INTRODUCTION TO OLD ENGLISH

English 320: class #17024
= Medieval Studies 320: class #18435

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the Old English language and aspects of Old English literature. The main purpose of the course is to develop a good reading knowledge of Old English, enabling students in subsequent semesters to read *Beowulf* and do more advanced studies in early English language and literature. In addition, students will acquire some knowledge of characteristic themes and genres in Old English literature, including both prose and poetry, and will gain a sense of the culture that produced the texts we read.

REQUIREMENTS

Numerous quizzes and written exercises. Two midterm exams and a final exam. Regular attendance and participation in class are essential, as is daily homework (including the memorization and review of grammatical paradigms, the memorization and review of vocabulary, and additional reading and practice on the course website).

The exams will count for 50% of the final grade. The other 50% of the final grade will be based on other evidence indicating the quality of a student's commitment to the course. Individual progress will be taken into account—so don't panic if you have a hard time at the beginning.

INSTRUCTOR’S OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT NUMBERS

M 10–11 am, Th 1:30–2:30 pm, and by appointment, 6131 White Hall.
Tel. (608) 265-9836.
Email jdniles@wisc.edu
Web site: http://www.wisc.edu/english/jdniles/nilesclas.html

TEXTS

The following two texts are basic to the course and are required for purchase:

**ML**

**Guide**

The following additional text is recommended:

In addition, some course materials are mounted on a website:

web  http://www.wisc.edu/english/courses/320/

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE  (subject to change):

W  Sept 3  Introduction to the course and to Old English orthography (letter forms and spelling) and pronunciation. Check out the website, esp. ‘How to Succeed’ and the sections under ‘OE Vocabulary’.


M  Sept 8  MK ch. 2 and ch. 3 through §48: strong masc. and neuter (a-declension) nouns. Memorize the paradigms of sē stān, þæt lim, ðæt word. Web: ‘Heavy and Light Syllables’ and the masc. and neuter parts of ‘Strong Nouns’ (all under Grammar Lessons). Guide, §§188-192: functions of the cases. When you do the translation in MK §45 and other sample translations during the next week, jot down the form (gender, number, and case) and function of each noun.

W  Sept 10  MK ch. 3 (the rest) and ch. 4: strong fem. (o.-decl.) nouns, verb endings. Memorize sēo ġiefu, sēo ġār. Web: ‘Strong Nouns’ (the rest), ‘Weekly Practice’ for week 1, and the first few sample sentences.

F  Sept 12  Quiz 1. MK ch. 5: weak nouns, the verb to be. Memorize sē hunta, sēo eorðe, and bēon.


F  Sept 19  Quiz 2. MK chs. 8 & 9 through §86: sound changes, demonstrative this. Preparation should include writing out the two little exercises and memorizing þēs, þēos, þis. Reading: Luke 15:20-32.

M  Sept 22  MK chs. 9 (the rest) and 10: additional sound changes (exercise) and pronouns. Memorize iċ, þū, wē, and ġē. Web: check for new sentences, Weekly Practice for week 3.

W  Sept 24  MK ch. 21: anomalous verbs, u-declension; memorize the four verbs. Next OE readings: ‘The Fall of Man’ and ‘Abraham and Isaac’ (Guide, texts 2a and 2b). Readings from now on will be assigned, so skip the remaining ones in MK.

F  Sept 26  Review date. MK ch. 15: gemination and i-mutation (two exercises).

M  Sept 29  MK ch. 11 and rest of 16 (§§12426): strong verbs classes 1 & 2, syncopated present forms.
Memorize at least the principal parts of bīdan, bēdan, and brūcan, and do the exercise in §126. Web: “Strong Verbs” (up to the table).

W Oct 1 MK ch. 12: strong verbs class 3 (exercise); memorize at least the principal parts of bindan, helpan.

F Oct 3 Quiz 3. MK ch. 13: strong verbs class 4 & 5. Memorize at least the principal parts of beran, cuman, niman, and metan.

M Oct 6 MK ch. 14: strong verbs class 6 & 7. Memorize at least the principal parts of faran, hatan, and gangan. Web: try to learn the whole table of strong verbs. Next OE reading: “Extracts from the Old English Chronicle” for the years 787-878 (MK pp. 25355).

W Oct 8 MK ch. 17 and 18: weak verbs class 1 (exercise). Memorize the conjugation of fremman and démán.


M Oct 13 MK ch. 20: weak verbs classes 2 & 3; memorize the conjugation of lufian and the list of important class 3 weak verbs. Next OE reading: “A Colloquy on the Occupations” (Guide, text 3; read the first 5 occupations and the closing section, the “critique”).

W Oct 15 Review.

F Oct 17 First midterm examination.


F Oct 24 MK ch. 24 through §183: contract verbs.


W Nov 5 Review of OE grammar and prose syntax.

F Nov 7 More reading and review.

M Nov 10 Second midterm examination
W Nov 12  ‘The Battle of Brunanburh’ (MK, pp. 277-79); brief introduction to OE poetry.
F Nov 14  ‘Brunnanburh.’
M Nov 17  ‘Riddles’a, b, c, and d (from Guide, text 11).
F Nov 21  NO CLASS: Thanksgiving recess.
M Nov 24  ‘The Wanderer.’
W Nov 26  ‘The Wanderer.’
F Nov 28  ‘The Battle of Maldon’ (Guide, text 12).
M Dec 1   ‘Maldon.’
W Dec 3   ‘Maldon.’
F Dec 5   ‘Maldon.’
M Dec 8   ‘Maldon.’
W Dec 10  ‘Maldon.’
F Dec 12  Review.

Final examination: Wed. Dec. 17, 2:45 – 4:45 pm, location to be announced.