

Chaucer teaching in UK universities

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CONTENTS

1. **Introduction**
 - a: Where are we now?
 - b: ESC report
 - c: Responses to Chaucer

2. **Accessibility**
 - a: Relevance and variety
 - b: Language
 - c: Strategies

3. **A-level and student expectation**
 - a: A/S level
 - b: Student knowledge
 - c: Plans and responses

4. **Courses**
 - a: Modularisation
 - b: Chaucer and Middle English literature
 - c: Course structures
 - d: Options: design
 - e: Options: take-up
 - f: Changes in Chaucer criticism: the place of theory

5. **What text?**
 - a: Publishing industry
 - b: The *Canterbury Tales*
 - c: The *Troilus* problem
 - d: Short poems
 - e: Recommended texts and criticism

6. **Assessment Methods**
 - a: Practice
 - b: The place of translation
 - c: Problems and solutions

7. **General problems**

8. **Desiderata**

9. **Conclusion**

1. Introduction

The material in this chapter owes much to the helpful cooperation of Chaucer teachers in various UK institutions. It does not claim to be definitive nor even completed, but it aims to give a snapshot of the present situation and it is open to continual reworking and exploration of the issues it raises. Readers are invited to contribute their comments, observations and experiences in teaching Chaucer to the author, so that the material and opinions given here can be updated and refined.

This report is based on returns and web-research showing that 63 departments of English teach Chaucer. It includes anonymised quotations from responses to questionnaires and material derived from current web sites. Where material is in the public domain (websites, prospectuses) it is attributed. It is restricted to BA courses, although there is also evidence of lively developments at MA level.

The English Subject Centre (ESC) has been generous with advice and material from their report on the HE English Curriculum. The organisational principles governing this web site should be apparent to Chaucerians: a collection of voices, thematically linked but not necessarily in agreement, overseen by an unreliable narrator. It is to be hoped that this will result in a lively and ongoing conversation on matters of concern to us all.

a: Where are we now?

It is difficult to imagine a time when more people have read Chaucer [or Langland or Gower]...there are more copies of the work of Chaucer in existence than there have ever been, and there are more readers of Chaucer than there have ever been, back to and including the poet's own time. There are more students in universities than there were just a few decades ago; in English-speaking countries there are more students as a proportion of the whole population ... and there are more universities. But Chaucer is available outside the universities too, in a greater number of volumes than ever before, at a relatively low price...Put simply, more people are reading more Middle English than ever before. If this is marginalization, then we are going to have to work with it.

(David Matthews, *The Making of Middle English, 1765-1910* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 194.

Recent events in the public domain keep Chaucer in the public consciousness as an essential figure in English literature – e.g. the recent *Canterbury Tales* series on BBC tv, Ian McEwan citing Chaucer as his ‘man of the millenium’, and creative responses such as Peter Ackroyd’s *Clerkenwell Tales* (2003). Chaucer, like Shakespeare, is one of the authors about whom the general public expect English graduates to be knowledgeable. The challenge to Chaucer teachers is to build on and use these perceptions and expectations while avoiding the trap of ‘heritage’ Chaucer. And a survey of the present situation indicates that this is a challenge they are meeting.

Recent changes in higher education have had an immediate bearing on pedagogical practice, assessment, course content, and design.

It seems clear that many of the problems and challenges confronting teachers of Chaucer are not peculiar to Chaucer or even medieval literature more generally, even if they present themselves more pressingly at the moment to teachers of early literature.

Questions of how we tackle issues of language, of accessibility, of historical context, of long texts, and the rest are inherent in the subject(s) of English.

b: ESC report

English Subject Centre: *Survey of the English Curriculum and Teaching in UK Higher Education*. Report Series no 8, October 2003. Relevant extracts from this report, referred to by page number below, provide a context for the material here. Of the 135 questionnaires distributed by the ESC, 53 completed survey forms were returned (p.1) About half of these offer language studies as well as literature (p.3)

2.7.14: *Compulsory elements (p.48-9):*

Medieval literature (Chaucer not separately canvassed):
Single Honours: 12 (23%) Level 1, 15 (28%) Level 2.
Joint Honours: 1 (2%) level 1, 2 (4%) level 2.

2.8: *Coverage and Aims (pp.56-7):*

Chaucer (sic):

Total number of compulsory courses: under 10. Total number of optional courses: 29.

