

Fall 2017

ENG 428/528: Old English I

MWF 10-11, 246 Gerlinger

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* In Week 1 office hours are by appointment only.

Fitt i: Course Description

In a quiet corner of the Natural History Museum's instrument gallery you find an unassuming object, graphite grey, small enough to fit in the hand, on a small pedestal. The placard reads: "Musical Instrument? Date: Unknown. Provenance: Unknown." The placard directs you to hold it up to your ear. When you pick it up, a small wave of nausea washes over you. You hear a faint humming sound coming from the object. You attempt to hum a matching note. Suddenly, darkness closes in around you and you fall to the floor. You awake to find yourself in a field near the edge of a forest. Standing up, you see a small group of men approaching, all armed.

The year is 876.

You are in Anglo-Saxon England.

What do you need to know to save your life?



But wait! You're in luck! This accidental time-travel has not happened to you yet! This class—*this very class*—will prepare you for such an event.

Welcome to Old English.

ENG 428/528 is a course in learning to read and understand Old English, the language of the Anglo-Saxons (the English between the years 449 and 1066). We will concentrate on language basics, creating a firm foundation for reading Old English literature in later courses, and enabling you to communicate simple ideas in Old English (“Ic eom freond! No ic ne eom viking!”). The focus of this term will therefore be grammar and vocabulary, although we will also read short, simple texts. Thus, besides one day saving your life, this course will also increase your understanding of grammatical concepts helpful for any language, enrich your historical understanding of modern English, and introduce you to the history and culture of Anglo-Saxon England. In addition, training in grammatical analysis will help train you in detail-oriented, orderly habits of mind and increase your ability think abstractly about language.

Please be aware that, even more than in a conventional English course, your proficiency and your grade (and, some day, your very survival) will reflect the time you put in to the course. Because of this, consistent attendance is essential. Note also that the class is fun, but it takes concentrated study and a good amount of rote memorization. Be warned!

Note: OEI is the first in a three-class sequence. It is not designed to stand alone. OEII (Winter) deals more thoroughly with syntax, covers a variety of short poems and prose, and culminates with a re-enacted battle. OEIII (Spring) usually covers *Beowulf*, spends more time on poetic form, and ends with a feast (monsters not invited). In short, the later terms are where you actually get to read Old English literature; they’re even more fun than this term.

Required Text: do not buy e-books

Baker, Peter. *Introduction to Old English*, 3rd ed. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. ISBN 978-0470659847.

Additional texts can be found on Canvas along with worksheets, links to helpful websites, and further research resources.

Strongly Recommended:

For a basic dictionary: *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, J.R. Clark Hall and Herbert T.

Merritt, 4th ed., Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching (Toronto: University of Toronto Press). ISBN 9780802065483. Your best bet is to buy it here: <http://www.utppublishing.com/A-Concise-Anglo-Saxon-dictionary.html>. You can find all sorts of shady copies on Amazon. *Make sure* it’s the 4th edition (make sure the ISBN matches and the cover is blue and white); the previous editions are (pardon my Old English) *scitte*; because it’s out of copyright all sorts of reprinters sell very bad reprints on Amazon. If you get one of these you’ll be sorry.

For a good basic reference work: *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge, *et al.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001). ISBN 978-0631224921.

Qui amat uina, non execratur crateras; qui nucleos, non putamina; qui segetes, non boues; qui lac, non uaccas; qui Deum, non proximum; et qui amat scientiam, non abhorreat a grammatica, sine qua nemo eruditus aut sapiens esse poterit.

He who loves wine does not hate goblets; he who loves nuts does not mind nutshells; he who loves corn does not object to oxen; he who loves milk does not detest cows; he who loves God does not hate his neighbor; and he who loves knowledge should not loathe grammar, without which no one can be either learned or wise.
— *Collectanea* (8th century)

Fitt ii: Syllabus

- All **Monday** classes will have either a quiz or a battle.
- All **Friday** classes will have a short translation due, will cover an artifact from Anglo-Saxon England and will concentrate on reading actual OE texts.
- Exercises to accompany Baker's book can be found online at <http://www.oldenglishaerobics.net/>. If you choose the "Workout Room" you'll find interactive drills on basic language concepts that will correct you as you go along. For this, you'll need to sign up for an account. If you choose the "Workbook" you'll find a bunch of worksheets without an answer key. **I strongly recommend that you do the exercises that correspond to the concepts as we cover them.** You'll do much better on quizzes and exams.
- Exercises on Baker's website are referred to as being "online." Documents on Canvas are referred to as being on Canvas.

Week 1: Introduction. Alphabet, pronunciation. Artifact: Anglo-Saxon names and kingdoms.

W: Read Baker ch. 2. See ch. 2 exercises online.

F: Read Baker ch. 1

Week 2: Grammar review. Artifact: West Stow and Anglo-Saxon everyday life.

M: Read Baker ch. 3 and parse sentences from Bede (on Canvas, with instructions)

W: Read Baker ch. 4. See ch. 4 exercises online

Week 3: Personal pronouns and intro to nouns. Artifact: Runes and Ruthwell.

M: Read Baker ch. 5 (concentrating on personal pronouns). See personal pronoun exercises online. See "What's a Paradigm?" on Canvas.

W: Read Baker ch. 6 (concentrating on the attributes of nouns and inflectional endings). See ch. 6 exercises online.

DUE: Old English Recitation for **Last Names A-K by Wednesday**. See document on Canvas. Recitations will be held in my office during office hours. No appointment needed.

Week 4: Strong and weak nouns. Intro to verbs and weak verbs. Artifact: Clothing and weapons.

M: Review Baker ch. 6 (concentrating on strong and weak nouns).

W: Read Baker ch. 7 (concentrating on the basics and weak verbs). See ch. 7 exercises online, esp. the first two and the two before the "minitext."

DUE: Old English Recitation for **Last Names L-Z by Wednesday**.

Week 5: Strong and anomalous verbs. Artifact: Fuller Brooch.

M: Review Baker ch. 7. See ch. 7 exercises online, esp. the third. Look again at "What's a Paradigm?" on Canvas.

W: Review Baker ch. 7. See ch. 7 exercises online, esp. the fourth.

Week 6: Demonstrative and indefinite pronouns. Artifact: medicine and charms.

M: MIDTERM

W: Read Baker ch. 5 (concentrating on non-personal pronouns). See ch. 5 exercises online for demonstratives and indefinites.

Week 7: Adjectives. Artifact: Recent Archaeological Finds.
Read Baker ch. 8. See ch. 8 exercises online.

Week 8: Adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions. Artifact: Manuscripts

M: Read Baker ch. 10. See ch. 10 exercises online.

F: DUE: Customary paper for the Anglo-Saxon travel guide.

FRIDAY'S CLASS will be held in the Special Collections room of the library. In preparation, please watch the short video "Making Manuscripts," posted to YouTube by the Getty Museum (here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuNfdHNTv9o>).

Week 9: Reading and review.

NO CLASS Friday on account of the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Week 10: Reading and Tourism presentations. Artifact: Franks Casket.

(The following schedule may be adjusted

M: Northumbria and Deira

W: Mercia and East Anglia

F: Wessex and Kent

Final: 10.15am Friday, Dec. 8. All exams must be taken at the scheduled time, no exceptions.
Graduate students' research paper is due at this time.