

**EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS**

*For The Following Qualification:-*

*B.A.*

**Chaucer and his Literary Background**

**COURSE CODE : ENGLN01**

**DATE : 06-MAY-03**

**TIME : 10.00**

**TIME ALLOWED : 6 Hours**

Answer three questions: Question 1 or Question 2 (not both) and two other questions.

Candidates must not present substantially the same material in any two answers, whether on this paper or in other parts of the examination.

A plain text of Chaucer (Robinson's edition) is provided.

Between 1.00 p.m. and 1.45 p.m. candidates will be able, if they wish, to leave their desks to have lunch. The examination will finish at 4.00 p.m.

Candidates should not discuss the paper during the lunch break.

TURN OVER

1. Write about one of the following passages. You should include such explanations of the language, style and subject matter as seem important for a full appreciation of it.

(a)

Phebus," quod he, "for al thy worthynesse,  
 For al thy beautee and thy gentillesse,  
 For al thy song and al thy mynstralceye,  
 For al thy waityng, blered is thyn ye  
 With oon of litel reputacioun, 5  
 Noght worth to thee, as in comparisoun,  
 The montance of a gnat, so moote I thryve!  
 For on thy bed thy wyf I saugh hym swyve."  
 What wol ye moore? The crowe anon hym  
 tolde,  
 By sadde tokenes and by wordes bolde, 10  
 How that his wyf had doon hire lecherye,  
 Hym to greet shame and to greet vileynye;  
 And tolde hym ofte he saugh it with his yen.  
 This Phebus gan awayward for to wryen,  
 And thoughte his sorweful herte brast atwo. 15  
 His bowe he bente, and sette therinne a flo,  
 And in his ire his wyf thanne hath he slayn.  
 This is th'effect, ther is namoore to sayn;  
 For sorwe of which he brak his mynstralcie,  
 Bothe harpe, and lute, and gyterne, and sautrie; 20  
 And eek he brak his arwes and his bowe,  
 And after that thus spak he to the crowe:  
 "Traitor," quod he, "with tonge of scor-  
 pioun,  
 Thou hast me broght to my confusioun;  
 Allas, that I was wroght! why nere I deed? 25  
 O deere wyf! o gemme of lustiheed!  
 That were to me so sad and eek so trewe,  
 Now listow deed, with face pale of hewe,  
 Ful giltelees, that dorste I swere, ywys!  
 O rakel hand, to doon so foule amys! 30  
 O trouble wit, o ire recchelees,  
 That unavysed smyteth gilteles!  
 O wantrust, ful of fals suspencion,  
 Where was thy wit and thy discrecion?  
 O every man, be war of rakelnesse! 35  
 Ne trowe no thyng withouten strong witnesse.  
 Smyt nat to soone, er that ye witen why,  
 And beeth avysed wel and sobrelly  
 Er ye doon any execucion  
 Upon youre ire for suspencion. 40  
 Allas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire  
 Fully fordoon, and broght hem in the mire.  
 Allas! for sorwe I wol myselfen slee!"  
 And to the crowe, "O false thief!" seyde he,  
 "I wol thee quite anon thy false tale. 45  
 Thou songe whilom lyk a nyghtyngale;  
 Now shaltow, false thief, thy song forgon,  
 And eek thy white fetheres everichon,  
 Ne nevere in al thy lif ne shaltou speke.  
 Thus shal men on a traytour been awreke; 50  
 Thou and thyn ofspryng evere shul be blake,  
 Ne nevere sweete noyse shul ye make,  
 But evere crie agayn tempest and rayn,  
 In tokenyng that thurgh thee my wyf is slayn."

CONTINUED

*The Manciple's Tale, 249-302*

(b)

This false chanon cam upon a day  
Unto this preestes chambre, wher he lay,  
Bisechyng hym to lene hym a certeyn  
Of gold, and he wolde quite it hym ageyn.  
"Leene me a marc," quod he, "but dayes three, 5  
And at my day I wol it quiten thee.  
And if so be that thow me fynde fals,  
Another day do hange me by the hals!"

This preest hym took a marc, and that as  
swithe,  
And this chanoun hym thanked ofte sithe, 10  
And took his leve, and wente forth his weye,  
And at the thridde day broghte his moneye,  
And to the preest he took his gold agayn,  
Wherof this preest was wonder glad and  
fayn.