Medieval:

Total number of compulsory courses: 20+. Total number of optional courses: 90+.

2.8.2: *Optional course popularity:*

[note – popular in terms of take-up, rather than experience of the course]

Chaucer : Unpopular: 3, quite popular: 15, very popular: 5.

Medieval: Unpopular: 1, quite popular: 22, very popular: 3.

Chart 40, p.59: Availability of Medieval options:

Between 1-10; mostly 2, 3, or 4.

2.10: *General questions:* (p.84) respondents noted a need to sustain some aspects of the ‘traditional’ curriculum (Shakespeare for example).

c: Responses to Chaucer

It is evident that Chaucer is a very popular author with students who have the opportunity to work on him:

On the whole Chaucer is popular

Taught well, Chaucer is lapped up

Student questionnaires repeatedly say that the Chaucer options are the most demanding and amongst the most enjoyable

popular– perceived as more accessible than other medieval

several comments that although students wouldn't have chosen it, the experience was much better than they expected

the most attractive component of all the ME courses

Students nearly all enjoy Chaucer – often to their surprise!

Students enjoy it....

*Student satisfaction expressed through questionnaires is high
Many students enjoy Chaucer and produce their best work on it
As soon as students get used to the language, which doesn't take long, they
invariably love him*

The prevailing theme running through these returns is that the study and appreciation of Chaucer has to confront an initial fear/difficulty/resistance. Students' evident enjoyment of Chaucer is often a matter of surprise (to them). This makes demands on teachers and various strategies have been developed to overcome the initial resistance.

Teachers of medieval literature, both Old and Middle English, have shown in recent years that they are willing to be innovative and out-reaching in their teaching methods and materials, e.g., the cutting-edge work done for OE texts in IT. Necessity breeds good practice ...

2. **Accessibility**

a: Relevance and variety

One unexpected result of the returns is that only one reported students questioning the 'relevance' of the study of Chaucer, a familiar cry from twenty years earlier. Is relevance no longer a criterion by which students criticise their courses, or have a new generation of Chaucer scholars, with their feminist and deconstructive criticism, succeeded in rendering Chaucer relevant and accessible for a new generation of students?

The main difficulty is overcoming all those preconceptions about comic Chaucer, genial Chaucer, universal irony, courtly love, etc and that the Middle Ages are utterly different and incomprehensible, like goldfish.

on the one hand there are all the pre-theory reasons: it's amusing, all human life is there, it gives a window onto a medieval culture, he writes v. well! On the other, Chaucer responds well to students using modern theoretical approaches.

And on gender, class, xenophobia, etc., they gain insights into the origins of many modern problems in a study of medieval culture.

The alterity is attractive, especially when such variety can be experienced relatively quickly in the 'Canterbury Tales'.

I think the relative shortness and the variety of the 'Canterbury Tales' makes it possible for students to experience a lot of variety, in genre, etc. Their critical faculties are also sharpened when they read in succession such different texts.

b: Language

Another larger issue that impinges on the teaching of Chaucer is that of language awareness:

Increasing resistance to language

The Language is time-consuming!

Language can be a difficulty and put students off.

The difficulty of reading Chaucer's English isn't specific to Chaucer or ME – they have comprehension difficulties with Shakespeare and Milton ... I think

that ME studies could be used more explicitly to provide a focus for students to develop the linguistic skills and reading and comprehension strategies they need for the discipline as a whole.

It may well be that the boundary of language competence is continually shifting forwards and if students do not study Chaucer they will register problems when it comes to Shakespeare and Milton, eventually Austen and Dickens. However, there is clearly an issue here with regard to the time available to familiarize students with Chaucer's language (see below 4a)

c: Strategies

It makes me cross that most people who write about Chaucer (especially in the US) treat him like a novelist. I try to press the role of language and style, even poetry, in class.

I try to sell Chaucer by acknowledging that it is different and initially harder, than other things, but that if they can do it, they can do anything and that it will sharpen their perceptions of literature in general.

*Learning to read Chaucer aloud is a great stimulus
e.g. in Leeds students on Chaucer option learn to recite 20 lines of 'General Prologue'.*

Teach by the centimetre, not the metre; never more than one tale a week.

Whether one can sustain Chaucer teaching on a 'Chaucer is fun' ticket depends on the energy and the competition.

