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:**


**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January Test</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Online Papers</td>
<td>6 @ 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Translations and Commentary</td>
<td>4 @ 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Group Presentations in two parts (groups of 3)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonus Grades for Participation (up to 5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonus Grade for online quiz 1%</td>
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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
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, The Voyage of Ohthere
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 Ælfræða
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 *Beowulf*  
7 *Beowulf*: the prologue lines 1-52  
9 *Beowulf*: lines 53-188  

**January:**  
Jan. 4 Sight Translation (and Commentary) 2  
6 *Beowulf* lines 189-319  
11 *Beowulf* lines 320-370  
13 *Beowulf* scholarship, a brief history  
   lines 371-455  
Short Online Paper 3 due  
18 *Beowulf* lines 456-528  
20 *Beowulf* lines 529-651  
25 *Beowulf* lines 652-702a  
27 *Beowulf* lines 702b-836  

**February**  
Feb. 1 Sight Translation and Commentary 3  
3 *Beowulf* lines 1050-1159a  
8 *Beowulf* lines 1251-1398  
Short Online Paper 4 due  
10 *Beowulf* lines 1492-1590  
**BREAK WEEK**  
22 Sight Translation and Commentary 4  
24 *Beowulf* The return to Hygelac, recapitulation, history  
   lines 2247-90, 2555-2601  
29 *Beowulf* lines 2788-2820, 3110-3136  

**March**  
Mar. 2 *Beowulf* lines 3137-82, Final discussion  
Short Online Paper 5 due  
7 Class Presentations  
9 Class Presentations  
14 Baker, Text 12, “The Wanderer”  
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, *The Battle of Maldon*  
6 *The Battle of Maldon*  
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%