do so.

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1. Oon seyde that Omer made lyes,
Feynyng in hys poetries,
And was to Grekes favorable;
Therfor held he hyt but fable.

(*House of Fame*, 1477-80)

Discuss Chaucer's engagement with the 'truth' of poetry AND / OR with the authority of past *auctores*.

2. For wel I wot that folk han here-beforn
Of makynge ropen, and lad away the corn;
And I come after, gleyng here and there,
And am ful glad if I may fynde an ere
Of any goodly word that they han left.

(*The Legend of Good Women*, G 61-5)

Discuss Chaucer's presentation of himself as an author AND / OR his relationship to his literary sources.

3. O blisful light of which the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thridde heven faire!
O sonnes lief, O Joves doughter deere,
Pleasance of love, O goodly debonaire,
In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire!

(*Troilus and Criseyde*, III. 1-5)

Discuss the exploration of love AND / OR 'gentillesse' in Chaucer's works.

4. 'And syn that thise thinges ben thus (that is to seyn, syn that necessite nis nat in thinges by the devyne prescience), thanne is ther fredom of arbitrie, that duelleth hool and unwemmed to mortal men [...]' (*Boece*, Book V, Prosa 6, ll. 286-90).
Discuss Chaucer's engagement with Boethian ideas of providence, fate and free will.

5. I fynde ek in stories elleswhere,
Whan thorough the body hurt was Diomede
Of Troilus, tho wep she many a teere
[...]
And for to helen hym of hys sorwes smerte,
Men seyn – I not – that she yaf hym hire herte.

(*Troilus and Criseyde*, V. 1044-50)

What are the uses of Chaucer's narrative personae?

DENB 2405 .

6. Lo, whiche sleighes and subtilitees
In wommen been! For ay as bisy as bees
Been they, us sely men for to deceyve,
And from the soothe evere wol they weyve.

(Epilogue to the *Merchant's Tale*, 2421-4)

For he [Chaucer] was evir (God wait) all womanis frend.

(Gavin Douglas, *Eneados*, Prologue to Book I. 449)

Was Chaucer 'all womanis frend'?

7. Thoghte I, 'Thys ys so queynt a sweven
That I wol, be processe of tyme,
Fonde to put this sweven in ryme
As I kan best, and that anoon.'

This was my sweven; now hit ys doon.

(*The Book of the Duchess*, 1330-4)

Analyse Chaucer's attitude(s) to dreams and the poetic imagination.

8. 'To use such terms as "irony", "ambiguity", "tension", and "paradox" in describing Chaucer's poetry is to bring to the subject our [...] feeling for an unresolved dialectic' (CHARLES MUSCATINE). Do you agree?
9. 'Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century social description tends to be conservative in its deference to principles of social hierarchy' (PAUL STROHM). Is this true of Chaucer?
10. O reverend Chaucer, rose of rethoris all
(As in oure tong ane flour imperiall)
That raise in Britaine evir, quho redis ryght,
Thou beris of makaris the triumph riall;
[...]
Was thou noucht of oure Inglisch all the lyght,
Surmounting eviry tong terrestriall,
Alls fer as Mayes morrow dois mydnycht?
(WILLIAM DUNBAR, *The Goldyn Targe*, 253-61)
EITHER (a) Discuss any aspect or aspects of Chaucer's poetic craft (e.g. rhetoric, metre, form, word-play).

OR (b) How do Chaucer's successors view his poetic authority?

11. 'The scribes themselves devised various methods of imposing an ordonnance lacking in Chaucer's text [*The Canterbury Tales*], or of explaining its lack' (HELEN COOPER). Discuss how the presentation of the text in manuscripts might influence the interpretation of Chaucer.

TURN OVER

DENB 2405

12. 'Chaucer was an author who hid behind the "shield and defence" of the compiler' (ALASTAIR MINNIS). Do you agree?
13. What are the uses of genre in Chaucer?
14. 'Even Chaucer's religious poetry is a poetry of this world, of faith as ethics, like his prose, not a poetry or prose of mysticism' (DEREK BREWER). Discuss.
15. What may I conclude of this longe serye,
But after wo I rede us to be merye
And thanken Juppiter of al his grace?
(*The Knight's Tale*, 3067-9)
Analyse Chaucer's treatment of classical paganism.
16. Discuss ONE of the following:
- (a) Lollius
 - (b) 'fame'
 - (c) 'franchise'
 - (d) 'translacion'
 - (e) 'glosynge'
 - (f) 'armonye'