

# Introduction to Medieval English Literature and Culture

B.EP.204; M.EP.02b-L; M.EP.02c

<b>Term:</b>	Summer 2021	<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr P. S. Langeslag
<b>Time:</b>	Thu 10–12	<b>Office:</b>	SEP 2.306
<b>Room:</b>	Stud.IP → Meetings → Weekly Webinar	<b>Office hours:</b>	By appointment (online)
<b>Credits:</b>	6–8 (see module description)	<b>E-mail:</b>	planges@uni-goettingen.de
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	None	<b>Course website:</b>	langeslag.uni-goettingen.de/medlit

## Course Description

This course introduces students to the corpus and culture of Old and Middle English literature and trains them to read, translate, and interpret prose and verse texts from these traditions. Given the differences between Modern English and Old English in particular, the central intellectual challenge will be to come to grips with the grammar and vocabulary of at least one entirely new language. To accomplish this task, a considerable amount of class time will be spent becoming acquainted with the grammar and the translation of early English. In addition, students will learn to analyze medieval texts in their formal, literary, and cultural aspects. **This course is combined in all modules with this term's Medieval Studies lecture course. Your knowledge of the lecture material will be assessed as part of the seminar exam.**

## Aims

Students will

- Learn to read and translate Old English;
- Become accustomed to the reading of Middle English;
- Learn to analyze medieval narrative;
- Hone their skills writing close commentaries.

## Assessment

Online written **exam** (120 minutes, covering both the seminar and the lecture course). Students are also expected to submit a **close commentary**, which will not be marked but whose timely submission is a prerequisite for taking the exam.

## Required Texts and Resources

Please get hold of either of the following works:

- Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson. *A Guide to Old English*. 8th ed. Chichester: Wiley–Blackwell, 2012.  
(Earlier editions are equally admissible; the SEP library *Lehrbuchsammlung* has 29 copies of the 7th ed.)
- Peter S. Baker. *Introduction to Old English*. 3rd ed. Malden, MA: Wiley–Blackwell, 2012.  
(Earlier editions *not* admissible because they lack King Alfred's Preface to the *Pastoral Care*.)

Additional materials will be provided on Stud.IP.

## Schedule

Please use the below timetable to structure your work, always ensuring you watch the videos and do the readings and homework *ahead* of the corresponding session. Videos in boldface are essential; the others are offered as an extra service.

Wk	Date	Videos	Reading/Translation
1	15 Apr	<b>Course Format</b> (14m) <b>Introducing Old English</b> (43m)	
2	22 Apr	<b>Pronouns</b> (24m) <b>Nouns</b> (34m) <b>Sound Laws</b> (30m)	Mitchell & Robinson §§1–86 <i>or</i> Baker chs 1–6, 8; Basic Sentences (Stud.IP)
3	29 Apr	<b>Verbs</b> (50m) <b>Dictionaries</b> (14m)	M&R §§87–130 <i>or</i> Baker ch. 7 plus M&R §§96–109; Alfred's Preface to the <i>Pastoral Care</i> (M&R #5/Baker #6)
4	6 May	<b>Translation Strategies</b> (48m) <b>Prepositions</b> (17m) <b>The Close Commentary Format</b> (12m)	M&R §§131–147, 213–214 <i>or</i> Baker chs. 10–12; Alfred's Preface to the <i>Pastoral Care</i>
5	13 May	<b>NO CLASS: Ascension Day</b>	
6	20 May	<b>Numerals</b> (26m) <b>The Corpus of Old English</b> (27m)	M&R §§82–86 <i>or</i> Baker ch. 9; Alfred's Preface to the <i>Pastoral Care</i>
7	27 May	<b>Poetics</b> (29m)	<i>Dream of the Rood</i> (M&R #14/Baker #13)
8	3 June	<b>NO CLASS: Accreditation Week</b>	
9	10 June	<b>The Exam Format</b> (15m)	<i>Dream of the Rood</i>
10	17 June		<i>Dream of the Rood</i>
11	24 June		<i>Dream of the Rood</i> <b>SUBMIT COMMENTARY: <i>Dream of the Rood</i> ll. 63–74</b>
12	1 July	<b>Middle English</b> (12m)	<i>The Franklin's Tale</i> (Stud.IP)
13	8 July	<b>Chaucer</b> (25m)	<i>The Franklin's Tale</i>
14	15 July	<b>The Corpus of Middle English</b> (10m)	<i>The Franklin's Tale</i>
15	22 July	<b>EXAM, 10:00 sharp–12:00</b>	

## Diversity Statement

This course is run with the understanding that students bring a variety of backgrounds into the classroom in such domains as socioeconomics, appearance, culture, religion, ability, gender, age, family situation, and sexual identity. With different backgrounds come different needs and sensitivities. If you feel your needs or those of a fellow student require special attention or are being compromised, please feel free to make this known to me by whatever channel seems most appropriate. (For more serious concerns, the **Department** and **University** each have their own points of contact as well.) I will treat all requests seriously and with confidentiality, and will seek to make accommodations within my abilities and reason. At the same time, you too owe it to your fellow students to treat them with respect regardless of their background and identity. Do not stand in the way of anyone's well-being.