The problem with the 'Chaucer as fun' approach is the pressure to rely on comic Chaucer. What of Chaucerian romance? Pathos? Learning? Religion? We have often and quite successfully used the 'Clerk's Tale' as a first-year text – the indignation and defamiliarization it causes can fuel some interesting responses.

3. **A-level and student expectation**

a: A/S level

Since the recent changes to A-level, Chaucer has been relegated to an option amongst texts for level 1, i.e. Lower Sixth, A/S level study.

The likely result of this is that fewer incoming students will have encountered Chaucer, and even those who have will see Chaucer as something they have moved beyond. The effect of this reduction on the status of the serious study of Chaucer is only just beginning to be felt at university level.

b: Student knowledge

Is A-level study an advantage?

Overwhelmingly 'No' (16:4) – over-confident, lazy, pre-conceived ideas, rigid, out of date convictions. But some students choose options because they had an enthusiastic teacher at school.

It's more about having a positive cultural attitude towards medieval things, towards history...

One issue – how to get students to opt for medieval courses, including Chaucer – my assumption is that the reason they do not has to do with the expectations they bring from school – and by the increasing tendency to ‘play safe’ which seems to have been inculcated as a function of ever more restrictive curricula and head teachers with an eye on league tables. It is interesting to note that the last medieval module was almost exclusively taken up by mature students who have not had the dubious benefit of attending a UK secondary school in recent years

To a large extent University courses have responded to this situation by teaching *ab initio* because the critical mass of students who arrive at University with A-level experience of Chaucer has dropped. The evidence is that this is not a problem and students encountering Chaucer for the first time will do as well, if not better, than those drawing on their A-level approaches. But the question arises – what about all those for whom A-level is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity?

c: Plans and responses

Need for greater support for and promotion of teaching Chaucer in schools ... discussion in schools and HEIs of the implications of the changes in the 14-19 curriculum for the design and delivery of medieval literature courses in HE.

This is now happening—for details of the proposed conference for teachers of Chaucer at 6th form and HE in Birmingham in 2005 contact Steve Ellis (S.P.Ellis@bham.ac.uk). There are signs that the academic Chaucer community is becoming increasingly willing to tackle these issues, with pedagogical sessions at the New Chaucer Society Congress in 2004 and the London Chaucer Conference in 2003 and 2005.

4. **Courses**

a: Modularization

The teaching of Chaucer does not take place in a vacuum and the most significant change in course design over the last decade – modularisation – has had its impact. There is now less opportunity for students gradually to accumulate familiarity with Chaucer’s language and medieval literary culture.

The main problem is inherent to a modular structure – it used to be possible to achieve more when a Chaucer course ran for a whole year.

Modular courses need to be designed to be self-sufficient and complete within 10 –14 weeks.

How to approach the problems of sources with the limited time now allowed on most modules e.g. Boethius?

Hence the concentration on the *Canterbury Tales* or a selection from. Not perhaps so thematic as many other medieval courses—on women’s writing and gender for example.

(But: you have to thematize the teaching—not ' "Canterbury Tales" 1', but 'Love, Magic, Mysogyny').

b: Chaucer and ME literature

Most teachers of Chaucer are not narrow Chaucerians. Is Chaucer a 'loss leader' for medieval literature or perceived, like Shakespeare, to stand alone?

*There is enthusiasm for the whole medieval scene
Is Chaucer entrenched as a modern in pedagogical convention?*

Chaucer and other medieval literature vs stand-alone Chaucer courses

Q: is Chaucer taught in a dedicated course or as part of a ME course?

Only 3 places—Liverpool Hope, Salford, Northumbria—reported teaching Chaucer in isolation as the only medieval course. 7 places only teach Chaucer in with other medieval literature.

i.e. is Chaucer best served by being studied in the company of other ME literature?

Chaucer is so often used as the introductory figure in medieval literature course – are there disadvantages to this? ... Useful for serving as a window on medieval culture, but Chaucer's unmedieval qualities, particularly in character and genre, can engender misconceptions. Difficult to give ample coverage while leaving room for very different kinds of medieval literature.