"Certes," quod he, "no thyng anoyeth me 15  
To lene a man a noble, or two, or thre,  
Or what thyng were in my possessioun,  
Whan he so trewe is of condicioun  
That in no wise he breke wole his day;  
To swich a man I kan never seye nay." 20

"What!" quod this chanoun, "sholde I be  
untrewe?  
Nay, that were thyng yfallen al of newe.  
Trouthe is a thyng that I wol evere kepe  
Unto that day in which that I shal crepe 25  
Into my grave, and ellis God forbede.  
Bileveth this as siker as your Crede.  
God thanke I, and in good tyme be it sayd,  
That ther was nevere man yet yvele apayd  
For gold ne silver that he to me lente, 30  
Ne nevere falskede in myn herte I mente.  
And sire," quod he, "now of my pryvetee,  
Syn ye so goodlich han been unto me,  
And kithed to me so greet gentillesse,  
Somwhat to quyte with youre kyndenesse  
I wol yow shewe, and if yow list to leere, 35  
I wol yow teche pleyedly the manere  
How I kan werken in philosophie.  
Taketh good heede, ye shul wel seen at yē  
That I wol doon a maistrie er I go."

"Ye," quod the preest, "ye, sire, and wol  
ye so? 40  
Marie! therof I pray yow hertely."  
"At youre comandement, sire, trewely,"  
Quod the chanoun, "and ellis God forbede!"  
Loo, how this theef koude his service beede!  
Ful sooth it is that swich profred servyse 45  
Stynketh, as witnessen thise olde wyse,  
And that, ful soone I wol it verifie  
In this chanoun, roote of al trecherie,  
That everemoore delit hath and gladnesse —  
Swiche feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse — 50  
How Cristes people he may to meschief bryng.  
God kepe us from his false dissymulyng!

*The Canon's Yeoman's Tale, 1022-1073*

TURN OVER

2. Make a critical comparison of one of the following pairs of passages.

(a)

(i)

Sire Thopas wax a doghty swayn;  
Whit was his face as payndemayn,  
His lippes rede as rose;  
His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,  
And I yow telle in good certayn, 5  
He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun,  
That to his girdel raughte adoun;  
His shoon of cordewane. 10  
Of Brugges were his hosen broun,  
His robe was of syklatoun,  
That coste many a jane.

He koude hunte at wilde deer,  
And ride an haukyng for river  
With grey goshawk on honde; 15  
Therto he was a good archeer;  
Of wrastlyng was ther noon his peer,  
Ther any ram shal stonde.

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,  
They moorne for hym paramour, 20  
Whan hem were bet to slepe;  
But he was chaast and no lechour,  
And sweete as is the brembul flour  
That bereth the rede hepe.

And so bifel upon a day, 25  
For sothe, as I yow telle may,  
Sire Thopas wolde out ride.  
He worth upon his steede gray,  
And in his hand a launcegay, 30  
A long swerd by his side.

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,  
Therinne is many a wilde best,  
Ye, bothe bukke and hare;  
And as he priketh north and est,  
I telle it yow, hym hadde almost 35  
Bitid a sory care.

Ther spryngen herbes grete and smale,  
The lycorys and the cetewale,  
And many a clowe-gylofre; 40  
And notemuge to putte in ale,  
Whether it be moyste or stale,  
Or for to leye in cofre.

The briddes synge, it is no nay,  
The sparhawk and the papejay, 45  
That joye it was to heere;  
The thrustelcok made eek his lay,  
The wodedowve upon the spray  
She sang ful loude and cleere.

Sire Thopas fil in love-longynge,  
Al whan he herde the thrustel synge, 50  
And pryked as he were wood.  
His faire steede in his prikyng  
So swatte that men myghte him wryng;  
His sydes were al blood.

Sire Thopas eek so wery was 55  
For prikyng on the softe gras,  
So fiers was his corage,  
That down he leyde him in that plas  
To make his steede som solas, 60  
And yaf hym good forage.

"O seinte Marie, *benedicite!*  
What eyleth this love at me  
To bynde me so soore?  
Me dremed al this nyght, pardee, 65  
An elf-queene shal my lemman be  
And slepe under my goore.

"An elf-queene wol I love, ywis,  
For in this world no womman is  
Worthy to be my make  
In towne; 70  
Alle othere wommen I forsake,  
And to an elf-queene I me take  
By dale and eek by downe!"

