

OLD ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

This course introduces the language and literature of England as they were approximately 1000 years ago. In the Fall Term the language will be taught step by step through a reading of some texts in prose and poetry, before beginning consideration of *Beowulf*. In the second term students will continue to concentrate on *Beowulf*. Our focus this year will be on the interlacing structures of words and ideas, particularly the way in which Christian exegesis in Anglo-Saxon England made use of syncretism. We will focus particularly on the psalms. In the final month of the course we will turn back to some shorter lyrics to consider the wider context of Anglo-Saxon culture.

Required Texts:

Baker, Peter. *Introduction to Old English*. 3rd ed (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012).

Liuzza, R.M.. *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*. (Peterborough: Broadview, 1999).

Mitchell, Bruce and Fred C. Robinson, ed. *Beowulf*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

Course Organisation:

In September and October the class will study the language and culture of England in the years 700-1100, including some examples of the prose and short poems written at that time. Along the way we will look chronologically at the surroundings, and at the material context within which these texts were produced, in an effort to understand the way the Anglo-Saxons thought about their world. In the latter part of the first term and into January, we will turn to *Beowulf*, reading closely about a third of the poem. Students will be responsible for knowing relevant passages of the whole text and understanding its structure and content. At the end of the course, we will turn back to some shorter poems and lyrics.

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

January Test		5%
Final Exam		35%
Short Online Papers	6 @ 5%	30%
In-class Translations and Commentary	4 @ 5%	20%
Small Group Presentations in two parts (groups of 3)		10%
Bonus Grades for Participation (up to 5%)		
Bonus Grade for online quiz		1%

Neither late assignments nor make-up tests will normally be possible; this is a course of study in which it is vital to keep up to date with the work. My policy is not to give individual extensions.

My office is Old Ivey 1G40, and my office hours for the year are Wednesdays 10:30-11:30 and 2:30-3:30 p.m. My email is mjtoswel@uwo.ca; I will usually reply within twenty-four hours.

Learning Hopes

By the end of the course students will have:

- ◆ an understanding of the elements of language and of the importance of understanding language in order to address literary texts;
- ◆ a basic understanding of Old English grammar;
- ◆ an understanding of what the issues are in the field of translation studies and some practical understanding of how to translate Old English;
- ◆ a recognition that accuracy and attention to detail is important in engaging with texts, especially Old English texts;
- ◆ the ability to discuss Old English texts critically;
- ◆ a real understanding of the interlacing mental and emotional structures, as exemplified in the lexicon, which surround *Beowulf* and other Old English texts
- ◆ an awareness of the ideas and structures of surviving Anglo-Saxon texts, including the ability to engage with details of prosodic and stylistic analysis
- ◆ a detailed understanding of about a third of *Beowulf* and some shorter lyrics and prose passages in Old English

NOT the Official Course Outline

This is not the official course outline. The official course outline is posted to the Class OWL site, and includes all of the required additional material from the department, the faculty, and the university senate.

Course Syllabus

September:

Sept. 14	Introduction Old English sounds and sentences
16	Baker ch. 1, 2, Pronunciation, Appendix C
21	Baker, ch. 3, 4
23	Introductory sentences, Adam & Eve Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England: History, Culture
28	Lord's Prayer, Parts of Speech
30	Grammar, case, pronouns and nouns

October:

Oct. 5	Baker, ch. 5, Grammar, Minitext A
7	Baker, ch. 6, Minitext B
12	Thanksgiving NO CLASS
14	Baker, ch. 6, 8, Minitext D
19	Baker, Text 7, <i>The Voyage of Ohthere</i>
21	Review of grammar, Introduction to verbs Baker, ch. 7, Minitext C
26	Short Online Paper 1 due Baker, ch. 9, 10
28	Grammar review, Minitext E p. 97, Minitext F p. 103

November:

Nov. 2	Sight Translation (and Commentary) 1
4	Text 3, Cynewulf and Cyneheard
9	Baker, ch. 12, Minitext H
11	Text 4, The Martyrdom of Ælfheah
16	Text 8, Bede on Caedmon
18	Introduction to Poetry Baker, ch 13-16

	Short Online Paper 2 due
23	Class Presentations
25	Class Presentations
30	Class Presentations
December:	
Dec. 2	Introduction to <i>Beowulf</i>
7	<i>Beowulf</i> : the prologue lines 1-52
9	<i>Beowulf</i> : lines 53-188
January:	
Jan. 4	Sight Translation (and Commentary) 2
6	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 189-319
11	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 320-370
13	<i>Beowulf</i> scholarship, a brief history lines 371-455
	Short Online Paper 3 due
18	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 456-528
20	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 529-651
25	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 652-702a
27	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 702b-836
February	
Feb. 1	Sight Translation and Commentary 3
3	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 1050-1159a
8	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 1251-1398
	Short Online Paper 4 due
10	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 1492-1590
BREAK WEEK	
22	Sight Translation and Commentary 4
24	<i>Beowulf</i> The return to Hygelac, recapitulation, history lines 2247-90, 2555-2601
29	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 2788-2820, 3110-3136
March	
Mar. 2	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 3137-82, Final discussion
	Short Online Paper 5 due
7	Class Presentations
9	Class Presentations
14	Baker, Text 12, “The Wanderer”
16	Baker, “The Wanderer” and Text 17 “The Wife’s Lament”
21	Sight Translation and Commentary 5
23	Baker, Text 13 “The Dream of the Rood”
28	Short Online Paper 6 due
	Text 10 A Selection of Riddles
30	Text 10 and additional riddles, Text 16 “Wulf and Eadwacer”
April	
Apr. 4	Baker, Text 11, <i>The Battle of Maldon</i>
6	<i>The Battle of Maldon</i> Review

Assignments

Short Online Papers: Submitted on Sakai, these will be 500-word engagements with one of the texts treated in the previous three weeks. You may consider style, the material or social culture of the text, its theme or ideas, or an idea cleared with me. 6 @ 5% = 30%

Sight Translations (and Commentary): At five points in the year you will come to class with your textbooks and any reference texts (within reason) that you find useful, as well as your own notes. I will provide you with a text to translate (and for the last four of these also the opportunity to write commentary or analysis) in class. You will be working on paper, and will not have access to the internet. The best four results will count in your grade. 4 @ 5% = 20%

Group Presentations: Groups of three students will take on a critical approach to Old English poetry and present their basic analysis in the fall, with a shorter follow-up presentation in the spring to indicate either how their thinking has advanced or how their approach works for the texts studied in the interim. My basic principles for marking in-class presentations are: content as appropriate for the rest of the class, clarity of delivery, time-keeping, quality of ancillary materials. In short, these presentations are opportunities to teach your colleagues, and that will be the focus in the grading. For group presentations, unless there is a compelling reason otherwise, I assign the group a base number and vary the marks for each student by no more than 5 marks up or down. 10%

January Test: This test will include passages for translation (chosen from the passages studied to date), a short-answer question, and one or two essay questions. There will be no grammar questions *per se* on the January test. 5%

Final Examination: More details will be available during the course, but the final examination for English 3012 typically includes several passages from *Beowulf* and other texts for translation, sometimes a sight translation, some short-answer questions, and two essays (one specifically on *Beowulf*, the other a more general question that will allow you to apply knowledge gained throughout the course). All the translation passages are chosen from among those for which the student is responsible. Please bear in mind that you will not be able to use your textbooks and notes during the final examination. 35%

Bonus Grades for Participation: These grades will be awarded for attendance (to the entire class meeting), for good completion of assignments to help with learning Old English, for posting passages to the website, for completing all of the quizzes, and for good contributions to class and online discussions. Bear in mind these are bonus grades and you will not receive half of them just for enrolling in the course. Up to 5%