

**Victoria University of Wellington**  
**School of English, Film, Theatre, and Media Studies**

**ENGL 215 Old English Literature (2007 2/3)**  
**Course Information**

**Teaching Staff**

Christine Franzen (VZ 919, 463-6805), Course co-ordinator (christine.franzen@vuw.ac.nz)

**Classes**

Classes are held on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 3:10 to 4:00 in Kirk 204. All classes are conducted as tutorials. Any changes to the course programme or additional information will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

**Course Aims**

The course attempts, through a close study of set texts, to introduce characteristic forms and themes of Old English literature, especially poetry. Although a short period of intensive language learning is necessary to provide a reading knowledge of Old English, the course is essentially literary in approach.

**Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- demonstrate some proficiency in translating Old English prose and poetry;
- show an awareness of the characteristic forms and themes of Old English poetry;
- be responsive to the detail of the set texts;
- critically discuss the texts in a formal academic essay;
- demonstrate good work habits by coming to class having prepared the set work for each day; and
- in general, demonstrate a good standard of accuracy and attention to detail in reading, translating, analysing, and presenting written work.

**Set texts**

To be purchased:

Needed at the beginning of the course:

ENGL 215 *Introductory Grammar* (Student Notes).

ENGL 215 *The Lives of the English Saints* (Student Notes).

Needed from Week 5 onwards:

ENGL 215 *Background Reading* (Student Notes).

ENGL 215 *Running Glosses* (Student Notes).

John C. Pope, ed. *Eight Old English Poems*, 3rd edn., 2001. (*Seven Old English Poems* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) is also acceptable).

Recommended for Language Majors:

Randolph Quirk and C. L. Wrenn, *An Old English Grammar*, 2nd edn., 1957.

A reading list is found in the Background Reading Coursebook, pp. 1-3.

### **Assessment/Relationship between assessment and course objectives**

The course is internally assessed: there is no final examination. Assessment is based on four pieces of work: two tests and two essays. The tests are designed to assess your ability to translate Old English prose and poetry and to ensure that your understanding of basic Old English grammar and vocabulary is sufficient to appreciate the texts in their original form. The poetry test and the essays test your ability to appreciate the characteristics and themes of Old English literature and to write coherently and intelligently on them. Essay topics will be distributed well in advance. Essays must be produced in accordance with the School's *Guidelines for SEFT Students*, which is found on the SEFTMS web site: [//www.vuw.ac.nz/seft/documents/guideforseftstudents.doc](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/seft/documents/guideforseftstudents.doc). Note particularly the University's statement on academic integrity and plagiarism.

**Prose Translation Test:** Friday 17 August on *The Life of St Edmund* and an unseen passage, with some grammar and vocabulary (20%).

**Essay** on *The Life of St Edmund* and *The Battle of Maldon*. Due Tuesday 18 September (in class), approximately 1500 words (30%).

**Poetry Test:** Tuesday 9 October on passages from *The Battle of Maldon*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *Deor*, and *The Wanderer*: this is basically a comprehension test, with short answers and some translation, critical commentary, scansion, and vocabulary (20%).

**Essay** on *The Dream of the Rood*, *The Wanderer*, *Deor*, and *Wulf and Eadwacer*. Due no later than 12:00 pm, Tuesday 16 October, approximately 1500 words (30%).

**Extensions for term work:** The deadlines for written work must be strictly observed. If you need an extension beyond the due date for any piece of work, you must apply **in writing** to me **before the due date**, stating your reasons for needing an extension, providing supporting documentation if possible. Work submitted with an extension will be graded in the normal way.

Late work submitted without an extension will be counted, but for **Essay 1**, only if it is received within two weeks of the due date (that is, by 2 October). You will be penalised by having your grade lowered one step (for example, B+ to B), and one additional step for every additional week of lateness (that is, an essay which is between one and two weeks late will be lowered two steps). Comments on late work will be minimal. **For Essay 2**, late work will only be counted if it is received before 5 p m on October 19. I am going overseas on Research and Study Leave and will not be able to mark work received after this date. The University does not permit us to accept work after the end of the examination period, and students who cannot complete their work by this date for medical or similar reasons should consult the aegrotat provisions in the *Calendar*.

**Workload:** You may expect to spend a minimum of 15 hours per week on this course (including the time spent in class). As in any course with a language component, good work habits are essential. With a consistent 2 hours per day of work outside class hours, most students (even those with no previous background in language study) should have no difficulty coming to terms with the grammar, vocabulary, and translation. The time commitment is likely to be greatest in the weeks immediately prior to tests and essay submission dates.

**Mandatory course requirements:** The minimum course requirements which must be satisfied include completion of all internal assessment as detailed above and a minimum of **70%** attendance (that is, 34 out of 48 classes).

## ENGL 215 Old English Literature: Course Schedule

1	July	M	9	Introduction	
		T	10	Introductory grammar	
		Th	12	“	
		F	13	“	
2		M	16	“	
		T	17	“	
		Th	19	“	
		F	20	“	And beginning <i>The Life of St Edmund</i>
3		M	23	“	“
		T	24	“	“
		Th	26	“	“
		F	27	<i>The Life of St Edmund</i>	
4		M	30	“	
		T	31	“	
5	August	Th	2	“	
		F	3	“	
		M	6	“	
		T	7	“	
6		Th	9	“	
		F	10	Introduction to poetry	
		M	13	<i>The Battle of Maldon</i>	
		T	14	“	
7		Th	16	Late Anglo-Saxon art	
		F	17	<b>PROSE TRANSLATION TEST</b>	<b>(Mid-term break begins)</b>
		M	3	<i>The Battle of Maldon</i> (continued)	
		T	4	“	
8		Th	6	“	
		F	7	“	
		M	10	“	
		T	11	<i>Deor</i> and scansion	
9		Th	13	“	
		F	14	<i>The Dream of the Rood</i>	
		M	17	“	
		T	18	Early Anglo-Saxon art	<b>FIRST ESSAY DUE</b>
10		Th	20	<i>The Dream of the Rood</i> (continued)	
		F	21	“	
		M	24	“	
		T	25	<i>The Wanderer</i>	
11	Oct	Th	27	“	
		F	28	“	
		M	1	“	
		T	2	“	
12		Th	4	<i>Wulf and Eadwacer</i> and <i>The Seafarer</i> (in translation)	
		F	5	“	
		M	8	Revision	
		T	9	<b>POETRY TEST</b>	
		Th-F	11-2	Wrapping up and Sutton Hoo	<b>SECOND ESSAY DUE 16/10</b>