*Sir Thopas, 724-796*

CONTINUED

2

(a)

(ii)

MADAME, ye ben of al beaute shryne  
As fer as cerclid is the mapemounde,  
For as the cristal glorious ye shyne,  
And lyke ruby ben your chekes rounde.  
Therwith ye ben so mery and so jocounde     5  
That at a revel whan that I see you daunce,  
It is an oynement unto my wounde,  
Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce.

For thogh I wepe of teres ful a tyne,  
Yet may that wo myn herte nat confounde;     10  
Your semy voys, that ye so smal out twyne,  
Maketh my thocht in joy and blis habounde.  
So curtaysly I go, with love bounde,  
That to myself I sey, in my penaunce,  
"Suffyseth me to love you, Rosemounde,     15  
Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce."

Nas never pyk walwed in galauntyne  
As I in love am walwed and ywounde,  
For which ful ofte I of myself devyne  
That I am trewe Tristam the secounde.     20  
My love may not refreyde nor affounde;  
I brenne ay in an amorous plesaunce.  
Do what you lyst, I wyl your thral be founde,  
Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce.

TREGENTIL.

CHAUCER.

*To Rosemounde*

TURN OVER

(b)

(i)

And here began the depe affeccioun  
Betwixe hem two; this was the firste morwe  
Of hire gladnesse, and gynning of hire sorwe.  
For there hath Eneas ykneled so,  
And told hire al his herte and al his wo, 5  
And swore so depe to hire to be trewe,  
For wel or wo, and chaunge hire for no newe,  
And as a fals lovere so wel can pleyne,  
That sely Dido rewede on his peyne,  
And tok hym for husbonde, and becom his wyf 10  
For everemo, whil that hem laste lyf.  
And after this, whan that the tempest stente,  
With myrthe out as they comen, hom they  
wente.  
The wikke fame upros, and that anon,  
How Eneas hath with the queen ygon 15  
Into the cave; and demede as hem liste.  
And whan the kyng, that Yarbass highte, it  
wiste,  
As he that hadde hir loved evere his lyf,  
And wowede hyre, to han hire to his wyf,  
Swich sorwe as he hath maked, and swich  
cheere, 20  
It is a routhe and pite for to here.  
But, as in love, alday it happeth so,  
That oon shal laughen at anothers wo.  
Now laugheth Eneas, and is in joye  
And more richesse than evere he was in Troye. 25  
O sely wemen, ful of innocence,  
Ful of pite, of trouthe, and conscience,  
What maketh yow to men to truste so?  
Have ye swych routhe upon hyre feyned wo,  
And han swich olde ensaumples yow beform? 30  
Se ye nat alle how they ben forsworn?  
Where sen ye oon, that he ne hath laft his leef,  
Or ben unkynde, or don hire som myscheef,  
Or piled hire, or bosted of his dede?  
Ye may as wel it sen, as ye may rede. 35  
Tak hede now of this grete gentil-man,  
This Troyan, that so wel hire plesen can,  
That feyneth hym so trewe and obeysynge,  
So gentil, and so privy of his doinge,  
And can so wel don alle his obeysaunces, 40  
And wayten hire at festes and at daunces,  
And whan she goth to temple and hom ageyn,  
And fasten til he hath his lady seyn,  
And beren in his devyses, for hire sake,  
Not I not what; and songes wolde he make, 45  
Justen, and don of armes many thynges,  
Sende hire lettres, tokens, broches, rynges —  
Now herkneþ how he shal his lady serve!

*The Legend of Dido, 1229-1276*

(ii)

Gret was the sorwe and pleynte of Troilus;  
But forth hire cours Fortune ay gan to holde.  
Criseyde loveth the sone of Tideüs,  
And Troilus moot wepe in cares colde. 5  
Swich is this world, whoso it kan byholde: 5  
In ech estat is litel hertes reste.  
God leve us for to take it for the beste!  
  
In many cruel bataille, out of drede,  
Of Troilus, this ilke noble knyght,  
As men may in these olde bokes rede, 10  
Was seen his knyghthod and his grete myght. 10  
And dredeles, his ire, day and nyght,  
Ful cruwely the Grekis ay aboughte;  
And alwey moost this Diomedes he soughte.  
  
And ofte tyme, I fynde that they mette 15  
With bloody strokes and with wordes grete,  
Assayinge how hire speres weren whette;  
And, God it woot, with many a cruel hete  
Can Troilus upon his helm to bete! 20  
But natheles, Fortune it naught ne wolde, 20  
Of oothers hond that eyther deyen sholde.  
  
