Abbreviated Description and Syllabus
This course will examine what makes the writing and reading of literature such an intense endeavor. We'll investigate Old and Early Middle English heroic, lyrical and religious voices in the Middle Ages from c.900-1300 to discover what connects early literature and culture to our modern world.

We shall be working in the original languages, often from the manuscripts themselves, translating texts and transforming them into modern versions. Translation is the only way to learn the structures and nuances of the earliest works in English, but it is, as with any language, hard graft. We shall also be looking at contexts of literary production, and the cultural and socio-political landscapes of the time.

We'll be using a variety of text and textbooks. The essential purchase is Peter Baker, Introduction to Old English, which is available in print and online (http://www.oldenglishaerobics.net/). There are other online sites that we’ll be using, too. For some of the materials, I'll supply the texts, but you'll be working with digital dictionaries (Bosworth-Toller’s Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, the Toronto Dictionary of Old English, and the Middle English Dictionary) and grammars to construct your translations. Each week, you will complete grammatical work, a major translation of your own, a critical reading, and brief readings of short supplementary texts in translation. Students will make one formal presentation during the quarter and work on a single final project, comprised of the production of a text from Early English into a modern format.

September 24, Week 1: Place and Perspective
Caedmon's Hymn, Cynewulf and Cyneheard, and the Franks Casket

October 1, Week 2: Space and Meaning
Exeter Book Riddle 5, Riddle 26, Wulf and Eadwacer

October 8, Week 3: Loneliness
The Seafarer (The Wanderer, The Wife's Lament; Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden)

October 15, Week 4: Dislocation
The Ruin, The Ruthwell Cross, The Dream of the Rood

October 22, Week 5: Desire
Wulfstan's short sermons, Apollonius of Tyre, The Life of St Margaret

October 29, Week 6: Praise and Blame
The Battle of Brunanburh, William the Conqueror:
http://www.oldenglishaerobics.net/william.html; Durham
November 5, Week 7: Love-Longing
Godric's Hymns, On God Ureisun of Ure Lefdi (Lines 1-100), plus some short lyrics
http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/AHA2688.0001.001/1:3.20?rgn=div2;view=fulltext

November 12th: Week 8: Decay
The Grave, Poema Morale and The Worcester Fragments, plus some short lyrics

November 19th, Week 9: (Revised time for class) Love and Land
King Horn, Layamon’s Brut

November 26: No class
Thanksgiving

December 3, Week 10: Everlasting Love
Reviving Old and Middle English

Week 11: Projects due (A translation and full commentary; or, an edition, translation and commentary)

Assessment: 20% Presentation; 40% Portfolio of translations, plus participation; 40% Final Project