

Exam Specifications

Structure

1. Lecture material (25% — count 30 minutes)
2. Seminar material (75% — count 90 minutes)
 - (a) Commentary on a seen passage of Old English verse (30% of seminar exam)
 - (b) Translation of an unseen passage of Old English prose (40% of seminar exam)
 - (c) Discussion of a seen Middle English text (30% of seminar exam)

Specification

Lecture Material

Dr Wolf will provide the questions relating to the lecture; I have no further information.

Close Commentary

This assignment will quote a short verse passage (8–12 lines, with no or minimal glosses) that has been translated and discussed in class. You will be asked to comment on all aspects of the passage: form (rhythm and alliteration; diction), content/argument, and cultural context. This part is usually left wide open: you will be given a passage and are expected to comment on it, and on the wider text from which it has been excerpted, without further instruction. To prepare for this assignment, reread your class notes for Alfred's preface to the *Pastoral Care* as well as *The Dream of the Rood* along with the editors' introductions and notes to these texts in the textbook, but also read Ó Carragáin and North, "The Dream of the Rood and Anglo-Saxon Northumbria", provided on StudIP, and **closely study the example commentary on the Close Commentary handout!** You can anticipate much of what should be in your commentary ahead of time.

Translation of an Unseen Passage

This will be a short excerpt of Old English prose, thoroughly but not exhaustively glossed. Words that we have often encountered may not be glossed, and the same is true for words whose senses are transparent from their Modern English reflexes. To prepare for this, learn your paradigms, but also practise reading familiar and new prose texts in the textbook. A sample passage is included on the reverse of this sheet.

Discussion

This is a short essay question which you should answer in two to four brief paragraphs. It will concern the Middle English text we have read (i.e. *The Franklin's Tale*) and explore one particular issue the author raises, or a cultural phenomenon he explores. For instance, the poem ends with the question which character in the tale is “the most free”; that could be a natural essay question to ask here.

Sample Translation Assignment

Provide a single translation into Present-Day English, without footnotes or parenthetical material. If you find any ambiguities, translate just one acceptable sense.

Pharaoh's Death

Ðā Pharao cōm tō ðære sǣ, ȝ eal his here, ðā fōr hē on þone ylcan weg æfter Israhēla folce on dægrēd mid eallum his folce ȝ mid eallum his wǣpnum. Ðā cwæð Drihten tō Moyse: “Aðene ðīne hand ofer ðā sǣ ȝ ofer Faraon ȝ ofer ealne his here.” ȝ hē āhefde up his hand, ȝ sēo sǣ slōh tōgædere ȝ āhwylfde Pharaones cratu, ȝ ādrencte hine sylfne ȝ eal his folc.

Glossary

ādrencan (1) drown

āhebban (1: āhefde) raise up

āhwylfan (1) engulf

āpenian (2) stretch out

cræt (1n) chariot

cuman (IV: cōm, cōmon, cumen)
come

cweþan (V: cwæþ, cwædon, cweden)
say, speak

dægrēd (1n) daybreak

Drihten (1m) the Lord

faran (VI: fōr, fōron, faren) travel

here (1n) army

ilca (pron) same

Moyses (m proper) Moses

sǣ (1m/2f) sea

slēan (VI: slōh, slōgon, slagen) strike

wǣpen (1n) weapon