**30:374 — Beer, Blood & Song: Old English Language and Literature**

**(Fall 2016)**

**Dr. Rosanne Gasse**

**CHO 107**

**gasse@brandonu.ca / 204-727-9795**

**No attachments, please!**

**Office hours:** I have an open door policy. If the door is open you are most welcome to come in.

**Course Objectives:** Two purposes underlie this course. One is to bring you far enough along in your ability to grasp this historical form of the English language that you can read and appreciate the historical and literary texts from this time in the words in which they were originally written. The other is to introduce you to this crucial period in the history of English as a language. The language we speak and write today had its beginnings in the Anglo-Saxon period. Believe it or not, but the essentials of the language we know today were all there 1500 years ago.

**Required Text:** Mitchell and Robinson eds., *A Guide to Old English*

**Recommended Text:** Crossley-Holland trans., *The Anglo-Saxon World: An Anthology*

**Reading List:**

Introduction to the Old English language

PROSE:

selection from Ælfric’s Translation of the Old Testament: The Fall of Man

selection from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: Cynewulf and Cyneheard

Alfred’s Preface to Gregory’s *Pastoral Care*

selections from the Old English translation of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*:

The Conversion of King Edwin

The Story of Cædmon

POETRY:

The Wanderer

The Seafarer

The Wife’s Lament

Wulf and Eadwacer

The Ruin

The Dream of the Rood

Judith

The Battle of Maldon

a selection of riddles

**Marking Scheme:** 3 translation tests: one take-home, one in-class on prose, one in-class on

poetry, to be scheduled accordingly

two of three count toward grade: 15% = best, second best = 10%

participation: 20%

term paper: (25%) due December 6, 2016

final examination: (30%) -- December 15, 2016

**Grading Equivalents for This Course:**

letter grade g.p.a. numerical grade

A+ 4.3 95 - 100

A 4.0 85 - 94 Exceptional

A- 3.7 80 - 84

B+ 3.3 77 - 79

B 3.0 73 - 76 Above Average

B- 2.7 70 - 72

C+ 2.3 67 - 69

C 2.0 63 - 66 Average

C- 1.7 60 - 62

D 1.0 50 - 59 Needs Improvement

F 0.0 0 - 49 Failure

**Human Rights Compliance:**

Brandon University is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities. If you need such accommodation, please contact Michelle Magnusson, Accessibility Services Coordinator, Student Services (MCK 106). Students are responsible for registering with the Special Needs Coordinator and for requesting the appropriate accommodation with reasonable advance notice.

**Statement on Academic Integrity:**

You *know* plagiarism is wrong. Just don’t do it. See section 3.13 in the Undergraduate Calendar for the consequences. You are responsible for what you hand in, and for when you hand it in. Overly late material will not be accepted without full medical documentation.

**Participation (20%)**

The participation grade in this course is very high because you are expected to translate material in class on a daily basis once we reach the literature section of the course. If you skip class frequently or if you come to class without material prepared to translate, your participation grade will suffer accordingly.

**The Translation Tests (25%)**

The translation tests are designed to measure how well you are engaging with Old English as a language. It is very important that you read these texts in their original form and not try to ‘game the system’ by relying on the translations of others. If you have worked through each text on your own, you should be able to deal successfully with a text when you are challenged on a test to translate it a second time.

**Old English Literature — Essay Topics (25%)**

You are asked to write a short literary essay in this course. Yes, 5 pages is very short for a 300-level course, but a tremendous amount of your time in this course will go toward translation. The shortness of the essay is meant as some small measure of compensation for the time you are expected to put into translation.

Due: December 6, 2016

Length: 5 - 8 typed pages maximum (not including bibliography page)

Format: Chicago Style is the standard format found in Medieval Studies

Research Requirement: none, but you are encouraged to consult secondary sources.

1. The theme of exile ("wraeclastas") in TWO of "The Wife's Lament", "The Seafarer", and "The Wanderer". Describe the general concept of exile as it appears in Old English literature. Compare and contrast its thematic treatment in two of the poems while considering structure and specific motifs.

2. Weather and the natural world in "The Wanderer", "The Seafarer", "The Wife's Lament", and "The Ruin". Discuss the emotional effects of patterns of weather and nature imagery in two or three of these poems.

3. The definition of the hero in Old English literature. Taking at least two works (e.g. "Cynewulf and Cyneheard", "The Dream of the Rood", "Judith", "The Battle of Maldon" ...) arrive at a working definition of what the Anglo-Saxons considered heroic.

4. Narrative techniques in the Old English translation of Bede's Ecclesiastical History. Discuss, on the basis of two or three episodes, how Bede tells his stories of early English history. Discuss both structure and technique. The stories you choose can be read in translation. Don't restrict yourself necessarily to just the two stories we went over in class.

5. Compare the treatment of Christ's Crucifixion in the "Dream of the Rood" with that found in the Old Saxon New Testament paraphrase, The Heliand. How do the authors emphasize the heroic elements of the narrative? You can borrow a copy of the Heliand from me if you are interested in this topic.

6. The remembrance of things past in Old English literature. Discuss, on the basis of two or three works, how Anglo-Saxon writers make use of the past in their literature. What themes and motifs do they derive from this material?

**Final Exam (30%)**

Scheduled for December 15, 2016. Further details TBA.