

Spring 2014

# ENG 430/530: Old English III: Beowulf

FW 12-1.20 in 307 Volcanology

Instructor: Professor Stephanie Clark  
office: 374 PLC office phone: 346 3960  
email: sclark11@uoregon.edu  
office hours: Fridays 1pm -4pm  
course website: on Blackboard

## Part 1: Course Description

This course will use the tools and knowledge acquired in previous terms of Old English to read the monsters section of *Beowulf* with critical and philological skill. We will pay attention to language, literary, and scholarly issues. To this end, please come to every class prepared to translate, parse, and comment on the assigned text.

### Grading Breakdown

Class Preparation and Participation	10
Presentation	10
Textual assignments	30 (#2 is weighted more heavily)
Final Exam	25
Essay Prospectus	25

### Required Texts: *do not buy e-books*

*Beowulf: A Student Edition*. Ed. George Jack. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. ISBN 0 19 871044 5.

Bjork, Robert E. and John D. Niles, eds. *A Beowulf Handbook*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. ISBN 0-8032-6150-0. \$30 on Amazon.

*Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*. Trans. R. M. Liuzza. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2000. ISBN 978 1 55111 189 6.

### Recommended

Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. (If you already own a stylebook, you may use the one you have. If you do not currently own a style book, you should buy this. Earlier editions won't have the latest word on citing electronic sources, but they'll do for most things.)

Neque enim possunt carmina, quamvis optime composita, ex alia in aliam linguam ad verbum sine detrimento sui decoris ac dignitatis transferri. —The

Venerable Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*

(It is impossible to make a literal translation of poetry, no matter how well written, into another language without losing some of the beauty and dignity.)

## Part 2: Syllabus

*Lines for a given week will be narrowed down from the passages given below.*

### **Week 1**

- M Introduction, Review
- W *Beowulf* ll. 1-52: Scyld Scefing

### **Week 2**

- M *Beowulf* ll. 64-114: Grendel; Liuzza to l. 114  
*Beowulf Handbook* presentations
- W *Beowulf* ll. 134b-169: Grendel's depredations; Liuzza to l. 169

### **Week 3**

- M *Beowulf* ll. 371-498: Hrothgar and Beowulf; Liuzza to l. 498  
Assignment 1: Metrics
- W cont. assigned lines

### **Week 4**

- M *Beowulf* ll. 499-606: Beowulf and Unferth; Liuzza to l. 606  
*Beowulf Handbook* presentations
- W cont. assigned lines

### **Week 5**

- M *Beowulf* ll. 702b-836: Beowulf and Grendel; Liuzza to l. 836  
Assignment 2: Word Study
- W cont. assigned lines

### **Week 6**

- M *Beowulf* ll. 1008b-1045: Hrothgar's Gifts; Liuzza to l. 1045  
*Beowulf Handbook* presentations
- W *Beowulf* ll. 1192-1231: Wealhtheow's Gifts; Liuzza to l. 1230

### **Week 7**

- M *Beowulf* ll. 1171-1159a: The Fight at Finnsburg  
Assignment 3: Editing Theory
- W cont. assigned lines

### **Week 8**

- M *Beowulf* ll. 1251-1306a: Mrs. Grendel; Liuzza to l. 1306a  
*Beowulf Handbook* presentations
- W *Beowulf* ll. 1321-1382: Hrothgar's description of the Grendels and their home; Liuzza to l. 1382.

### **Week 9**

- M Memorial Day: No Class

W *Beowulf* ll. 1492-1590: Beowulf fights Mrs. Grendel; Liuzza to l. 1590  
Assignment 4: Translating Theory

### Week 10

M *Beowulf* ll. 1700-1784: Hrothgar's "sermon" (note: since we can't possibly get through the lines assigned for week 9, we'll probably just continue with them for week 10); Liuzza to l. 1887

W cont. assigned lines  
DUE: Final Essay

**Final:** Monday, June 9 at 10:15

## Part 3: Learning Outcomes

**Main Goals:** Through in-depth study of *Beowulf* in the original language, you should gain skill in close and careful reading of a particular medieval text as well as deeper knowledge of the culture that produced it. This class builds on Old English I and II in furthering your knowledge of Old English and giving you a better grasp of Modern English grammar. This class will also allow you to situate yourself more deeply within the long tradition of English literature and thought.

**Read/Analyze.** Your careful study of the assigned passages and texts in preparation for class should increase your level of comfort with the language and give you greater awareness of what is to be gained by close reading a particular text. Your reading will also tune you in to the conventions of Old English poetry. Lectures and supplementary reading will further orient you to the formal characteristics of Old English poetry.

**Contextualize.** Class lectures, assigned readings, and a variety of course assignments will introduce major terminology, methodology, and interpretive issues in studying *Beowulf* specifically and Old English and much medieval literature more generally. In addition, the resources will help situate *Beowulf* within their cultural, historical, and literary contexts. Class translation and parsing should increase your comfort with using grammatical terminology

**Research.** The written assignments are designed to familiarize you with the some of the tools and techniques of Old English linguistic research, and the issues and methodologies involved in editing and translating.

**Write.** The final written assignment is designed to allow you to apply your linguistic research to the interpretation of *Beowulf*. You should therefore gain skill in writing a focused analytic essay in clear grammatical prose that advances an original argument. There are various resources on campus to help you; my office hours are one of them.