The second term of Old English will be devoted to the shorter OE poems. The first goal of the course is to get an improved mastery of OE grammar, syntax and vocabulary; however, these poems are masterworks worthy of a term's study for their literary, philosophical, cultural and historical interest.

After starting with "The Dream of the Rood" we'll focus on the "elegies," a set of nine poems (we'll read five in OE) which share a number of themes and techniques which have been of special interest to readers of modern English literature. One overarching question for the term will be whether the poems really constitute a genre—"elegy"—and what that term might mean. As all of these poems, including "Dream of the Rood," are first-person monologues, I'm also interested in what they tell us about medieval subjectivity, the psychological or spiritual "inner life" of the Anglo-Saxons. It's commonly argued that what we think of as subjectivity today didn't exist in the early Middle Ages.

Class time will be devoted primarily to translation of the poems, but also to critical discussion of them. A bibliography of criticism on each poem will be distributed ahead of time, and everyone is expected to read at least one article on each poem and introduce it into discussion. For translating check out this very helpful website: http://www.oepoetry.ca/. Check your own translation against Crossley-Holland's. How accurate is he? What's been lost in translation? By the end of the term you should be able to read all of the poems in OE without the aid of glosses, notes, or translations, and have an idea of your own on each poem for a short essay. The exam will allow you to demonstrate both translation skill and critical thinking.

A term paper (for undergrads at least 10 pp., for graduate students at least 15) is due on the last day of class. Discuss your topic with me early in the term, and consult with me regularly. That way you'll get as much from the project as possible, and avoid confusion about expectations, last-minute haste, and catastrophe.

Grad students will meet as a group once a week, time to be determined, to discuss critical theory, research methods, and term papers.

Office: PLC 374  Office hours: TTh 9:00-11:00, and by appt.
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Books: Mitchell and Robinson, Guide to Old English
Crossley-Holland, The Anglo-Saxon World: An Anthology

Week I  Jan. 4, 6  The Dream of the Rood
Week II  Jan. 11, 13  "
Week III  Jan. 18, 20  The Ruin
Week IV  Jan 25, 27  Wulf and Eadwacer
Week V  Feb. 1, 3  The Wife's Lament
Week VI  Feb. 8, 10  "
Week VII  Feb. 15, 17  The Wanderer
Week VIII  Feb. 22, 24  "
Week IX  March 1, 3  The Seafarer
Week X  March 8, 10  "

Final Exam  Friday, March 18, 10:15