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**


Recommended


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.)
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 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:

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<td>Essay Prospectus</td>
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Second Timers:

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<td>Full Essay</td>
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Graduate Students:

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