

**ENG 355 Myths Legends and Literature**  
**Section 1\*** 21140  
**Fall 2016**

Professor Margaret Sinex  
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Class meetings: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 – 12:15 in Simpkins 214.  
**Office hours:** Tuesday, Thursday 3:30 – 4:30, Wednesday 2:00 – 4:00.

Your successful completion of this course depends on the crucial information in this syllabus. If you lose your copy, print a replacement from our Western Online site.

**Course Description**

ENG 355 will introduce students to northern European mythology with emphasis on the Norse, Celtic and Finnish traditions. Participants will study the survival of various pre-Christian Norse, Celtic and Finnish elements in later literature specifically in J. R. R. Tolkien's twentieth-century literary works: *The Hobbit*, *The Silmarillion*, *The Legend of Sigurd & Gudrún*, *Sellic Spell* and the "Lay of Beowulf." We will consider different approaches to the study of myths (structural, psychological) as well as the range of insights myths offer (historical, cosmological, aetiological) over the course of the term. Students should expect the tests (there are two of them) to cover lecture material, class handouts, and assigned readings including Introductions and Prefaces as indicated. **Do not substitute** another edition of *Beowulf* for that listed below because you must have the assigned Introductions, Notes and Articles.

**Catalog Description**

**ENG 355 Myths, Legends and Literature. (3)** A literary study of myths and legends, with special emphasis on European myths and legends and their relationship to literature.

ENG 355 satisfies the requirement for one upper-division course in the Traditions category for the English Major.

ENG 355 satisfies the General Education requirement for the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Required Texts to Purchase:**

Texts are available at the Union Bookstore.

Used copies may also be available from Chapman's Book and Office Supply, 717 W. Adams Street. 833- 4509.

You may also order through New Copperfield's Book Service on the Macomb Square; their number is: 837-3052.

Donoghue, Daniel, ed. *Beowulf: A Verse Translation*. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: 0393975802. **Do NOT** substitute a different edition of this poem.

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual – 2016 MLA Updated*. 7th ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015.  
 ISBN: 0312406843.

Lönnrot, Elias. *The Kalevala*. Trans. Keith Bosley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN: 9780199538867. **Do NOT** substitute a different edition.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit*. Boston: Houghton – Mifflin, 2001.

Young, Jean I., Trans. *The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson*. Berkley: Univ. of California Press, 2002. ISBN: 9780520273054. **Do NOT** substitute a different edition.

**Required Texts Available on Western Online\*:**

- Ainulindalë The Music of the Ainur (*The Silmarillion*)
- Valaquenta Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar (*The Silmarillion*)
- Selection from Tolkien's translation of *Beowulf*.
- Sellic Spell* (Tolkien) and 'Lay of Beowulf' both versions (Tolkien)
- Selection from *The Legend of Sigurd & Gudrún*
- Selection from *The Poetic Edda*

**Course Requirements:**

**Evaluation**

Test # 1	20%
Test # 2	30%
Essay #1 (6 1/2 pages)	25%
Essay # 2 (6 1/2 pages)	25%
Regular Class Attendance	

**Scale**

89 – 87 = B+	79 – 77 = C+	69 – 67 = D+
100 – 95 = A	86 – 83 = B	76 – 73 = C
94 – 90 = A-	82 – 80 = B-	72 – 70 = C-
		66 – 63 = D
		62 – 60 = D-

**Course Policies:**

Failure to comply with the following policies will lower your grade.

1. Participation: Your regular, punctual attendance in class is mandatory. For this class, you have three unexplained absences. After that, each class missed will result in two points off your final grade for the course. Participation in the class discussion is essential to forming a reading community in this course; consequently, participation is an integral part of your final grade. If you are present in body but never speak or fail to read the assignment, or asleep you are not participating.
2. All assigned reading must be completed in its entirety for the classing meetings as noted in the Course Schedule.

3. Essays must be typed and are due on the assigned date at the beginning of class. Phone me or email me **before** the due date if you have a legitimate reason for being unable to meet a deadline and we may be able to accommodate you.

4. Behavior that is discourteous to your fellow classmates and consistently interferes with his or her learning experience in our classroom will not be tolerated. Please treat one another with the consideration and respect each of you deserves. No verbal attacks on a classmate are permissible. Using profanity before the class begins, during class or following class is not acceptable. **Entering the classroom late and leaving the room during the period** are distracting to your classmates and intensely annoying to me. Cell phones and all other devices will be turned off **before entering** the classroom. Remove your baseball cap for the duration of class. Why? Because the university classroom is a formal space reserved for discussion and lecture and men do not wear hats indoors in formal spaces.

