



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Education Programs application guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/seminars.html> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

Institution: Eastern Illinois University

Project Director: David Raybin

Grant Program: Summer Seminars and Institutes for School Teachers

Proposal for a Summer Seminar for School Teachers

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

Co-Director: David Raybin, Eastern Illinois University

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Narrative description

We propose a four-week Seminar for School Teachers on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to be located in London. As participants read and discuss Chaucer's poetry in depth, we will visit many of London's medieval sites associated with the poet. We will also undertake excursions to Canterbury and Oxford in order to absorb settings named in the *Tales* that still evoke Chaucer's medieval world. The Seminar will be co-directed by two American scholars dedicated to the teaching of Chaucer, scholars who also edit the international journal *The Chaucer Review*. It repeats, with some modification based on our experience and the comments of participants, our successful 2008 and 2010 Seminars. The participant evaluations from the 2010 Seminar are included in an attached file.

The teachers in our earlier seminars declared them extraordinary experiences, an assessment with which we agree wholeheartedly. As directors, we were continually impressed by the intelligence, diligence, and camaraderie of the participants. We were especially pleased by the unexpected discoveries that surface when a group of highly motivated overachievers put their minds together. The 2008 Seminar elicited 76 completed applications, and the 2010 Seminar elicited 142 completed applications, giving us the opportunity to select groups of truly extraordinary individuals. In each instance, we received applications from enough highly qualified teachers to fill multiple seminars. In both years, all the teachers we invited into the seminar accepted, which suggests the strong interest in reading Chaucer in London.

Intellectual rationale

Why read Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* today? This complex work is a masterpiece of narrative styles, dramatic voices, interwoven themes, and poetic expressions that evoke strong

responses: from tears to shock to laughter, and to recognition of profound insights on the human condition. The seminar will explore how Chaucer looks out upon the world, as participants consider the relevance of Chaucer's poetry for readers now, that is, how his vivid ideas on human relationships, desires, and difficulties mesh with and yet challenge modern attitudes. As we progress through the tales with the seminar's participants, we will join together in making discoveries about the distance that separates us from the lived details of Chaucer's fourteenth-century England; about the continuities of artistry, philosophy, emotion, and meaning that render Chaucer's writings still important; and about the variety of responses to Chaucer that may combine to reach understandings richer than what might be achieved by reading alone. Part of the pleasure we have enjoyed as directors is learning from the ideas of teachers who bring to the text their own broad and deeply thought-out life experiences.

Chaucer holds distinguished and permanent status in the curriculums of high school and college English programs. Selections from the *Canterbury Tales* appear in standard high school surveys of English literature, often as part of a large medieval component. A selection of tales have a perennial place in college-level anthologies of British literature, and most universities have medievalists on staff for whom courses exclusively on Chaucer are a regular offering. This said, Chaucer's poetry offers special challenges to high school teachers. Two of these challenges are, for example:

- Chaucer wrote in Middle English, an earlier form of the English language. Many high school teachers assume that their students will not be able to understand Chaucer's language without spending more time than is available, especially if the teachers themselves have had limited exposure to Middle English. They therefore rely on translations, which greatly diminish the experience of reading Chaucer.

- Many teachers have read only the small bits of Chaucer's poetry included in college surveys, usually the *General Prologue* and a few tales from the *Canterbury Tales*, so they are themselves unaware of the range of Chaucer's interests.

The difficulties in teaching Chaucer have consequences. Teachers often present the *Canterbury Tales* simply as stories, without considering their poetic language, and impart little sense of the book's variety. These partial understandings, in turn, lead students to get the impression either that Chaucer was primarily a portrait painter—since selections from the *General Prologue* are almost always included—or a simple storyteller. So the awareness that comes from reading a great poet's epic masterwork in its original language remains all too often out of reach.

