Introduction to Old English

Ian Cornelius

Spring 2024

Contents

1   Basic information

1.1   Course details

- Course number: ENGL 441-001 (5048)
- Meeting time: TuTh 4:15PM – 5:30PM
- Location: Mundelein Center – ~~Room 605~~ Room 407

1.2   How to contact me

- Name: Ian Cornelius
- Pronouns: he | they
- Office location: Crown Center 411
- Office hours: TuW 10:00am–12:00pm and by appointment
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2   Course description

In this course we learn to read English from more than 1000 years ago. English has changed so much since this early period that speakers of Present Day English (PDE) must approach Old English as if it were foreign, by learning grammar and vocabulary and even some new letters. Yet the languages remain close enough that speakers of PDE learn Old English quickly. Learning to read Old English gives a fresh perspective on PDE (for instance, why *ran* and *feet*, not *runned* and *foots*?) and unique access to a rich body of literature: about 30,000 lines of English poetry survive from the period between 600 and 1200 and more than ten times as much prose (including sermons, historical narratives and chronicles, Bible translations, philosophy, and medical writings).

In the first half of this course we learn the basic grammar of Old English and some core vocabulary and learn to translate short texts. In the second half, we sample the diversity of literature in Old English: readings become longer and more challenging and class discussion becomes more interpretative. Secondary readings introduce us to the history and culture of early medieval England and contextualize our study of language. In the last two weeks we read *Beowulf* in Seamus Heaney's translation, with dips into the original Old English. Assessment is by quizzes, midterm and final exams, a research assignment, and a class presentation.

3   Schedule

The course schedule complies with the Loyola University academic calendar. Assignments are due on the day listed. If there is need to revise the course schedule, I will announce the change in class and on Sakai and publish an updated version of this syllabus. See Version Information.

Dates on the schedule below are combined class meetings (undergraduate and graduate).

Graduate students have some additional meetings. Readings for those are listed at the beginning of each week. Dates and times will be set in due course.

3.1 Old English grammar

Week 1

Jan 16 Introductions (no reading assignment)

Jan 18

- Fulk, Introduction and Chap. I
- Video introductions to the International Phonetic Alphabet and modern English phonology
- Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 1: Brooks, "The social and political background" (course reserve)

Week 2

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 12: Godden, "Biblical literature: the Old Testament" (course reserve)

Jan 23 Fulk, Chap. II and III

Jan 25 Fulk, Chap. IV and V

Week 3

Fulk and Cain, Chap. 1: "The chronology and varieties of Old English literature" (course reserve)

Jan 30 Fulk, Chap. VI and VII

Feb 01 Fulk, Chap. VIII and IX

Week 4

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 4: Anlezark, "The Anglo-Saxon world view" (course reserve)

Feb 06 Fulk, Chap. X and XI

Feb 08 Fulk, Chap. XII and XIII

Week 5

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 16: Lendinara, "The world of Anglo-Saxon learning" (course reserve)

Feb 13   Fulk, Chap. XIV and XV

Feb 15   Fulk, Chap. XVI and XVII

Week 6

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 2: Gneuss, "The Old English language" (course reserve)

Feb 20   Fulk, Chap. XVIII and XIX

Feb 22   Fulk, Chap. XX and XXI

Week 7

Feb 27   Grammar review

Feb 29   Midterm exam

Week 8

Spring Break: class does not meet

3.2   An anthology

Week 9

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 15: Gretsch, "Literacy and uses of the vernacular" (course reserve)

Mar 12   The Story of Cædmon (Fulk, Text 1.B), lines 74–152

Mar 14   King Alfred's Preface to the *Pastoral Care* (Fulk, Text 2)

Week 10

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 9: Clayton, "Preaching and teaching" (course reserve)

Mar 19   Selections from the Parker Chronicle (Fulk, Text 3)

Mar 21   Ælfric on the Three Estates (Fulk, Test, 4)

Week 11

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 3: Scragg, "The nature of Old English verse" (course reserve)

Mar 26   Riddles from the Exeter Book (Fulk, Text 14). Read 26, 35, 45, 46, and 47