The majority teach both medieval literature course including Chaucer and Chaucer on his own [14]. E.g., Leeds: Chaucer is part of a compulsory Level 1 module, 'Exploring Medieval Literature': this covers Old English, Old Norse, Marie de France, as well as later texts. The Chaucer material (changes year by year) has 3 weeks of the 11-week module. At level 2 an 'optional core' module on the 'Medieval Renaissance': Chaucer takes up 4/11 weeks. At level 2 /3, options on 'Chaucer' (*Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus*); 'Dream-vision' (4/11 weeks on Chaucer); 'Gender Issues in Medieval Literature' (5/11 weeks on Chaucer).

At Royal Holloway University of London, Chaucer provides four weeks in a 20 week introductory course on OE and ME and 2 weeks in each of two one-term year 2 options on Medieval Dream and Vision, and Medieval Epic and Romance. Chaucer as a Special Author is a year 3 option.

c: Course structures

20 have Chaucer courses, 15 both compulsory and optional, 5 optional only, 4 compulsory only. 2 replies have dropped Chaucer. 12 have the compulsory material in the first year, another 9 continue or add compulsory Chaucer in later years. It is very rare [2 instances] to find no 1st year Chaucer if Chaucer is available anywhere in the degree.

Chaucer is invariably a component in first-year survey courses of medieval literature, but Chaucer-only courses are usually aimed at 2nd or 3rd year students; i.e. options usually offer an opportunity to build on first-year Chaucer in later years.

Core/Compulsory courses: usually 1st year. Chaucer included with other medieval literature, e.g. 'Later Medieval English Literature' (Glasgow), 'Introduction to Medieval

Literature (OE & ME) (Royal Holloway), 'Medieval Literary Culture' (King's College London). Some are more targeted, e.g. 'The Age of Chivalry' (Durham: includes 'Knight's Tale' and 'Franklin's Tale')

(NB: the term 'Middle English' seems to be giving way to the more user-friendly 'Medieval').

d: Options: design

I deplore the habit of treating Chaucer divorced from his contexts, both social and linguistic.

Options provide the opportunity to target specific areas and approaches and to link Chaucer with other literature: e.g. 'Medieval and Tudor Literature' (University of Kent at Canterbury), 'Images of Love and Faith in Late Medieval Literature' (Newcastle), 'Seeing Medieval' (King's College London).

They also provide the opportunity to engage a dedicated group of students in the concentrated study of Chaucer's entire corpus.

The description of the Chaucer option at UKC makes explicit what is probably true for many--that it looks in depth at Chaucer in relation to historical and cultural contexts, other medieval writing and the visual arts.

However, with regard to the more general argument in support of optional modules, that is, that they facilitate teaching based on research, there does not, on the face of it, seem to be much evidence of this in the Chaucer modules in that none seems to be particularly idiosyncratic. This does not of course rule out the likely input of individuals' research experience, but does seem to indicate options are designed to engage students in reading Chaucer rather than exploring any particular approach.

In reply to the question as to which of the following approaches were most important:

Chaucer's Life ... 1
Society ... 5
Religion ... 5
London ... 1
Nationhood
Chivalry ... 2
Sexuality ... 3
Science ... 0
Philosophy ... 2
Language ... 5
Iconography ... 1
Love ... 2

e: Options: take-up

(See 2. 8. 2 above).

Take up depends very much on course structure, mix of core and options, and

competition (Oxford has increased author options from 12 to 30 and seen a sharp drop in Chaucer take-up).

Belfast: 50% for *Canterbury Tales* term, 20% for *Troilus* term; Bristol: 10 – 65;
Glasgow: between 10-20%; Birmingham: steady core of some 10% taking specialist options out of ¾ of students encountering Chaucer somewhere in the course; Liverpool: modules including Chaucer recruiting between 40 - 90 students.

The only requirement is to take 30 credits of pre-1750 literature at each Level: medieval modules are definitely recruiting high compared with Early Modern modules, the 18th century and Anglo-Saxon/Old Norse, which are the other possible ways of fulfilling this requirement

f: Changes in Chaucer criticism: the place of theory

I'd like strategies for firing up student interest in Chaucer to be discussed and the development of novel, imaginative ways of approaching his work ...these may range from applications of modish, theoretically driven ways of reading texts of Chaucer's work to cross comparisons of his work with carefully chosen writings from very different periods...

A frequent comment from the questionnaire returns is that Chaucer teaching is much more theory-based in recent years. The sense that medieval literature is a theory-free zone is now out-of-date. Theory may act as a bridge between medieval and later literature, and may enable students to apply skills developed elsewhere in their studies to the reading and analysing of Chaucer.

