

Veranstalterin	Dr. Julia Boll
Thema	Encounters with Early English Literature in Translation and Adaptation: from Bede, <i>Beowulf</i>, and the <i>Book of Kells</i> to <i>The Drift</i>, <i>The Wake</i>, and <i>The Last Kingdom</i>
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar II [ENG-6, ENG-6a, ENG-12, AA7, AA10, LAA9, LAA12, AA-MA01, AA-MA02, AA-MA04, AA-MA06]
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-547
Zeit	Di 14-16
Raum	(online)
Beginn	03 November 2020

Early English literature and culture persist as a source of contemporary and popular cultural fascination. This course introduces students to a range of different literary texts and genres, from 7th and 8th century Old English religious and secular poetry, over the epic *Beowulf* (and modern translations thereof), to descriptions of far-away countries and battles with the Vikings, and an Irish monk's poem about his cat.

We will encounter kennings, scops, and wordhords and will see how Early English literature is being reworked, rewritten and adapted in contemporary literature and culture, for example by John Gardner, whose 1971 novel *Grendel* retells the first part of *Beowulf* from the perspective of the monster; by Caroline Bergvall in her multi-media adaptation of the 8th century poem "The Seafarer", *Drift* (2014); and by the 2015 BBC show *The Last Kingdom* and its portrayal of the reign and cultural work of Alfred the Great. We will have a session on illuminations and manuscripts like the *Book of Kells* (8th century) and look at the famous *Bayeux Tapestry* and its depiction of the Battle of Hastings (1066), and we will read a 2015 novel by Paul Kingsnorth on the language shift and culture shock this battle brought about. We will also consider contemporary Early English and Anglo-Saxon Studies and the turmoil the field experienced when it confronted the links between Anglo-Saxon Studies, nostalgic nationalism, and white supremacy.



This is the so-called **Alfred Jewel** (c. late 9th century), probably forming the decorative end of a small pointer (an *æstel*) used to follow the line when reading. It is kept at Oxford's Ashmolean Museum (AN1836 p.135.371).

Reading/Viewing List:

Some material and secondary reading will be made available. Students are asked to obtain the following:

- Gardner, John. *Grendel*. 1971. Any edition (I have the Vintage 1989; Gollancz published a newer edition in 2015).
- Kingsnorth, Paul. *The Wake*. Unbound, 2015.
- Treharne, Elaine. *Old and Middle English, c. 890-1490: An Anthology*. 3rd edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. (there is mention of a 4th edition from 2020 on the pages of some online retailers, but the publishers have confirmed that this edition has been cancelled)

Please make sure you have access to/have a chance to view:

- Butchard, Stephen, et al, producers. *The Last Kingdom*. Series 1. Carnival Films for BBC Two, 2015.
→ available on Netflix

Studienleistung: regular and active participation (also in teamwork), detailed knowledge of assigned texts/material, preparation of discussion questions and discussion leading, small course assignments (e.g. preparation of short audio clips).

Prüfungsleistung, in addition to the above:

- annotated bibliography on 6 critical texts (due in January 2021)
- a scholarly essay (date TBA)

Note: Registered students who fail to show up for the first session will automatically be set "inactive" on Stine, so that another student may take up their place.