

Carleton University  
Winter 2016  
Department of English

ENGL 4105/5207: Old English  
*Beowulf* in Contexts

*Prerequisite: fourth-year standing in Honours English  
or permission of the Department.  
Precludes additional credit for ENGL 3102.*

**Tuesdays and Thursdays/ 10:05 am – 11:25 am**  
**Location: DT 1816 (Please confirm on Carleton Central)**

**Instructor: Prof. Robin Norris**  
**Email: robin.norris@carleton.ca**  
**Office: 1806 Dunton Tower**  
**Telephone: 613-520-2600, ext. 4195**  
**Office Hours: TBA**

**TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE (as of May 2015)**

In Winter 2016, I will present a new version of this course, and this tentative course outline reflects its ongoing development. Please feel free to email me with questions or suggestions. First we will read from the five texts of the *Beowulf* manuscript, which may reflect its compiler's interest in monsters: the dog-headed saint Christopher, the heathen hound Holofernes whom Judith beheads, and the orientalism of both Alexander the Great's letter to his teacher Aristotle and the so-called "wonders of the east," which catalogues foreign peoples alongside monsters and marvels. We will end the course by reading and discussing the canonical poetry that has long served as the primary context of *Beowulf* in the classroom.

**Course description**

The primary purpose of this course is to learn to read Old English, the oldest form of the English language. After 1000 years of language change, the language of the Anglo-Saxons can seem quite foreign. At the same time, 76% of the most common Old English words are still in use today, and 83% of our most common words are from Old English.

Reading knowledge of Old English is the primary objective of the course, but we will accomplish several additional **course objectives** along the way:

- Introduction to the extant Old English corpus
- Mastery of fundamental Old English grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation
- Understanding of the cultural and historical contexts of Anglo-Saxon literature
- Introduction to Anglo-Saxon material culture, including art, archaeology, and manuscripts

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week 1: Welcome and introductions, McGillivray Chapters 1 and 2.

Week 2: McGillivray Chapters 8 (67–70), 3, 4, 5 (46–49), 7. Marsden pp. 355–78. St. Christopher.

Week 3: McGillivray Chapters 5 (42–46), 6, 8 (65–67). Marsden pp. 381–95. Wonders of the East.

Week 4: McGillivray Chapters 9–12. Marsden pp. 379–81. The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle.

Week 5: *Judith*.

Week 6: *Beowulf*.

Week 7: *Beowulf*.

Week 8: *Beowulf*.

Week 9: Practice exam and translation exam.

Week 10: "The Wife's Lament," "Wulf and Eadwacer."

Week 11: "The Wanderer."

Week 12: "The Dream of the Rood."

**Texts** (Available at Octopus Books, 116 Third Avenue, 613-233-2589, octopusbooks.ca)

J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4th ed. (MART 1984). Recommended.

R. D. Fulk, *The Beowulf Manuscript* (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 2010). Required.

Richard Marsden, *The Cambridge Old English Reader* (CUP 2004). Required.

Murray McGillivray, *A Gentle Introduction to Old English* (Broadview 2011). Required.

Students will also be required to read, photocopy, and/or print websites and handouts available online or in hard copy.

### **Evaluation**

Memorization/recitation 5%

Preparation, participation, homework, quizzes, and in-class activities 25%

Translation exam\* 35%

Final project\* 35%

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Attendance, participation, and missed appointments**

You must complete all reading and translation assignments before coming to class and bring all assigned reading and homework materials to each class. Faithful attendance, advance preparation, and informed participation will be necessary to pass the class. For every unexcused absence from class, for lack of preparation in class, and for each missed appointment, I reserve the right to deduct two points from a student's final course mark. I also reserve the right to refuse future appointments to students who miss appointments scheduled with me.

### **Essay protocols**

All assignments must be written in standard academic English using MLA format. The essay assignment will be discussed in class at least one week prior to the deadline. Essays will be available for return as soon as possible (e.g., approximately two weeks after all students' assignments have been submitted). Students are responsible for making arrangements to pick up their essays. I reserve the right to request a backup electronic and/or hard copy of all assignments; you are responsible for keeping these backups and submitting them immediately upon request.

### **Late assignments**

A grade of zero will be recorded for all late or missing assignments. No late essays will be accepted. No late homework assignments, exercises, or quizzes will be accepted except in cases where students present documentation of accommodation, illness, bereavement, etc., and take responsibility for making appropriate arrangements to make up the missing work. Late assignments (i.e., those with an excuse for receiving an extension in advance of the deadline) may receive no written feedback.

### **Rewrite policy**

Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to rewrite an essay or exam, or to resubmit an assignment in this course.

### **Status of split-level course**

\*Students enrolled in ENGL 5207 will complete a longer version of the translation exam and submit a longer final project. Otherwise, no distinction will be made between undergraduate and graduate students. Behavior detrimental to a spirit of collaboration and community will be detrimental to the class participation component of the mark.

## **FASS POLICIES**

### **Academic accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows: Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide. Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for

accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide. Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

### **Deferred final exams**

Deferred final exams must be applied for at the registrar's office and are available only if the student is in good standing in the course. In order to qualify for a deferred final exam for this course, all prior assignments must have been submitted on or before their respective deadlines, and the student may not have more than one unexcused absence.

### **Final grades**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

### **Statement on plagiarism**

Before completing any assignment, it is your responsibility to ensure that you understand what academic integrity means, what plagiarism is, how to complete your work honestly, and how to cite sources properly. All work must be completed independently unless otherwise instructed. No piece of work written for another course, however modified, may be submitted for credit in this one.

Academic integrity violations will not be tolerated. All suspected cases will be reported to the dean's office at once and prosecuted to the fullest extent possible. All existing means of plagiarism detection will be utilized, including internet search engines and services such as [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com).

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of F for the course.