

Spring 2015

# ENG 430/530: Old English III: Beowulf

FWT, Th 12-1.20 in 176 Lokey

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*course documents uploaded to Dropbox*

## 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.

### **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.* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Trans. R. M. Liuzza. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2013 ISBN: 9781554810642. The first edition from 2000 is fine, ISBN 978 1 55111 189 6. There's also an edition with Old English and the translation side-by-side if you prefer that: from 2012, ISBN 978-1554811137.

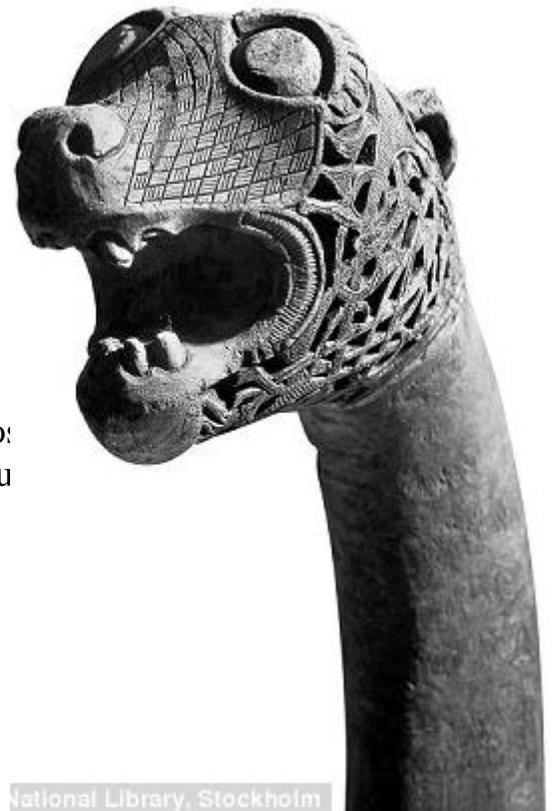
### Recommended

*Klaeber's Beowulf*, 4th ed. Ed. R.D. Fulk, Robert Bjork, John Niles. Toronto: U Toronto P, 2008. *This is the edition to get if you're serious about Beowulf.*

Neque enim possunt carmina, quamvis optime composita,  
ex alia in aliam linguam ad verbum sine detrimento su-  
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.)



National Library, Stockholm

## Part 2: Syllabus

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

### **Week 1**

T Introduction; *Beowulf* ll. 2200-20: The throne passes to Beowulf  
Th *Beowulf* ll. 2231b-2311: The dragon (in class we'll focus first on the Lay of the Last Survivor, ll. 2247-66)

### **Week 2**

*Beowulf* ll. 2313-95: Dragon attacks, Beowulf comes to the throne

### **Week 3**

*Beowulf* ll. 2391-2471: Beowulf reminisces; Hæthcyn kills Herebeald  
Assignment 1: Metrics

### **Week 4**

*Beowulf* ll. 2510-2601: Dragon fight (make sure you read ll. 2471-2509 in translation)

### **Week 5**

*Beowulf* ll. 2602-93: Wiglaf and the retainers  
Assignment 2: Word Study

### **Week 6**

*Beowulf* ll. 2694-2711a, 2729-2820: Death (read ll. 2711b-28 in translation)  
DUE (graduates and second-time undergraduates only): research paper prospectus

### **Week 7**

*Beowulf* ll. 2821-91: Wiglaf and the Retainers  
Assignment 3: Editing Theory

### **Week 8**

*Beowulf* ll. 2900-3057: Political situation (note this is 157 lines, which we will clearly not get completely through. We'll deal with that problem when we get to it)

### **Week 9**

*Beowulf* ll. 3058-3136: Wiglaf's eulogy  
Assignment 4: Translating Theory

### **Week 10**

*Beowulf* ll. 3137-82: Beowulf's funeral  
DUE: Research Prospectus (first time undergraduates only).

**Final:** Monday, June 8 at 8-freaking-a.m.  
Research paper due (second time undergraduates and graduate students)

## 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.

### Grading Breakdown, First timers:

Class Preparation and Participation	15	
Textual assignments		30 (#2 is weighted more heavily)
Final Exam		25
Essay Prospectus	30	

### Second Timers:

Class Preparation and Participation	15	
Textual assignments		20 (#2 is weighted more heavily)
Final Exam		25
Essay Prospectus	10	
Full Essay		30

### Graduate Students:

Class Preparation and Participation	15	
Textual assignments		25 (#2 is weighted more heavily)
Final Exam		25
Essay Prospectus + Full Essay	35	