Mar 28   Easter Holiday: class does not meet

Week 12

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 13: Marsden, "Biblical literature: the New Testament" (course reserve)

Apr 02   *Dream of the Rood* (Fulk, Text 15), lines 1–70

Apr 04   *Dream of the Rood*, lines 71–end

Week 13

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 10: Fell, "Perceptions of transience" (course reserve)

Apr 09   *The Wanderer* (Fulk, Text 16), lines 1–63

Apr 11   *The Wanderer*, lines 64–end

3.3   *Beowulf*

Week 14

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 8: Orchard, "*Beowulf*" (course reserve)

Apr 16

- *Beowulf* (trans. Heaney), lines 1–2199 (in Donoghue)
- Heaney, "Translator's Introduction" (in Donoghue)

Apr 18   *Beowulf* (trans. Heaney), lines 2200–end

Week 15

Godden and Lapidge, Chap. 6: O'Keeffe, "Values and ethics in heroic literature" (course reserve)

Apr 23   Selections from *Beowulf* in original lang. (Sakai)

Apr 25   Class does not meet

Week 16

final exam Thursday, 4:15PM

4   Assessment

4.1   Summary of grade components

course component	percentage
participation	30
presentation	10
note collection	20
quizzes	10
midterm exam	15
final exam	15
TOTAL	100

In sum: 30% participation, 40% quizzes and exams, 30% presentation and note collection.

4.2   Description of components

4.2.1   Class presentation

Students will research a topic relevant to this class and report their findings in a short class presentation. This may be a group effort if you wish.

The first step is to sign up for a presentation date and, optionally, form a group. You will do this in the second and third weeks of class. You may claim a topic at this time or leave your topic undecided while you explore options.

Select a topic from the list below or develop your own. Clear your topic with me, so that we avoid duplicate presentations. Once I have approved your topic, you are ready to begin research. For that, see instructions for the note collection, below.

Aim to speak for between five and ten minutes, supported by slides. Before your presentation, post slides (or a link to them) in the "Forums" section of Sakai. If you are posting a link, configure your document to be viewable by anyone with the link.

Usually a presentation will be followed by class discussion; the best presentations invite thoughtful response from your peers.

Here are some possible topics:

- The later history of an Old English word, using the online lexicographical tools available for English, Old and Modern

- Influences of Old English literature on a later writer (possibilities include Tennyson, Hopkins, Auden, Pound, Robert Graves, Robert Lowell, Tolkien, Thom Gunn, Geoffrey Hill, Seamus Heaney, and Jorge Luis Borges)
- Recent archaeological finds from early medieval England
- Recent scholarly debates on use of the term "Anglo-Saxon" to designate the early medieval inhabitants of lowland Britain
- An entry in Lapidge et al. (the *Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglos-Saxon English*, on course reserves) – e.g., *Adventus Saxonum*; Ælfric of Eynsham; Æthelred the Unready; aerial reconnaissance; agriculture; Alcuin of York; Aldelhm; Alfred; Amiatinus codex; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*; animal husbandry; arms and armour; Arthur; Augustine, first bishop of Canterbury; Bayeux Tapestry; Bede; Beowulf manuscript; Bible; bookbindings; Cædmon; Canterbury; carpet-pages; Celts; cemeteries; charms; charters; children; clergy; clothing; Cnut; codicology; coinage; colloquies; color; *comitatus*; computus; conversion; crosses, stone; Cynewulf; Danelaw; dialects; disease; Domesday Book; dragons; Easter Controversy; elegies; Elstob, Elizabeth; embroidery; entertainment; Exeter Book; feuds; folklore; food and drink; Franks Casket; Fuller Brooch; Germanic languages; Gildas; glosses; Gospelbooks; grammar, Latin; grave goods; Gregory the Great; Hadrian; hagiography; Hastings, Battle of; Hicks, George; Hild; hoards; homilies; iconography; illumination; jewellery; Jews; Judith; Junius, Franciscus; Junius manuscript; Kent; kinship; labour service; laws; libraries; Lindisfarne; literacy; liturgy; loan-words; London; magic; manumission; marriage and divorce; medical literature and medicine; Mercia; metalworking; metre, OE; mills; mining and quarrying; mints and minting; missionaries; monasticism; music; Normandy; Northumbria; nunneries; oaths; Old Norse; paganism; papacy; peasants; penitentials; personal names; pilgrimage; place-names; poetic technique, OE; population; pottery; preaching; prose style, OE; punctuation; queens; reeve; relics and relic cults; *Rhyming Poem*; riddles; roads; Roman remains; runes; Ruthwell Cross; St. Albans; schools; script; scriptorium; seals; settlement; ships; slavery; social class; Staffordshire Hoard; sundials; surgery; Sutton Hoo; tapestry; taxation; textiles; thegn; Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury; timber building; towns; trade; transport and communication; 'Tremulous Hand'; Vercelli Book; Vikings; visions; wergild; Wessex; widow; wills; Winchester; women; *wyrd*; York

