**A Guide to the Seminar Paper**

Course: BBNAN 13200 Close Reading Literary Texts (Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales:* Tales about Difference and Otherness)

(1) Parameters of the paper

Length: 4–5 pages

Letter font: Times New Roman 12

Spacing: 1.5

Margins: standard setting

Paragraphs: indented by 1.25 inches, no gaps between the paragraphs

Title: top central position on the first page

Name: Top left or right corner (in heading)

Referencing and bibliography according to the MLA style, as described in the BA thesis guide: <http://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/135506/file/BA%20thesis%20guide_Literary%20and%20cultural%20topics-2016.pdf>

(2) What to do?

Please choose one of the following two options. Only one has to be submitted.

**Option 1**:

* Choose any passage of ca. 20-25 lines from *The* *Canterbury Tales* (CT). The analysis must be based on a critical edition of Chaucer’s original text and a reliable modern English translation.
* Indicate precisely the source of your passage (bibliographic data of the edition and the location of the passage in CT).

The analysis has to contain the following parts:

* A summary of the passage in your own words
* An explanation of the context of the passage: In which part of CT it is located; where does it occur in the respective tale or prologue?
* Identify the speakers and the characters of the passage.
* Explain the significance of the passage within the context.
* Point out the major aspects of interpretation: What makes the passage problematic, unique, outstanding, contradictory or difficult to interpret, etc.? What is the major role of the passage in the context of the tale/prologue (description, dialogue, characterization, narrator’s intervention, moralizing, humour, irony, summary, etc.)?
* Comment on the style of the passage and provide adequate illustration.
* Point out ambiguities in meaning and the linguistic means that create ambiguities.
* Compare the modern English translation with the Middle English original. Discuss how the translation interprets the original text. Where does the translation differ from your own interpretation? What might be the reason for the very different solutions in the translation?
* Make references to your sources, including the Middle English text and its modern English translation, and prepare a list of works consulted.

**Option 2**:

* Write an argumentative paper on one of the tales. You have to define your aspect of analysis, the research question, your methods, and build up an individual argument.
* Use at least five scholarly sources, including articles and books.
* Make references to your sources and prepare a list of works consulted.

(3) Statement on plagiarism

Academic research and its presentation are embedded in a large dialogue. In the process of thinking and arguing we are necessarily influenced by others: we borrow ideas from other writings and integrate them into our own. You can use others’ ideas or words in form of literal quotes or paraphrases, but you must indicate the source of quotes, paraphrased passages, and all sorts of factual information in all cases. The failure of keeping a correct record of borrowed material, either due to ignorance or to deliberate theft of ideas, is plagiarism. Papers showing evident signs of plagiarism will fail.