We think that the experience of reading Chaucer in high school can be different. Almost all of the teachers in our previous seminars have picked up Middle English quickly, so that discussion moves rapidly to exploring Chaucer's intellectually satisfying ideas, poetry, and language. We have had similar experiences with college students, but high school teachers—whom we have found to be superbly motivated learners—add a maturity that allows them to respond to a broader range of Chaucer's subjects than do their younger counterparts. Early in the seminar, from the moment we read Chaucer aloud in the opening minutes, we will devote large blocks of time to model methods of adjusting to Chaucer's language. We expect participants to grasp the rudiments of Middle English in just a few days, as close reading allows us to treat language and ideas simultaneously. Teachers in the seminar will have the added advantage that, as they begin to read, they will soak up a great deal of knowledge by exposure to locales associated with Chaucer. Chaucer's places give context to the life behind his verse, and thus help to illuminate his ideas.

Ideas matter. In a complex world it is essential that citizens have the intellectual tools to

understand and evaluate both their own culture and foreign cultures. As much as any writer can, Chaucer helps in enabling readers to think more clearly, because without being in any way pedantic he was an exceptional observer of both people and their environment. In narratives like the *Knight's Tale* and the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, Chaucer displays what it means to be forgiving toward human nature and its frailties. In poems like the *Franklin's Tale* and the *Clerk's Tale*, he offers in-depth and challenging explorations of humans in reference to God and nature. In stories like the *Man of Law's Tale* and the *Prioress's Tale*, he requires us to interrogate our attitudes toward foreign beliefs. Across the *Canterbury Tales* he explores a wide range of social networks, displaying how they organize people for better and for worse. And throughout the book he demonstrates how language can be used either to illuminate or to deceive. As we and the participants read closely through the *Canterbury Tales*, we will pay close attention to Chaucer's mastery of rhetoric and tone. As we note ambiguities, ironies, puns, multiple meanings, and the play of bluntness, irony, and problematic shadings in-between, we will observe how Chaucer puts these tools to careful use. What is distinctive about Chaucer's poetry is how he uses a multitude of voices and stances to explore the fundamental values that persist in what we call the humanities.

Honor and trust, sin and sanctity, wit and deceit, love and desire, marriage and fidelity, male and female, absolute and contingent truths, seriousness and play, destiny and free will, persistence in the face of adversity: these are Chaucer's subjects. In various combinations these issues will enter our discussion each day of the seminar. The focus of our reading generally will be on Chaucer's language as it relates to the details of a particular tale or to fourteenth-century English attitudes, but Chaucer's thinking so often seems universal that readers inevitably relate his ideas to current situations and problems. We will encourage such analysis of the continued

relevance of medieval concepts—until it is time to lead discussion back to the text at hand.

In the famous opening sentence of the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer explains that his pilgrims are journeying to England's most important spiritual site to thank the martyr St. Thomas of Canterbury, "that hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke" (who has helped them when they were sick). The seminar's discourse and sojourn in London will place participants in the enviable position of pilgrims on a journey somewhat akin to that which Chaucer describes. The NEH Summer Teacher programs are premised on the notion that instructors at all levels need time to be rejuvenated, to rethink ideas and methods, and to acquire new ones. Having seen this happen in the seminars and institutes that we have experienced in the past, as participants earlier in our careers and now as directors, it is central to our planning. The Chaucer Seminar will enable participants to enjoy a break from teaching that is also a renewal. As a group we will learn and be revitalized together, as we share approaches and responses that stimulate new thinking.

The responses of our 2008 and 2010 participants make us confident that teachers will bring their experiences back to their classrooms in terms of method and appreciation, and also, importantly, as ways of approaching history and cultural difference. One of the challenges faced by those who teach the literature of the past lies in overcoming students' surface indifference to things they don't know about. Students need a firm grounding in earlier times and cultures if they are to be able to approach their own culture with honest understanding. Reading Chaucer has a particular appeal in opening students to the details of life and thought in medieval England. Producers of movies, books, video games, and historical reenactment games are well aware of the tremendous attraction that medievalism holds in contemporary popular culture. Teachers in the seminar will be able to consider how to tap this appeal to draw students to Chaucer, and then

how to use Chaucer to direct their students toward more accurate understandings of his culture and its ideas. In the months following each of our previous seminars, we have gathered the participants' projects into volumes that we distributed among them. Most of the projects involved new or revised unit plans. They were highly detailed and extraordinary in ways we would not have imagined if we had not seen these teachers in action. The experience affirms that high school teachers rapidly develop their own practical insights on how to implement what they learn in their own classrooms, and that they will readily share these ideas among themselves.

