

Twitter Assignments

The Format

For the purposes of this seminar, Twitter assignments are short reading responses of 140 characters or under. Abbreviations are not permitted, nor are ampersands, incorrect or incomplete punctuation, or the omission of spaces. The challenge is to express what you have to say in well-constructed sentences of no more than 140 characters. The content requirements of your tweet will be stipulated for each individual assignment (see below for the first).

For this course, we will use a central Twitter account [@ChaucerGoe](#). However, you will not post your assignments straight to Twitter. Instead, you add them to the StudIP wiki. Under the appropriate heading, write your tweet, ending in a full stop; then add, in parentheses, your name and the number of characters used for the tweet proper (example below). Twitter assignments are always due by 8pm the night before the next session.

Make sure to bring your tweet to class, and be prepared to talk about the passage you were asked to analyze or summarize. You will be expected to read and reflect on the set texts in full, but your Twitter assignment prepares you to be the class expert on specific passages. You are also expected to subscribe to [@ChaucerGoe](#) on Twitter, where I will post some response to every assignment following the session in which we discuss it. I may simply post your response, or I may post my own, or I may post some blend of the two. At any rate the “official” tweet as published by [@ChaucerGoe](#) may be considered more or less authoritative. The complete Twitter feed will then help you prepare for the final exam. You can always download an up-to-date dump of the Twitter feed from [chaucergoe.greptweet.com](#) (click “Download”).

Assignment 1: Character Analysis

For our second session (week 3), your Twitter assignment is to analyze one or two of the characters introduced in the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* (individual tasks are assigned in week 1). In writing his descriptions of the various pilgrims, Chaucer often included hints at their dispositions. Sometimes the traits in question are made explicit, but sometimes they are subtly hinted at, and you’ll have to read between the lines. Your task is to try to lay bare the personalities of the pilgrims by identifying, if possible, what vices or faults they have. These faults may be numbered among the seven cardinal sins (see [slides for week one](#)) or they may be obvious breaches of the social contract, such as theft. If you can find no flaws or you have space left, simply sum up their positive traits. If no traits are mentioned or you still have space left, simply summarize the pilgrim’s description. The ideal tweet combines all three aspects: physical description, virtues, and vices. In your tweet, include the accepted name of the pilgrim in allcaps. In addition to the tweet proper, add your name and character count as stipulated above. Example:

The SQUIRE is athletic, skilled, and cheerful in outlook and dress. He is an especially energetic lover, implying lechery, perhaps gluttony. (Paul Langeslag, 140 chars)