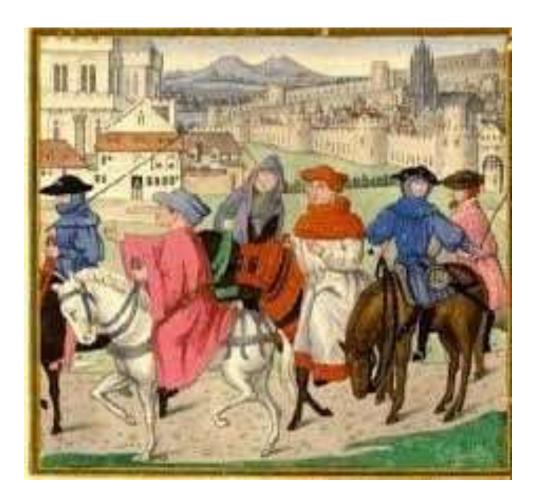# Slightly Updated

How to make a 600-year-old work relevant?

There's rap . . .

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fc8XPv_qstA&feature=related

. . . or popular TV shows . . .

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_OgWZfPqA&feature=youtu.be

Or, perhaps a group assignment . . .

Your first task -- but not your last, I hope -- will come with Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales:* after Spring Break we'll have the whole week with this fabulous work (April 4 and 6). And what I want you to do, with your group members, is to come up with some multi-media way to introduce one of the characters of the "General Prologue" to a contemporary audience.
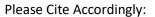
There are limitless possibilities here, so I'd really like you to have fun with this. In the past, some groups have written Facebook profiles for a character, and others have pretended that they're on dating sites like *OK Cupid* or *Tinder;* you could be applying for a job as that character; you could have the character introduce himself or herself to a new group; you could send a pen-pal letter to posterity; you could talk back to Chaucer and complain with how he's represented you. I could probably come up with a few more possibilities, but that's your job!

Please Cite Accordingly:

Safdie, J. (2016). Chaucer's pilgrims updated: The general prologue in 2016. *Regional-DH.SDSU.edu*

The Wife of Bath

On WordPress

The Doctor

On Google Docs

The Squire

On Match.com

The Miller

On Twitter

Plus A Little Intellectual Content . . .

But the point, or one of them, is this: when Chaucer introduces the various characters in the Prologue, the last group includes the so-called untrustworthy servants, including the Miller, but also "A somnour, and a pardoner also, / A maunciple, and myself – there were namo." In other words, he includes himself among the rogues, and by so doing, makes a pretty funny reference to the beginning of Dante's *Divine Comedy,* when Dante meets the famous poets of Limbo and includes himself among them. And he does so not because he's a thief or some kind of untrustworthy servant himself. Rather,

> by beginning *The Canterbury Tales* with the Knight and Miller, Chaucer makes a clear statement that he is writing no longer from within the world in which he had for all his life served. On the contrary, he is now standing outside that world as an independent, and by no means uncritical, observer. He is not an untrustworthy servant – like the Miller, Reeve, Manciple, Summoner, and Pardoner. But his position is even more radical: he is a servant no more. (Patterson 14)