Project content and implementation

All four weeks of the Chaucer Seminar will focus on reading and responding to the *Canterbury Tales*. We will generally hold four three-hour sessions per week, supplementing these sessions with five field trips to medieval sites. Over the course of the seminar, the group will read the *General Prologue* and twenty-four tales in the order in which they appear in the fifteenth-century Ellesmere Manuscript and standard editions of the *Tales*, with sessions devoted to either one long tale or two shorter ones. The seminar's work will be done in the way we have found to be most effective: through deliberative close reading of the tales in Chaucer's Middle English, with a focus on significant passages and engaged discussion of the issues raised in them.

The text we will use is Larry D. Benson's Riverside edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, which provides a good glossary, abundant explanatory notes, and helpful introductions on Chaucer's life, works, and language. We will distribute to participants a copy of our recently edited book, *Chaucer: Contemporary Approaches*, so that they may get a sense of approaches to Chaucer that have been particularly valuable in illuminating modern understanding. We will

also distribute a collection of articles on individual tales that we have found helpful; selections from our own scholarship are included so as to allow participants to encounter our perspectives without their dominating the seminar space (see Appendix 2). The reading of secondary material will be optional: our experience is that participants welcome the handouts, but some read the secondary materials more regularly than do others. Participants who wish to read further will have access to the library and computer facilities at the University of London's Mile End Campus. While these are not quite up to the standard of the facilities at large American universities, they are more than adequate for the needs of the seminar.

We will expect participants to engage actively in the daily effort of the seminar. To encourage involvement, we will ask participants to locate for each session a passage in the reading that they think particularly worthy of discussion. In addition, we will divide the sixteen participants into two-person groups at the beginning of the seminar, and then assign each group a tale, upon which they will direct an hour-long discussion during the second or third week. This strategy led to some very fine discussion in our earlier seminars, with participants modeling teaching methods they have found particularly effective and often suggesting imaginative, useful, and very smart approaches we would not have considered ourselves. Because of the intensity of the seminar experience and the constraints involved in living abroad in somewhat spartan accommodations, we will allow participants to submit their final projects after returning to the U.S. In the past, this work has taken the shape of formal papers treating a tale or a theme, reading journals, a heavily illustrated blog, PowerPoint presentations, a newly created "Canterbury Tale" in verse or prose, and, most often, new or substantially revised teaching units. Every participant in the 2010 Seminar completed his or her project. We then collected the writings as large portfolios, which were mailed to all participants. Some typical responses were:

“I am so impressed with the work everyone did and I am so glad that I have a copy of it”; “That binder of stuff is so valuable. I am enjoying every page. Bravo to all!”

For participants with little or no background in the language, the daily reading in Middle English will initially present a challenge, but one that is certainly manageable. What typically happens when people first encounter Chaucer’s language is that they struggle with unfamiliar spellings and a few strange words, gradually start to recognize repeated key words, grow accustomed to the word forms and syntax, and soon become comfortable enough with the language to appreciate its precision while engaging with the stories and ideas. A growing mastery over the poet’s language is one of the many rewarding elements of discovering Chaucer. Some participants in our earlier seminars used translations to help with the reading, and our groups discussed the merits and limitations of the various translations they have used in their classes.

As seminar leaders, we will facilitate participants’ engagement with the language by beginning with relatively short reading assignments (a few hundred lines), directing the group in verbatim translation of key passages, and reading aloud frequently. Participants will soon learn that words in Middle English are often closely related to modern English equivalents. The availability of two co-directors will facilitate the process because we are available to work with small groups at this beginning stage. We will encourage participants to read Chaucer aloud with their peers, and, as such fellowships are formed, we may join in those readings. We will be available to assist participants in individual reading/translation sessions as needed. Only one participant in an earlier seminar reported that s/he found the task of reading in Middle English too hard.

