

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*. In particular, we will read *Beowulf* in conjunction with J.R.R. Tolkien's translation, commentary, and response to the poem. In the final month of the course we will turn back to some shorter lyrics to consider the wider context of Anglo-Saxon culture. Our focus for the year will be on the differing perceptions and approaches taken by translators of the poetry we are considering.

Required Texts

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

Tolkien, J.R.R. *Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. (London:

14	Text 8, Bede on Caedmon
	Short Online Paper 2 due
16	Introduction to Poetry
	Baker, ch 13-16
21	Class Presentations
23	Class Presentations
28	Class Presentations
Nov. 30	Introduction to <i>Beowulf</i>
December	
Dec. 5	<i>Beowulf</i> : the prologue lines 1-52
	Short Online Paper 3 due
7	<i>Beowulf</i> : lines 53-143
January:	
Jan. 9	Translation (and Commentary) 2
11	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 144-285
16	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 320-370
18	<i>Beowulf</i> scholarship, a brief history
	lines 702b-836
23	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 837-924
25	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 1063-1159a
30	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 1251-1398
	Short Online Paper 4 due
February	
Feb. 1	<i>Beowulf</i> lines 1399-1491
6	Translation and Commentary 2&V Class Presentations 0-370 Class Presentations 144-370

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. The first of these will be worth 5% of your grade. You must complete five of the remaining six assignments, each of which will be worth 6% of your grade. If you complete all seven, I will count the best six in your final grade. 1 @ 5% = 5%, 5 @ 6% = 30%

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 an element of Tolkien's study of *Beowulf* 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 other texts studied in the course. Topics will include: Tolkien's scholarly career, Tolkien's subcreation, Tolkien's translation of *Beowulf*, Tolkien's attitude to religion in *Beowulf*, Tolkien's textual criticism and *Beowulf*, Tolkien's linguistic knowledge and *Beowulf*, Tolkien and Grendel (and perhaps others). 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 upwards or downwards, depending on the individual's contribution to the group, by 5%. The fall presentation will constitute two-thirds of this grade, and the spring update one-third. 10%

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), and for good and helpful contributions to class and online discussions. Bear in mind these are bonus grades, and you may not receive any. Up to 3%

Bonus Grade for Online Quiz: After the first class, there will be an online quiz available for twenty-four hours with ten questions. Up to 1% bonus marks available.