4.2.2 Note collection

One week after your presentation, submit a research report on your topic. Your research report will have two parts, as follows:

First, a collection of ten notes, drawn from at least four different sources. Each note should have the following components:

- A unique identifier for the note (for instance, an integer between 1 and 10)
- A unique title, to serve as a concise meaningful way of referencing the note
- A quotation. This is the nucleus of the note.
- The source citation, in MLA or Chicago format, as it would appear in a list of Works Cited. For guidance in the formatting of citations, see the instructions at the Purdue Online Writing Lab or another reputable source.

- The page number, if available, on which the quotation appears in the source
- A summary or paraphrase of the quotation. This may be shorter than the quoted passage.
- A commentary on the quotation (why is it noteworthy?). This should be longer than the quoted passage.
- Between three and five keywords

Second, a two-page summary and overview of your note collection, describing your research process and aims. What questions motivated your research? Which sources and search-procedures were most useful, and why? What questions do you have at the end of this process?

Your sources must be printed books or digital on-line resources to which Loyola subscribes. Non-scholarly sources located by web searches are not acceptable for this assignment. To access e-books, databases, and other on-line library resources, use an on-campus internet connection or follow instructions for off-campus access.

A basic keyword search of Loyola's library catalog will often produce useful leads. Here are some specific hints:

- Each entry in Lapidge et al. (on course reserves) has bibliographical recommendations.
- Oxford's Bibliographies for Medieval Studies has curated annotated bibliographies on many topics relevant to this class.
- I collect bibliographical recommendations on Zotero. Navigate between sections in the left panel. (This bibliography is based on the one printed by Peter Baker in his *Introduction to Old English.*)

Library specialists are helpful in the research stage of assignments involving secondary sources.

Have a question? Ask.

4.2.3 Quizzes

There are regular quizzes, usually on Thursdays, beginning in second week. It is usually not possible to make up a missed quiz. Exceptions are made for absences on account of a sponsored university event (for instance, mock trial) or illness: see Attendance and Public health. To qualify for a make-up quiz, notify me by email in advance of class.

Most quizzes will have five questions, worth one point each. Questions may be multiple choice, true-or-false, or short answer. Sometimes I will ask you to translate or comment on a short passage of Old English. Content presented in peer presentations is eligible to appear on quizzes. Your lowest two quiz scores will be dropped, i.e., not counted towards your course grade.

4.2.4 Exams

There is a midterm exam and final exam, as shown on the schedule. Details will be supplied in due course. The final exam must be taken on the date set by the university.

4.3 Grade schema

This course employs the quintile system, as follows:

letter grade	minimum percentage
A	86.6
A-	80
B+	73.3
B	66.6
B-	60
C+	53.3
C	46.6
C-	40
D+	33.3
D	20
F	0

5 Policies

5.1 Attendance

If you must miss a class, or if you must arrive late or leave early, inform me in advance by email. This course makes special provision for absences due to illness: see Public Health.

