

Term Paper: Specifications and Suggested Topics

Assignment: Write a paper on any Old English poem(s) or aspect of Old English poetry, with at least secondary attention to the formal aspects of Old English verse (whether it be metre, diction, syntax, or some combination thereof).

Length: Within ten percent of 3,000 words for *M.E.P.02b*; within ten percent of 7,500 words for *B.Eng.631*, *M.E.P.05b*, and *M.E.P.05d*.

Approval: Run at least the topic, and ideally (at a later stage) a detailed sentence outline, by me for approval. (See [these slides](#) for my idea of a sentence outline.)

Deadline: Final term paper due on 31 March; try to have a topic by late November.

The final paper is to be submitted on [TurnItIn.com](#) (class ID 46039801; enrolment key v3-J1bB7g; 6).

Responsible Scholarly Practice and the Use of AI

Your work will be judged against [the usual standards of independent authorship practised at University](#). In short, if you represent someone else's ideas, whether verbatim or in paraphrase, without acknowledging them, it counts as plagiarism; plagiarized work will be given a failing grade. As for your reliance on generative AI, thoroughly educate yourself about what is and is not permitted (the keyword being transparency), but also which applications of AI can elevate your work and which are more likely to harm it (see [slides](#)). You will be required to sign and submit [twin declarations on responsible scholarly practice and the use of AI](#) with your work, either by appending the signed PDF to your own or by submitting it separately by email.

Some Possible Topics

The following list is intended to give you an impression of the range of appropriate topics, but please do not infer that you are limited to the options listed. While you may copy out a topic directly from this list, you may prefer to come up with your own, and it is at any rate your own responsibility to formulate a research question. Remember that originality of argument (and by implication originality of research question) is a factor in the assessment of your paper (see marking grid overleaf). Along the same lines, although this list contains references to scholars who have worked on these or related themes, your best strategy is to use the work of others primarily as a stepping-stone, while crafting the core of your argument on the basis of your own original thought. If you are particularly keen to break new ground, you may want to consider a lexical approach, as *CLASP* and the *Dictionary of Old English* allow for convenient search queries into the distribution of words and formulae, while you can code your own queries if you download [the Dictionary of Old English Corpus](#). But do feel free to stick to a more purely literary topic if you are more comfortable with those.

Papers for this course may investigate any theme in any Old English poem(s), and they may optionally extend to Old Norse, Old Saxon, or Latin verse for comparison. The discussion of poetic form need not

amount to more than a thorough close reading with attention to metre, diction, syntax, and poetic devices. Unless you choose to study a phenomenon across the entire corpus, you will want to formulate a theme *and* define the texts within which you intend to study it. A selection of broad topics:

- Seafaring imagery (in *Christ B*, *Exodus*, etc.; see Phillip Pulsiano)
- Seafaring kennings (see Karin Olsen, Thomas Gardner, Ann Harleman Stewart)
- Lucifer/Satan as a heroic character (in *Genesis A*, and/or *Genesis B*, *Christ and Satan*, etc.; see Peter Dendle, Larry N. McKill)
- Fame, memory, and mourning in *Beowulf* (see e.g. Gale Owen-Crocker, Winfried Rudolf)
- The structure of *Beowulf* (see e.g. Gale Owen-Crocker)
- The function of gnomic wisdom (in *Beowulf*, or the Exeter Book, etc.; see James D. Thayer, Susan E. Deskis)
- The purpose of the Exeter Book collection of poetry (see e.g. Richard Gameson)
- The relationship between the metrical Psalms and the psalter gloss tradition (see e.g. Patrick O'Neill, Francis Leneghan)
- The versification strategy of the *Metres of Boethius* (see Michiko Ogura)
- The metrical and alliterative regularity of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* (see e.g. John C. Pope, Gordon Hall Gerould, Gerold Deffner, Sherman Kuhn, Bruce Mitchell, Thomas A. Bredehoft)
- Heroic diction and heroic narrative (in *Andreas*, or *Exodus*, *Genesis A*, etc.)
- The use of formulae (in *The Battle of Brunanburh*, *Andreas*, *Judith*, the metrical Psalms, Ælfric, etc.; see e.g. Andy Orchard, Michiko Ogura, Thomas A. Bredehoft, Mark S. Griffith)
- Lexical choices in the prose and verse *Judith*
- Metaphor in Old English verse (see e.g. Eric Stanley, Dennis Cronan)
- Religious formulae in Old English verse
- The syntax of Old English poetry

To identify relevant scholarship, you may want to make use of the *Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England* in addition to resources like [Google Scholar](#); if you are unsure about primary sources, browse the *poetic corpus* and/or its translation in Craig Williamson's *Complete Old English Poems*.

Marking Grid

The following marking grid indicates the considerations used to mark papers for this course (but not their weighting):

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Argument										
Structure										
Methodology										
Close reading and analysis										
Structural use of primary sources										
Use of secondary sources										
Grasp of source language <i>and/or</i> analytical methods										
Cultural context										
Command of academic English										
Mechanics (style, referencing, formatting)										
Length										