Weekly schedule

The close study of Chaucer's language encourages close engagement with his ideas. A pleasure intrinsic to slow reading is that participants discover how careful Chaucer was in his word choices and syntactic structures, and how he plays constantly with the nuanced meanings of words so as to challenge assumptions. The **first week** of the seminar will be given to the *General Prologue* and the *Knight's Tale*. In the first two-and-a-half sessions, our reading will center on the portraits in the *General Prologue*, which are famous for their mixture of precision and ambiguity in defining character. Our past experience is that most participants have taught the *General Prologue* to their students, allowing us to focus on language and voice, with all participants reading aloud, translating, and contributing their own interpretations. We will direct particular attention to recognizing Chaucer's characteristic verbal strategies, so that we all are prepared for the use to which he puts them in telling stories. Our reading of the *Knight's Tale* in the third and fourth sessions will allow participants to see how Chaucer crafts a distinctive narrative voice appropriate to this particular story, a strategy he uses throughout the *Canterbury Tales*. The *Knight's Tale* is one of the Middle Ages' finest stories of chivalry, and it also establishes a set of moral, philosophical, and rhetorical standards against which the subsequent tales are measured. Friday of this week will be devoted to an all-day trip to Oxford (discussed below), which provides the setting for the *Miller's Tale* that opens the second week's reading.

The *Canterbury Tales* takes its pilgrims on a spatial journey from the Tabard Inn, an authentic establishment across the Thames from London, to the outskirts of Canterbury, home to the cathedral that remains the principal ecclesiastical see in England. Our **second week** of readings will show Chaucer addressing the moral extremes implied by these locations. On the one hand, the tales of the Miller and the Reeve represent two of his finest accomplishments in

broad, bawdy humor, and the female voice that narrates the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* treats of love, marriage, and sexual relations without restraint. On the other hand, the tale of the Man of Law (on Christianity brought to England) displays Chaucer's spiritual side, which he expresses through female exemplarity, pathos, adversities to faith, and affirmations of true religion. Lest one be too complacent about the honesty of institutionalized religion, the tales of the Friar and the Summoner parade brands of clerical corruption and blasphemy. We will close the week with the exemplary *Clerk's Tale*, in which Chaucer builds upon themes raised in the previous tales as he takes the bold step of likening a wife's patience in the face of her husband's increasing cruelty to the biblical Job's endurance when faced with the most extreme trials.

During the **third and fourth weeks**, we will encounter more of Chaucer's astonishing range, as each succeeding tale offers a distinct narrative voice and a distinct moral or philosophical outlook on the world. Marriage is the theme in the tales of the Merchant, the Franklin, and the Shipman. The Merchant's fabliau exposes the cynicism of a January/May marriage, the Franklin's *lai* explores the hazards faced by a model couple, and the Shipman's amoral tale displays the cool antics of the participants in a French *ménage-à-trois*. The *Pardoner's Prologue* articulates the strategies of a corrupt ecclesiastical conman, while in the brilliant tale that follows, that same salesman of pardons spins a stark tale of three reveling youths who seek to challenge Death. That tale presents a contrast to the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, an exuberant beast fable in which a philosophical rooster comically escapes death. The tales of the Prioress and the Second Nun extol holy martyrdom, the former in affective devotional verse, the latter by a more coolly rational theology. In contrast, the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* uses the practical terminology of chemical science as it presents the unholy seductions of alchemy. Betrayal and grief enter the marital bedroom in the Manciple's bitter recounting of why crows

were given black feathers, while repentance overwhelms sin in the tale of the Parson.

By the time we reach these stories, the participants' confidence in their understanding of Middle English should be sufficiently strong that their ideas will flow as rapidly as those of the seminar leaders. As leaders, it is our role to promote and model collegiality, keep exchanges focused, and listen sufficiently well that participants are able to develop their own thoughts. To facilitate dialogue, we will direct attention to challenging passages, clarify issues where we have outside knowledge, and bring important ways of thinking about the tales into the conversation. We will open up to discussion, for example, the very different approaches to Chaucer's presentation of gender as found in criticism by feminists and specialists in gender studies. Chaucer inspires passionate responses to questions that go to the heart of what we believe, and our sessions will allow room for those passions to be expressed.

Guest speakers

London affords the opportunity of inviting distinguished scholar-teachers to visit the seminar. Presentations by Alcuin Blamires, Professor of English Goldsmiths' College, University of London, and Ardis Butterfield, Professor of English at University College London, were highlights of the 2008 and 2010 Seminars. Each presented a sample of the hour-long lectures they offer their advanced students, allowing for substantial participation by the seminar participants.

