

English 2400 — Beowulf: Medieval Hero to Modern Marvel Dr. Robert Upchurch (robertu@unt.edu)
T/Th, 12:30-1:50 p.m., Lang. 209 Lang. 409F, Tues 2-3 pm & by appt.

ABOUT THIS COURSE

It continually surprises me that an early medieval poem—the English epic *Beowulf*—can still have a purchase on the minds of modern audiences. For the initiated, there are echoes of the Old English poem to be heard in the *Lord of the Rings* (see, .e.g., C. Tolley’s “OE Influence on TLR” in *Beowulf and Other Stories*), but for the uninitiated or perhaps newly initiated the poem is made available as children’s literature (Wishbone’s *Be A Wolf!*), comic books, and graphic novels. For an older demographic there is Neil Gaiman and Roger Avary’s screenplay that becomes Robert Zemeckis’ CGI *Beowulf* starring Ray Winstone, Anthony Hopkins, and Angelina Jolie. For the “purist,” who has yet to undertake an extended study of Old English, there are the countless translations, the most famous in our day belonging to the recently departed Irish poet Seamus Heaney and, as of summer 2014, Tolkien himself. Yet to what extent does translation adapt the “real” *Beowulf* and does the Real Thing even exist? To answer these most fundamental questions to literary study, we will spend the term asking how differences in form and medium condition our responses to and understanding of *Beowulf*, medieval and modern ones alike.

REQUIRED TEXTS (in order needed, but purchase early before the bookstore returns unsold copies)		
978-0674052956	R. Fulk, ed.	<i>The Beowulf Manuscript</i>
978-0544442788	J. R. R. Tolkien	<i>Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary</i> (translation)
978-0763630232	G. Hinds	<i>Beowulf</i> (graphic novel)
977-0061350160	N. Gaiman and R. Avary	<i>Beowulf: The Script Book</i> (screenplay)

REQUIREMENTS

Participation	20% *
Compressed Essay	10%
Discussion/Presentation	10%
Midterm	25%
Final	35%

*I will assess participation daily. A grade of 100% is worth 4 points each day. At the end of the semester, the total number of points will be multiplied by .20 and will be worth 20% of the final grade. To merit a grade of 100% (4 points) you must bring the text we are discussing to class and engage in discussion by asking a question or offering a comment. Silent attendance with a text merits a grade of 75% (3 points). Early departure or distractedness (whether by a phone, device, sleep, or the like) merits a grade of 50% (2 points). Coming to class without a book or without having read the assigned material merits a grade of 25% (1 point). Not coming to class at all merits a grade of 0% *unless* the absence qualifies as a substantiated excused absence as defined in the UNT policy on Student Attendance and Authorized Absences ([06.039](#)). Students are responsible for requesting an excused absence in writing, for providing satisfactory evidence to substantiate the absence, and for delivering the written request personally to me.

POLICIES

- **ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION** — I deem class attendance and class participation to be essential. Attendance or non-attendance directly affects one’s participation grade, which is assessed as 20% of the final grade. Per the UNT policy on Student Attendance and Authorized Absences (06.039), students are responsible for requesting an excused absence in writing, for providing satisfactory evidence to substantiate the absence, and for delivering the written request personally to me.
- **LATE PAPERS** — Late work does not receive comments and is penalized ten points per day up to three days, after which the grade will be recorded as a zero. You must request an extension no later than a week in advance of the due date.
- **PLAGIARISM** — “The term ‘plagiarism’ includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials” (*UNT Undergraduate Catalog*). Plagiarism, intentional or inadvertent, merits an immediate “F” and dismissal from the course.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, the instructor will cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation, you must advise me of your needs in writing no later than the end of the second week of class.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

28 August	Introduction (begin reading <i>Beowulf</i>)
30 August	Setting the Stage
4 September	Setting the Stage
6 September	Setting the Page
11 September	<i>Beowulf</i> , pp. 87-169
13 September	Discussion continues
18 September	<i>Beowulf</i> , pp. 169-231
20 September	Discussion continues
25 September	<i>Beowulf</i> , pp. 231-95
27 September	The Last Lines in Context
2 October	<i>Judith</i> , pp. 297-323 and <i>Christopher</i> , pp. 3-13
4 October	<i>Wonders of the East</i> , pp. 17-31 and <i>Letter of Alexander to Aristotle</i> , pp. 35-83
9 October	<i>Beowulf</i> in Context
11 October	<i>Beowulf</i> in Context
16 October	Exam Review
18 October	MIDTERM EXAMINATION
23 October	Tolkien's <i>Beowulf</i>
25 October	Tolkien's <i>Beowulf</i>
30 October	Tolkien's <i>Beowulf</i> in Context
1 November	Tolkien's <i>Beowulf</i> in Context
6 November	Jerry Bingham's <i>Beowulf</i>
8 November	Jerry Bingham's <i>Beowulf</i>
13 November	Gareth Hinds' <i>Beowulf</i>
15 November	Gareth Hinds' <i>Beowulf</i>
20 November	<i>Beowulf: The Movie Board Game</i>
22 November	THANKSGIVING BREAK
27 November	<i>Beowulf: The Script Book</i>
29 November	<i>Beowulf: The Script Book</i>
4 December	<i>Beowulf: The Script Book</i> and Robert Zemeckis' <i>Beowulf</i>
6 December	<i>Beowulf: The Script Book</i> and Robert Zemeckis' <i>Beowulf</i>
7 December	Final Examinations Due