Remember: if you can see my face clearly, I can see yours with equal clarity.

Consider your facial expression during class period.

5. Academic dishonesty: Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to “plagiarism, fabrication and falsification, [and] cheating” will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with Western Illinois University’s Student Academic Integrity Policy. To learn about infractions and procedures see: [www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php](http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php).

In her *A Pocket Manual of Style* 7<sup>th</sup> ed., Diana Hacker defines plagiarism as “(1) failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas, (2) failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and (3) failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words” (115).

*Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, [disability@wiu.edu](mailto:disability@wiu.edu) or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.*

*University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: [http://www.wiu.edu/equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_access/request\\_form/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php). If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.*

Web address for student rights and responsibilities: <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>

Web address for Academic Integrity Policy: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

### **Course Schedule:**

The schedule is subject to change according to the needs of the class. All changes will be announced in a timely manner; it is your responsibility to keep informed of any alterations in the schedule.

#### **Week 1**

##### *August*

Tues. 23 Introduction and Syllabus. Myth and Legend. Handout distributed.

Thurs. 25 *The Prose Edda* (pages 23 – 28) The Author's Prologue. Complete questions.

This portion of the course is devoted to the *Prose Edda*. The creation stories will be compared to those in The Finnish *Kalevala* and to Tolkien's *Ainulindalë*. The Norse pantheon of gods will be compared to that in Tolkien's *Valaquenta*. Topics include shamanism, the origins of Dwarves, and the end of the world. We will also compare three versions of the story of the hero Sigurd and Fáfnir the dragon: one in *The Prose Edda*, one in *The Poetic Edda* and one in Tolkien's *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*.

#### **Week 2**

Tues. 30 Discussion of *Edda* (23 – 28) and questions. *Edda* Introduction sections I – III (pages 7 – 11)

##### *September*

Thurs. 1 *Edda* Introduction sections IV and V (11 – 15)

#### **Week 3**

Monday Labor Day

Tues. 6 *The Prose Edda* and related texts

Thurs. 8 “

#### **Week 4**

Tues. 13 *The Prose Edda* and related texts

Thurs. 15 “

#### **Week 5**

Tues. 20 *The Prose Edda* and related texts

Thurs. 22 **Test # 1**

This portion of the course is devoted to *The Kalevala* and topics such as the origins of Wizards, the power of words/song, and the northern cult of the bear. Time permitting we will also listen to the Finnish composer Sibelius's musical interpretations of the text. One paper option is comparing the tale of the hero Kullervo with Tolkien's interpretation of that tale.

#### **Week 6**

Tues. 27 *The Kalevala* and modern interpretations  
Thurs. 29 “

### **Week 7**

*October*

Tues. 4 **Essay #1 due in class**  
Thurs. 6 *The Kalevala* and modern interpretations

### **Week 8**

Tues. 11 *The Kalevala* and modern interpretations  
Thurs. 13 “  
Friday Fall Break

This portion of the course is devoted to *Beowulf* and to related texts and topics. Texts include variants such as the Tale of Grettir and the Trollwoman, a short prose tale and two poems about Beowulf (Tolkien), listening to Heaney read his translation (audio), comparing his translation to Tolkien's (time permitting), and comparing Beowulf's arrival at the Court of the Danes with Gandalf and Company's arrival at the Court of the Rohirrim (film).

### **Week 9**

Tues. 18 *Beowulf* and related texts  
Thurs. 20 “

### **Week 10**

Tues. 25 *Beowulf* and related texts  
Thurs. 27 “

### **Week 11**

*November*

Tues. 1 *Beowulf* and related texts  
Thurs. 3 “

### **Week 12**

Tues. 8 *Beowulf* and related texts  
Thurs. 10 **Essay #2 due in class.**

This section of the course is devoted to *The Hobbit* and topics such as: the nature of Dwarves and Wizards, Beorn the Bear-Man and Shape-shifter, Smaug, the *Beowulf* dragon and Fáfñir.

### **Week 13**

Tues. 15 *The Hobbit*  
Thurs. 17 “

### **Week 14**

Thanksgiving Break

**Week 15**

Tues. 29 *The Hobbit*

*December*

Thurs. 1 “

**Week 16**

Tues. 6 *The Hobbit*

Thurs. 8 “

**Week 17**

Exam Week

Test # 2 at 10:00 on Thursday the 15th.

Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> Grades Due at noon.