In 2010 we also invited A. S. G. Edwards, Professor of Textual Studies at De Montfort University, to introduce the group to medieval manuscripts and early printed books. We met in Senate House at the University of London, where Professor Edwards had arranged with the manuscripts librarian to bring a good selection of manuscripts and books to present to the group.

The participants, who had not expected that they would be permitted to turn the pages of medieval manuscripts, were both amazed and delighted. Two of the fourteenth-century manuscripts are unique exemplars that are among the most prized treasures of the Senate House library. The books comprised the full range of early printed Chaucer editions.

Our purpose in inviting guest speakers and circulating scholarly articles is twofold: (1) to give participants a sense of the range of approaches that informs contemporary Chaucer studies, and (2) to enable participants to feel what it means to be part of a scholarly community. As academic summer schedules are not yet determined, we cannot promise precisely the same experiences in 2012, but we have good relationships with many British scholars, and we will be certain to include presentations by two or three teacher-friendly Chaucerians.

London and excursions

We locate the seminar in London because studying Chaucer *in situ* enhances the experience immeasurably. Chaucer was quintessentially an English writer. Invoking “every shires ende / Of Engeland” in the opening sentence of the *Canterbury Tales*, he championed the writing of poetry in English and drew so vivid a picture of his society that his characters have become the faces that bring fourteenth-century England to life for students today. We will spend one afternoon visiting London-area Chaucer sites, including the place of Chaucer’s childhood home in the Vintner District; Southwark Cathedral; the location of the Tabard Inn, where the *Canterbury Tales* begins; and Westminster Abbey, where Chaucer is interred. Weather and legs permitting, we will walk the three miles from Southwark to Westminster on paths bordering the Thames. A second afternoon will include visits to some of the very few structures that remain from Chaucer’s day: the Church of St. Bartholomew, the Guildhall, and remnants of the ancient

(originally Roman) London walls. On route, we will also visit the Museum of London, where the medieval collection includes pilgrim artifacts, a chest featuring scenes from the *Pardoner's Tale*, and displays on the fourteenth-century Black Death, the medieval St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Fire of London that destroyed the medieval city. A third afternoon will be spent at the Victoria and Albert Museum, which in 2010 debuted in a new setting its exceptional collection of medieval art and artifacts. A visit to the collection of manuscripts on display at the British Library will be added for those who are interested. These visits will help us to uncover a Thames-centered culture and geography that American readers of the *Canterbury Tales* often do not fully comprehend.

A day trip to Oxford at the end of the first week will allow us to see another of Chaucer's worlds, the medieval university town that provides the setting for the *Miller's Tale* and *Reeve's Tale*. We will visit Christ Church (the largest of the medieval colleges and site of Oxford's most famous church), walk the central city's medieval and Renaissance streets, and take a guided tour of the ancient Bodleian Library, one of the world's great university libraries. This tour was declared a highlight of the 2010 Seminar.

At the end of the third week, an overnight trip to Canterbury will include outbound travel by a chartered bus so that we may stop at towns mentioned in the *Canterbury Tales* that retain some of their literary interest: **Deptford** (St. Nicholas Church, the site of Marlowe's grave), **Greenwich** (Greenwich Park, England's oldest enclosed Royal Park), **Rochester** (impressive Norman castle and cathedral, and High Street with a splendid mix of medieval, Renaissance, and Victorian buildings), and a village near **Sittingbourne** where we will enjoy a traditional midday Kentish tea—our unannounced tea stops were acclaimed in our previous seminars. In Canterbury itself, we will visit the Museum of Canterbury (for its collection of paintings of the

Canterbury Tales pilgrims) and the city's three World Heritage sites: St. Martin's Church (the oldest parish church in England in continuous use), St. Augustine's Abbey, and, of course, Canterbury Cathedral. As in 2010, we will hire a cathedral guide who is especially knowledgeable about Thomas of Becket and the cathedral's famed thirteenth-century stained-glass Becket windows. The overnight stay in Canterbury will allow participants time to soak in the walls, gates, streets, churches, and ancient buildings of one of England's best preserved medieval cities. On Thursday evening, we will have dinner in a pub housed in a building that dates to Chaucer's day. The trips to Oxford and Canterbury are timed so that participants who so wish will be able to use the subsequent weekend days to get to know these cities better.