5.2 Texts

Readings are drawn from these kinds of sources:

1. Books you are responsible for acquiring (see below)
2. On-line resources linked from the course schedule
3. Books on electronic course reserve (marked 'course reserve' in the course schedule)
4. PDF documents posted to the resources folder on Sakai (marked 'Sakai' in the course schedule)

Copies of the following books are available for rental or purchase at the Loyola University Chicago Lakeshore Campus Bookstore:

- Daniel Donoghue, ed., *"Beowulf": A Verse Translation: Authoritative Text, Contexts, Criticism*, trans. Seamus Heaney (New York: Norton, 2002). ISBN 978-0-393-97580-2
- R. D. Fulk, *An Introductory Grammar of Old English with an Anthology of Readings* (Tempe, Arizona: ACMRS Publications, 2014) ISBN 978-0-86698-514-7

If you purchase books from a source other than the campus bookstore, plan ahead to allow for delivery. Fulk has released his *Introductory Grammar* as a free PDF. If you use the PDF version, have a plan for note-taking and annotation.

Readings distributed as PDF documents should be printed. Students are reminded that most course readings are protected by copyright and should not be shared outside this course without written permission of the copyright holder.

We use several other on-line reference works. Here are the most important:

- The Chicago Manual of Style
- Dictionary of Old English
- The Historical Thesaurus of English
- Old English Aerobics
- The Oxford English Dictionary
- Seeing Speech: An Articulatory Web Resource for the Study of Phonetics

These are available at no additional cost to you. Some have been purchased by Loyola University Libraries for your use (for these you will be prompted to authenticate with your UVID); others are served out on the open web by their creators.

5.3 Diversity, inclusion, and equity

Loyola University provides equal opportunities in education without regard to, and does not discriminate on the basis of, age, color, disability, family responsibilities, familial status, gender identity or gender expression, marital status, national origin, personal appearance, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, source of income, veteran's status, or any other factor prohibited by law. Practicing respect for others is an important part of education. Each member of our course has a responsibility to create an environment in which all may flourish.

An additional note on names and gender pronouns: using appropriate names and gender pronouns honors and affirms individuals of all gender identities and gender expressions. Misgendering and heteronormative language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. During our first class, as we introduce ourselves, you may choose to share your name and gender pronouns. If you do not wish to be called by the name listed on the roster, please inform us. If you prefer to introduce yourself by name only, without pronouns, that is also fine. The goal is to create an affirming environment for all students.

By giving my pronouns as "he | they", I mean to leave you free to use the pronouns that come naturally to you in reference to me. The pipe character means "or".

5.4 Academic integrity

Loyola University Chicago takes seriously the issues of plagiarism and academic integrity. This course abides by the relevant policies of the university's Undergraduate Studies Catalog.

Plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the plagiarized exam or assignment and the incident will be reported to your dean. If you are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism, consult the Writing Center's guide on Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism. If you are still uncertain, please ask me.

Plagiarism includes submitting, as you own work, text derived from a generative artificial intelligence application.

5.5   Public health

Masks are not presently required in this classroom. Students are invited to mask at any time and requested to do so if they have contact with someone who has COVID-19, the flu, or another airborne illness. Your professor will mask if, for instance, their domestic partner contracts a cold. Do not be alarmed by this.

Please get tested regularly. If you contract COVID-19 you should not attend class meetings during the isolation period defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC has similar advice for the flu. If you are isolating due to illness, notify me at the earliest opportunity; I will help you get caught up. Absences due to illness are not charged against your participation score.

In response to changes in COVID-19 infection rates and following guidance of national, state, and city authorities, the university may re-institute a universal masking requirement. We will comply with university regulations in this and all other matters of public health.

5.6   Statement of intent

By remaining in this course, students agree to accept this syllabus and abide by its policies. Students will be informed of any changes to the syllabus.

6   Version information

Last updated January 11, 2024

File histories for this syllabus are available on GitHub.

Bibliography

Donoghue, Daniel, editor. *Beowulf: A Verse Translation: Authoritative Text, Contexts, Criticism.* Translated by Seamus Heaney, Norton, 2002.

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