

Medieval English Studies Lecture Course WiSe 2015–2016: Old English Literature

Term:	Winter 2015/2016	Instructor:	Dr P. S. Langeslag
Time:	Thu 14–16	Office:	SEP 2.306
Room:	ZHG 007	Phone:	0551/3919706
Credits:	variable	Office hours:	Wed 2–3
Prerequisites:	variable	E-mail:	planges@gwdg.de

Course Description

When Roman literacy was first systematically introduced to Anglo-Saxon England in the late sixth century, it constituted a new means of recording what must already have been a lively narrative and lyric scene. That new outlet may have come with a network of financial and ideological filters yielding something of a lopsided corpus, but the material is sufficiently rich to permit its study as the first English literature to have left a trace in writing. In the course of this term, we will discuss a generous selection of its genres, ranging from heroic and lyric verse to legal and religious prose, with regular attention to such historical topics as the Viking invasions and Alfred the Great.

No prior knowledge of Anglo-Saxon history, literature, or language is required for attendance of this lecture course, which exists only as a constituent course (*Teilveranstaltung*) of a variety of modules; as such, it cannot normally be taken for credit on its own. Please refer to the course catalogue for details.

Aims

Students will improve their knowledge of

- Old English literature
- Anglo-Saxon history
- Anglo-Saxon and medieval European culture

Assessment

Assessment is undertaken as part of the associated seminar. In most but not all cases, it takes the form of a written exam, 30 minutes of which are to be used to answer four out of twelve open questions on the lectures and/or associated readings in a paragraph or two each. Check with the course catalogue and/or your seminar instructor for specifics on your particular module.

Required Texts and Resources

Primary and secondary texts for this course will be made available on StudIP, at least a week prior to their discussion in the lecture; please read them ahead of time. Slides will likewise appear there, as will lists of key concepts for each session.

Schedule

wk	date	topic	reading
1	29 Oct	The Anglo-Saxons	
2	5 Nov	Language and Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treharne and Pulsiano, “An Introduction to the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Vernacular Literature” • Scragg, “The Nature of Old English Verse”
3	12 Nov	Heroic Poetry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Beowulf</i> lines 662–836 (trans. Liuzza) • <i>The Battle of Maldon</i> (trans. in Trapp, Gray, and Boffey 100–110) • Horowitz, “Beowulf, Samson, David and Christ”
4	19 Nov	Religious Poetry	• <i>Andreas</i> (trans. Root)
5	26 Nov	Religious Prose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maccabees</i> (trans. Skeat 3.66–124) • Anderson, “The Old Testament Homily”
6	3 Dec	Manuscript Culture, with Dr Christine Voth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jayatilaka, “Old English Manuscripts and Readers” • Parkes, “<i>Rædan, areccan, smeagan</i>”
7	10 Dec	Cosmography and Travel Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Orosius</i> book 1 ch. 1 (trans. Bosworth) • Hiatt, “<i>Beowulf</i> off the Map”
8	17 Dec	Lyrics, Riddles, and Wisdom Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Wanderer</i> (trans. Bjork, <i>Shorter Poems</i> 2.2–11) • <i>Solomon and Saturn II</i> (trans. Anlezark) • Orchard, “Not What It Was”
9	7 Jan	Magic, with Dr Sándor Chardonnens	TBA
10	14 Jan	Homiletics and the Benedictine Reform, with Esther Lemmerz and Dr Christine Voth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blickling Homily XII (Morris 131–137) • Clayton, “Preaching and Teaching” • TBA • Barrow, “The Chronology of the Benedictine ‘Reform’”
11	21 Jan	Vikings!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asser’s <i>Life of King Alfred</i>, §§ 1–72 (trans. Keynes and Lapidge 67–88) • <i>Life of St Edmund</i> (trans. Skeat 4.314–334)
12	28 Jan	King Alfred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asser’s <i>Life of King Alfred</i>, §§ 73–106 (trans. Keynes and Lapidge 88–110) • Irvine, “Old English Prose”
13	4 Feb	Law and Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Wife’s Complaint, The Husband’s Message, Wulf and Eadwacer</i>, and <i>The Queen and the Frisian Wife</i> (trans. in Trapp, Gray, and Boffey 85–90) • Richards and Stanfield, “Concepts of Anglo-Saxon Women in the Laws”
14	11 Feb	Applied Old English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sellic Spell</i> (Tolkien, <i>Beowulf</i> 355–386) • Tolkien, “The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm’s Son”

References and Further Reading

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