Participants in the Chaucer Seminar can be expected to use their free time to explore London on their own. With the support of our universities, we will host two meals to encourage collegiality without imposing on this freedom: an opening welcome dinner sponsored by Eastern Illinois and the Canterbury dinner sponsored by Kent State. We will also arrange for a group trip to see a play by Shakespeare at the restored Globe Theatre, and we will host the tea. The *Canterbury Tales* displays a Chaucer who was well aware that the comforts of food, drink, and good lodging may loosen the tongue, enhance the spirit, and hold together a company of disparate, sometimes cantankerous folk. We stand firm in this philosophy.

The storytelling contest that provides the frame to the *Canterbury Tales* is premised on the idea that the winning tale will incorporate *sentence* and *solaas*, that is, serious meaning as well as pleasure. Our intent is to frame and direct a seminar in which participants learn what it means to embrace simultaneously the dark and the cheerful, the bawdy and the devout, the pub and the cathedral, even as they enhance their appreciation and understanding of a poet and a book of poetry that have continued to enrich readers for upwards of six hundred years.

Project faculty and staff

We are lovers of Chaucer's poetry. But we bring to the seminar more than just poetic appreciation. We are scholars with a joint focus on Chaucer and with separate interests in many aspects of medieval literary culture. As editors since 2001 of *The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism*, we keep as current on new directions in Chaucer studies as anyone can; in our own scholarship we try to write on Chaucer in ways that are helpful not just to literary theorists and specialists but to a wide audience of scholars, teachers, and students. And we are devoted teachers, accomplished in facilitating the kind of group learning that makes for a successful intellectual endeavor. We work in public universities, and in this capacity each of us has a longstanding commitment to and experience in working with school teachers. Our 2008 and 2010 Seminars were intensely rewarding experiences—highlights in our careers—and we are excited at the prospect of directing another seminar.

This is a joint proposal because we enjoy working together and we bring complementary skills, knowledge, and experiences to the seminar room. Beyond our co-editorship of *The Chaucer Review*, we are longtime collaborators (and, for over twenty years, a married couple) who are accustomed to consulting with each other in our scholarship and teaching. Our joint projects include our 2008 and 2010 NEH Seminars, two books on Chaucer—*Rebels and Rivals* (1991) and *Chaucer: Contemporary Approaches* (2010); an undergraduate course on Literary Landscapes team-taught in England in Summer 2007; and sustained discussion of each other's research and writing. Yet our backgrounds are quite different. Susanna Fein comes to Chaucer as a specialist in Middle English manuscripts and poetry; David Raybin's training is as a comparative medievalist focusing on French. Our individual scholarship continues to reflect

these interests. When we meet over Chaucer, we see the poet's English and continental influences and recognize different aspects of his accomplishment. It is our experience that on those occasions when we teach together, discussion often moves in directions neither of us would have anticipated, and the resultant open-ended conversations invite extensive participation from our teacher participants. See Appendix 3 for résumés detailing our publications, past work with teachers, and professional activities.

We are fortunate to have university support for this overseas seminar. Eastern Illinois provided a graduate assistant to assist in arrangements in preparation for the 2008 and 2010 Seminars and will do so again this year. As noted above, Kent State and Eastern Illinois each will sponsor a dinner.

Participant selection

The selection committee will consist of the two directors and a local high school teacher who has participated in an NEH-sponsored Summer Seminar. We will follow NEH guidelines with no special criteria other than the desire to include people from a variety of backgrounds. Prior knowledge of the *Canterbury Tales* or of Middle English is welcome but not required. In response to one participant's feeling that reading Chaucer was more difficult than expected, we will be careful to stress in our Dear Colleague letter the challenges involved in reading Middle English for the first time.

Professional development for participants

The seminar will not carry academic credit, but we will assist participants in gaining equivalency credit (such as CPDUs) in whatever ways are most helpful.

Institutional context

The primary institutional support for the seminar will come from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Eastern Illinois University, with the cooperation of the Office of Sponsored Programs at Kent State University. Both offices were very helpful in 2008 and 2010.

