

MODULE CODE: CSEN7028
TITLE: *Beowulf and the Anglo-Saxon Heroic*
DATED: 27/02/2012

LEVEL: 7
CREDITS: 20

JACS CODE: Q320

AIM(S)

- To provide students with a detailed knowledge and understanding of the 'heroic' in Anglo-Saxon literature and culture, underpinned by a range of theoretical approaches.
- To critically examine 'Old English' vernacular writing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate:

- a high level of knowledge and understanding of a variety of literary and artistic works from Anglo-Saxon England;
- a sophisticated understanding of the values and preoccupation of Anglo-Saxon culture in England;
- a high level of awareness of the ways in which this culture and its literature, and art more broadly, relate wider socio-political contexts and particularly to the nature of Anglo-Saxon Christianity;
- theoretically informed awareness of the nature of the 'heroic' within Anglo-Saxon culture in England;
- a high level of knowledge and understanding of the ways in which Anglo-Saxon history and culture have had a marked influence on modern perceptions of Englishness and Britishness.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

- This module will explore the nature of the 'heroic' within a wide range of Anglo-Saxon texts, setting those texts within their broader social-political and religious context. Contexts to be explored will include:
 - the Anglo-Saxon migration and settlement;
 - conversion to Christianity;
 - the Anglo-Saxon aesthetic, including manuscript illumination and stone sculpture.
- The 'heroic' is a central theme of the literature of Anglo-Saxon England. It is used in the literature of warfare such as *The Battle of Maldon*, and also has an important place in religious and meditative writing such as *The Dream of the Rood* and *The Wanderer* where the pagan heroic ethic is debated and redefined. The text in which the heroic comes under most scrutiny is *Beowulf*, which is used as the focal point for this module.
- All the texts studied were written in the vernacular of Anglo-Saxon England, known to modern scholars as 'Old English', and the module aims to give students knowledge of

the original texts. However, the essential texts are made available in Modern English translations, with the original Old English texts in parallel, and these parallel text editions form the basis for much of the reading for the course.

- The module will also consider the impact of, and critical responses to, the ways in which Anglo-Saxon history and culture have had a marked influence on modern perceptions of Englishness and Britishness.

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

Tutorials and **seminars** are used to support the discussion and critical evaluation of what has been learned, normally in a smaller group size than a lecture.

Guided independent study allows students to further their independent learning skills with appropriate support provided by the module tutor(s) (e.g. preparation for lectures and seminars, follow-up work, background reading, revision, completion of assessment tasks).

The allocation of teaching to deliver the module is:

Activity type	Hours	Percentage
Scheduled learning	20	10%
Independent learning	180	90%
Placement learning		
TOTAL	200	100%

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Component 1 – 100%

5000 word assignment

Exemplar: the topic of the assignment is chosen by the student in consultation with the module tutor but must be related to the content of the module. 'Consider the view that Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry presents "a complex vision of reality whereby conflicting desires and codes of conduct meet"' (John Niles).

Assessment Summary

Activity type	Percentage
Written exam	
Coursework	100%
Practical	
TOTAL	100%

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)

Does the module contribute to ESD?	Yes
If yes please provide brief details (no more than 100 words):	
This module is designed in line with 2 of the 5 pedagogic approaches to sustainable development identified by UNESCO:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical and Creative thinking 	

Critical and creative thinking enables people to explore new ways of thinking and acting, make informed decisions, and create alternatives to present choices. It involves reflecting on how people interrelate with one other, understanding cultural differences and creating alternative ways to live together.

- Systemic thinking

Thinking systemically is essential to sustainable development, as piecemeal approaches have proved not to work - instead resolving one issue while creating other problems. Sustainable development requires approaches which go beyond analysis in terms of 'problem-solving' and/or 'cause-effect'.