

EN 8513
LOVE SACRED AND PROFANE IN THE AGE OF RICHARD II:
CHAUCER, GOWER, LANGLAND

Holly Johnson
Spring 2020
Thursday 3:30-6:20



Texts:

Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, eds. J. M. Dean and H. Spiegel (Broadview Editions, 2016)

John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* (selections), vol. 1, ed. R. Peck (TEAMS 2nd edition, 2006)

William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A New Annotated Edition of the C-Text*, ed. D. Pearsall (Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies, 2008)

The focus for this course will be the concept of love, both sacred and profane, as explored by three great writers of the late fourteenth century, called the Ricardian poets because they lived during the reign of Richard II (1377-1399). We will read Geoffrey Chaucer's masterpiece *Troilus and Criseyde*, which treats the pains, joys, and ultimate futility of profane love during a time of war; parts of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (the Confession of a Lover), which deals not only with the virtues of a lover but also the nature of story-telling; and the C-Text of William Langland's fascinating dream vision, *Piers Plowman*, which brings love to its most profound and cosmic level. We will read all texts in Middle English, but no prior experience reading Middle English is necessary. Requirements include two exams, weekly quizzes, a short translation project, an annotated bibliography, and a research paper.