It certainly makes Chaucer seem an adult author, not cosy one.

The concomitant danger is that a theory-based approach to Chaucer can tend to dishistoricise.

Replies to question of which theoretical approaches are most useful?

Feminism ... 4

The Carnavalesque ... 2

Postmodernism ... 3

New historicism ... 3

Cultural materialism ... 3

Queer theory ... 2 and Gender ... 1

Psychoanalytical criticism ... 3

Birmingham has an option 'Chaucer: Pre-Modern Writing and Post-Modern Reading'. King's College London's *Canterbury Tales* option approaches the 'Canon's Yeoman's Tale' through Fetishism and 'Sir Thopas' as 'Death of Author'

6. **What text?**

a: Publishing industry

The Chaucer publication industry has responded to all of this—there are an increasing number of introductory books, dealing with background, introduction to medieval literature and culture, and often pre-selected texts. Many of these are very high quality, but there is a resultant gap between such works aimed at incoming students and the coterie writing of academic Chaucerians. There are probably not enough high-quality, scholarly works of general applicability—reading lists tend to show a dependence on works of the 1970s and 1980s.

b: The *Canterbury Tales*

There is a preponderance of attention given to the *Canterbury Tales* but as many as 11 places teach across the board, and others offer *Troilus* and/or dream poems in options. Where replies specified which tales the weight fell very heavily on Miller, Wife of Bath, Pardoner, 'General Prologue', with a few votes for Knight, Franklin, Merchant, and one vote each for Nun's Priest, Prioress, Clerk.

c: The *Troilus* problem

8 teach *Troilus*: a separate module in Cardiff; as 2nd yr course in Bristol, Belfast, and Aberystwyth; as 3rd year course: Leeds, RHUL, Birmingham. Some anxiety expressed about *Troilus*, given the effect of modularization and problems with language and long texts..

Middle English is becoming more and more difficult for students – to the point where we're wondering whether 'Troilus' is more than they can manage.

We've begun to move away in our department from an assumption that you can set massive texts like 'Troilus' on the syllabus and expect undergraduates to read them without any assistance. The syllabuses used to include some very long texts (not just Chaucer ones). The result is that 'Troilus' disappears from the syllabus after this year.

This suggests that there is perhaps a need to address the *Troilus* issue—a need for more material, more theoretical approaches, more recognition of its position as, arguably, Chaucer's greatest work. Do we teach extracts?—e.g. the 'Seeing Medieval' option at King's College London includes Books 1 and 2 of *Troilus*. A re-issue of the Spearing selections might be helpful if so.

The Pearsall anthology has 58 pp mostly from Books 2 and 3; some returns find this helpful, some find it inadequate. Or is the teaching of *Troilus* now confined to specialist option groups, where students can be expected to read through the whole poem?

d: Short poems

Other poems: here the advantage of short texts becomes apparent; despite the inherent difficulty of these poems they are more likely to appear on courses than *Troilus*. Clearly there is flexibility in this and texts will vary from year to year e.g. dream poems: yr 3 Leeds, Cardiff; as a module, Glasgow; within a separate genre option, Bristol, Royal Holloway. *Book of the Duchess*: Lincoln: yr 3. *Parliament of Fowls*: Birmingham, Southampton: yr 1. *House of Fame*, *Legend of Good Women*: University of East Anglia (sometimes)

e. Recommended texts and criticism

Riverside holds premier place, despite its cost (Cardiff, University College London, Goldsmiths, St Andrews, King's College London (when enough texts), Birmingham, Leeds, Oxford, Royal Holloway, Liverpool Hope, Salford). Other editions: Penguin A-fragment, Everyman *Canterbury Tales* (Aberystwyth, King's College London), Everyman *Troilus* (King's College London), *Troilus* ed. Windeatt. *Norton Anthology* vol.1 (Cardiff, Birmingham). Pearsall Anthology (University of Kent).

Translation – Worlds Classics.

Students go for Wordsworth edition! Need for more inexpensive student-friendly anthologies of ME and contextual materials

The following critical studies appear frequently:

David Aers, *Chaucer* (Brighton: Harvester, 1986) (and some chapters in his other books)
Valerie Allen and Ares Axiotis (eds.), *Chaucer* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

Peter G. Beidler (ed.), *The Wife of Bath : Complete, Authoritative Text with ... Essays from Five Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996)

Peter Brown (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Chaucer* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

Alcuin Blamires (ed.), with Karen Pratt and C. W. Marx, *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

Helen Cooper, *The Canterbury Tales*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Steve Ellis, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996).

Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson (eds.), *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: the Wife of Bath and All Her Sect* (London: Routledge, 1994)

Stephen Knight, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1986).

V. A. Kolve, *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: the First Five Canterbury Tales* (London: Stanford University Press, 1984).

Jill Mann, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (London: Harvester, 1991).

A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Other media:

Web sites etc: this is a growth area of not uniformly reliable material. Nb Harvard Chaucer page proves one of the most generous and useful.

We devote one hour at the beginning to discussing, pointing to the best Chaucer web sites; we use our own online material—a hypertext of Miller etc, ‘Romaunt of the Rose’ digitised material + Chaucer Project CD (Glasgow)

Birmingham are developing own web pages and gateways.

7. Assessment methods

a: Practice

Predominantly a mix of essay and exam, e.g. Exeter has a portfolio comprising 2 essays, a translation, and commentary. Only 2 report exams throughout. King’s College London has prior disclosure exam. Most combinations have exam in years 1 & 2 and final year options assessed by essay (6000 words in Glasgow and Oxford, 8000 in Royal Holloway).

Exams invariably include translation work, essays do not.

b: The place of translation

There is an issue here about the status of translation work. In the past Old and Middle English teaching was largely insistent on the fundamental importance of translating texts. Arguably, this was a factor in making the study of medieval literature look different from the study of later literature.

The move to essay assessment has changed this; with the concomitant problem that students may become reliant on translations (other people’s) or simply reveal that they have not understood the text they are reading.

c: Problems and solutions

I’d appreciate ideas about how to devise methods assessment that get away from the 2500 word essay and stretch the individual student more (also a way of combating plagiarism).

8. General problems

Returns had much to say on general problems—lack of study time, the effects of paid employment during term-time, expectation of spoon-feeding, plagiarism. These are not dealt with here as they are not specific to Chaucer, but they do colour the environment in which teaching takes place.

There are reports that departments are losing, or are due to lose, their medievalists.

ESC Report:

2.6.15: *Drivers of Change: (applying to 99/00)*

43% reply that staff leaving/joining is a significant factor in change.

1 respondent reported a shift towards post-1800 appointments—affecting Chaucer and Renaissance (2.8.17)

9. Desiderata

I'd like suggestions for good introductions to 'Troilus'.

Any sharing of ideas on teaching ME to people who are only there for the literature, without losing one's audience, might be helpful.

I often think I'd like to switch on a good introductory, attractive video that put them into 'the medieval world', in week one!

I'd appreciate:

Ideas about how to inculcate some minimal knowledge of Middle English (I try to infiltrate some of this into the first week and thereafter a language topic briefly into each lecture, e.g. 'thou' and 'ye' difference).

Information about how other people use CDROMs, audio-tapes, etc.

Discussion about integrating Chaucer (and other medieval authors) into other periods vs. keeping the medieval separate;

Balancing modern and historical approaches to Chaucer.

We all create bibliographies and info pages - should we share them?

More work on Chaucer in his bibliographical or mss context using resources like the 'Canterbury Tales Project', Book of the Duchess CD rom.

There is need for a good on-line Chaucer glossary – I wish students could access the Middle English Dictionary for free

10. Conclusion

It would see that under the pressure of modularization and the widening interpretation of 'English', Chaucer is now being taught with a limited range of textual encounters but an enlarged range of critical and theoretical approaches. There may be a tension here between the recognition of the alterity of the medieval and the need – and indeed pleasure – in coming to terms with it and the collapsing of historical distance in the application of more abstract theoretical approaches to literature. This is not an issue specific to Chaucer, but Chaucer offers an important site for its exploration.

This is not all about problems and making Chaucer accessible to students who are struggling with pre-20th century literature. The best finalists produce work on Chaucer that shows the highest quality of response to the poetry and critical/theoretical sophistication – Chaucer is an author who brings out the best in strong students. It takes a small number of such students to keep the academic study of Chaucer alive and developing into the 21st century.

For such students, the range and structure (and support) of post-graduate opportunities are vital—but that's another story.