

**Carleton University  
Department of English  
Winter 2010**

**ENGL 5207F: Early Medieval Studies  
Reading Beowulf**

**Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays 16:00-17:30  
Location: 1816 DT**

**Instructor: Robin Norris  
Office: 1806DT  
Phone: (613) 520-2600 ext. 4195  
Email: [Robin.Norris@carleton.ca](mailto:Robin.Norris@carleton.ca)  
Office Hours: TBA**

**ENGL 5207: Reading *Beowulf***

Tentative description: *Fourth-year English majors are welcome to participate in this seminar! ENGL 4105 (offered in Fall 2009) is a prerequisite.* After 1000 years of language change, the Old English language may at first appear foreign, but with even one term of study in ENGL 4105, its familiar forms and structures become obvious. In ENGL 5207, students will have the opportunity to read *Beowulf* in the original Old English. This is a rare and golden prospect, in part a response to the medievalism that is so prominent in contemporary popular culture, and which has in turn increased student demand for classes in medieval literature and language. Reading *Beowulf* is challenging, but the poem rewards its translators with new found linguistic skills, mastery of Old English verse, and intimate familiarity with that most canonical of Anglo-Saxon poems. Reading *Beowulf* at Carleton will be doubly rewarding, as students will also be encouraged to consider the mediating functions of scribe, editor, lexicographer, and critic, through whose work we seek to access the “original” text. Medievalists will be working alongside students who are interested in language, linguistics, poetics, textual transmission and translation, manuscript culture, and medievalism. Many English students also find that a translation course offers a welcome change from their usual routine.

Assignments: Dedicated attendance and participation will be crucial to success in this course. Students will have input in the creation of course assignments; these will likely include a presentation and a final exam.

Books: We may translate from Mitchell and Robinson, *Beowulf: An Edition* (Blackwell, 2006).