Housing and facilities

To provide for community and affordable housing in London, we will stay at the Mile End Campus of Queen Mary, University of London, where the projected 2012 cost for single rooms with communal kitchens is approximately £775 (\$1300 at £1 = \$1.67). We know of no comparable lodging in central London for under \$1600. Participants in the earlier seminars all praised the lodging at Queen Mary. We agree, and we were happy also with the support given by the university staff. A couple of participants indicated mild discomfort at Mile End's mixed neighborhood. It is our experience that the area is at least as safe as central London, and the campus itself is gated with 24-hour security. Our contact for housing and facilities is Ms. Sue Mussett, Conference and Groups Manager.

Because London is the host city for the 2012 Olympics, group housing in the city is hard to come by during that summer and even more expensive than usual. In consultation with Ms. Mussett, we have planned the seminar to end before the Olympics begin and reserved lodging for participants from June 24 to July 21. Participants will lodge in flats with en-suite rooms and shared kitchens for the first two weeks, and then move for the two final weeks to a nearby building where groups of four will share flats with individual bedrooms (with washbasins) and shared bathrooms and kitchens. Although this move will be slightly inconvenient, the proximity

to and excitement of the Olympics should enhance the experience of lodging in the East End. The description of housing in our Dear Colleague letter and other materials will make the lodging situation absolutely clear.

Appendix 1. Schedule of Readings and Activities

Week 1

- Sun. June 24 9-2: Arrival at Mile End Campus, Queen Mary, University of London
5:30: **Welcome dinner**
- Mon. June 25 9-12: Introductory Session
General Prologue
- Tue. June 26 9-12: General Prologue
2-5: **Tour of London Chaucer sites**
- Wed. June 27 9-12: General Prologue, Knight's Tale
- Thu. June 28 9-12: Knight's Tale
- Fri. June 29 8-6 **Oxford day trip**

Week 2

- Mon. July 2 9-12: Miller's Tale, Reeve's Tale, Cook's Tale
- Tue. July 3 9-12: Man of Law's Tale
2-5: **Tour of London medieval sites**
- Wed. July 4 9-12: Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale
12-2 **July 4 Picnic**
- Thu. July 5 9-12: Friar's Tale, Summoner's Tale
2-5: **Shakespeare at the Globe Theatre**
- Fri. July 6 8-6: Clerk's Tale

Week 3

- Mon. July 9 9-12: Merchant's Tale
- Tue. July 10 9-12: Squire's Tale, Franklin's Tale
2-5: **Tour of London medieval sites**
- Wed. July 11 9-12: Physician's Tale, Pardoner's Prologue and Tale
- Thu. July 12 9-12: **Coach to Canterbury, with stops along Chaucer's pilgrims' route
Evensong at Canterbury Cathedral, followed by group dinner**

Fri. July 13 9-5: **Visit to Canterbury Cathedral, St. Martin's Church, St. Augustine's Abbey, and the Museum of Canterbury**

Week 4

Mon. July 16 9-12: Shipman's Tale, Prioress's Tale

Tue. July 17 9-12: Monk's Tale, Nun's Priest's Tale
12-2: Session over Lunch – Tale of Sir Thopas, Tale of Melibee

Wed. July 18 9-12: Second Nun's Tale, Canon's Yeoman's Tale

Thu. July 19 9-12: Manciple's Tale; Teaching *The Canterbury Tales* I

Fri. July 20 7-10: Parson's Tale, Retraction; Teaching *The Canterbury Tales* II
6-?: **Group dinner**, sponsored by Kent State University

Sat. July 21 7-10: Departure from Mile End Campus

Appendix 2. Primary and Secondary Texts and Electronic Resources

Primary Text (Distributed to Participants)

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Larry D. Benson (2000)

Secondary Text (Distributed to Participants)

Susanna Fein and David Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Contemporary Approaches* (2009)

Articles (Distributed to Participants)

General Prologue

Jill Mann, "The *GP* and Estates Literature," *Geoffrey Chaucer's CT: A Casebook*, 23-47

Miller's Tale

E. Talbot Donaldson, "Idiom of Popular Poetry in the *MiT*," *Speaking of Chaucer*, 13-29

Reeve's Tale

Susanna Fein, "'Lat the Children Pleye': The Game Betwixt the Ages in the *RvT*," *Rebels and Rivals*, 73-104

Man of Law's Tale

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