And if I hadde ytaken for to write  
The armes of this ilke worthi man,  
Than wolde ich of his batailles endite;  
But for that I to writen first bigan 25  
Of his love, I have seyde as I kan, — 25  
His worthi dedes, whoso list hem heere,  
Rede Dares, he kan telle hem alle ifeere —  
  
Bysechyng every lady bright of hewe,  
And every gentil womman, what she be, 30  
That al be that Criseyde was untrewed,  
That for that gilt she be nat wroth with me. 30  
Ye may hire giltes in other bokes se;  
And gladlier I wol write, yif yow leste,  
Penelopeës trouthe and good Alceste. 35  
35  
  
N'y sey nat this al oonly for these men,  
But moost for wommen that bitraised be  
Thorough false folk; God yeve hem sorwe, amen!  
That with hire grete wit and subtilte 40  
Bytraise yow! And this commeveth me 40  
To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye,  
Beth war of men, and herkneþ what I seye! —

*Troilus and Criseyde, V, 1744-1785*

CONTINUED

3. Elizabeth Scala has remarked on the 'tension between beginnings and endings in the *Book of the Duchess*'. Discuss the structure of two or more of Chaucer's dream-vision poems with this observation in mind.
4. Discuss either nature, or artifice, or the relation between the two in at least two of Chaucer's dream-vision poems.
5. Discuss the relationship between secrecy and dissimulation in *Troilus and Criseyde*.

6. Ther is non auctour telleth it, I wene

*(Troilus and Criseyde, V, 1088)*

What does Chaucer add to his sources in *Troilus and Criseyde*?

7. Is al this paynted proces seyde – alas! –  
Right for this fyn?

*(Troilus and Criseyde, II, 424-25)*

Discuss the relationship between 'proces' and 'fyn' in *Troilus and Criseyde*.

8. The surface of the text of the *Legend of Good Women* is cheerfully biased in favour of the poet's own gender.

*(Florence Percival)*

Do you agree with this assessment of the poem?

9. A marchant whilom dwelled at Seint-Denys,  
That riche was, for which men helde hym wys.

*(The Shipman's Tale, 1-2)*

How are money and wisdom related in Chaucer's writings?

10. According to Thomas of Chobham, wives 'employ persuasion, feminine enticements, and even deceit' (*Summa confessorum*). How far, in your view, does Chaucer portray the arts of persuasion as a feminine accomplishment?

11. For who can be so buxom as a wyf?  
Who is so trewe, and eek so ententyf?

*(The Merchant's Tale, 1287-88)*

Write on either obedience, or wives, or both, in Chaucer.

TURN OVER



12. 'Children are among the least fortunate of mortals in *The Canterbury Tales*' (Ian Bishop). Consider the treatment of children in *The Canterbury Tales*.
13. Discuss the function of preaching in *The Canterbury Tales*.
14. 'The *Miller's Tale* seems to use its art to challenge the moral rule that adultery must always be wrong' (Helen Phillips). To what extent do you think moral rules are challenged by art in Chaucer's writings?
15.           We seken faste after felicitee,  
              But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.

(*The Knight's Tale*, 1266-67)

Examine the issue of failed goals in *The Canterbury Tales*.

16. What attitudes to his audience do you discern in Chaucer's writings?
17. What uses are made of digression in *The Canterbury Tales*?
18. How trustworthy is authority in Chaucer's writings?
19. Discuss Chaucer's use of Virgil, or Ovid, or both.
20.           This world that passeth soone as floures faire

(*Troilus and Criseyde*, V, 1841)

Discuss the notion of transitoriness in Chaucer's writings.

21. 'Sometimes Chaucer's detachment is the most superficial of illusions' (Earle Birney). Do you agree?
22. Either:   (a)           The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne

(*The Parliament of Fowls*, 1)

Write an essay on the craft of loving, or of poetry, or of both, in Chaucer.

- Or:           (b) Comment on the relation of form to content in Chaucer's short poems.

23. Write on Chaucer's use in his narratives of one of the following: lyric, prayer, monologue, dialogue.

CONTINUED

24. Discuss the use made of Chaucer's writings by any one or more post-medieval English writer or writers.
25. Write about recantation in Chaucer's writings.

END OF PAPER