

Hist 635
Anglo-Saxon England
Spring 2017
M 7:20-10
Robinson B333

Sam Collins
Robinson B377B
scolline@gmu.edu
Office hours by appointment



In this course we will consider the political, cultural, and religious history of England from the end of Roman control in the fifth century to the Norman conquest of the eleventh. Our primary aim is to think through essential moments in the early kingdoms of England both for their own unique characteristics and as examples of wider trends in the post-Roman history of Western Europe. Topics to be addressed include: the changing nature of kingship and rule; the spread of Christianity; interaction between England and its Celtic neighbors to the north and west and its continental connections with the Frankish kingdoms and the papacy; the impact of the Viking age and the eventual formation of a single English kingdom; the Normans of 1066 and their new kingdom. And perhaps most importantly for such a course in the graduate program at GMU, we will pay careful attention to the relationship (real and alleged) of modern English and American political and legal institutions to the Anglo-Saxon past.

Books (required):

Sarah Foot, Aethelstan (Yale UP, 2012) 978-0300187717; e-version of this book is available from the university library:
<http://magik.gmu.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=3728935>

Dawn Hadley, Vikings in England (Manchester UP, 2006) 978-0719059827

Richard Huscroft, The Norman Conquest (Routledge, 2009) 978-1405811552

In addition to these monographs all students need to have a set of translations of the main primary sources as follows (strongly recommended):

Bede, Ecclesiastical History (Oxford Classics, 2009) 978-0199537235

Age of Bede, trans. Webb (Penguin, 1998) 978-0140447279

Alfred the Great (Penguin, 1984) 978-0140444094

Beowulf, trans. Heaney (Norton, 2001) 978-0393320978; e-version available through the university library: <http://magik.gmu.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=2977575>

Textbook. It's always good to read along in one of the three main surveys of the period. None of the following are required, but I recommend that all students have at least one:

Higham, Anglo-Saxon World (Yale UP, 2013) 978-0300216134; e-version available through the university library:
<http://magik.gmu.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=3802362>

Cambell et al. (edd.), The Anglo-Saxons (Penguin, 1991) 978-0140143959

Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England (Oxford UP, 1971) 978-0192801395

Students with disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474, ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through ODS.

Honor code

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process:
<http://oai.gmu.edu>

The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

Blackboard

For better or for worse blackboard plays an important role in this course as a repository for many of our readings and all of our graded assignments. Please ensure that you have access to our blackboard page: mymason.gmu.edu

Email

Please ensure that you have access to your MasonLive email account. I will occasionally communicate with the class via email, and the course email lists depend on your GMU mail account. Further, student privacy at GMU is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and is an essential aspect of any course. For this reason, as well as to adhere to Virginia regulations governing student privacy, all students must use their MasonLive email for all their communication with me in this class.

Student services

I want to remind you that George Mason University has a number of academic support and other resources to facilitate student success. You've already paid for these; they are your tuition dollars at work, so take full advantage of them. In particular:

The Writing Center: writingcenter.gmu.edu

Counseling and Psychological Services: caps.gmu.edu

University Career Service: careers.gmu.edu

Medieval events at CUA

The Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies at Catholic University in Washington DC maintains a strong and varied series of public lectures. As of this writing their spring schedule is not yet online, but as it comes out I will keep the class posted of any events that look relevant to our topic. All the details, when available, will be posted at: mbs.cua.edu.

Medieval events at Dumbarton Oaks

The Dumbarton Oaks Museum and research library also runs a series of public events during the academic year, many of them on topics of interest to students in this class. Like CUA, however, the autumn schedule at Dumbarton Oaks isn't yet online. I'll keep you posted as information becomes available, and you can check too at:
doaks.org/news.

The Mason Diversity Statement

This course adheres in all respects to the Mason Diversity Statement: "George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason

strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected. The reflection of Mason's commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach. Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed."

Grading

Weekly informal response essays: 25%

Two formal essay(s): 25% each

class participation: 25%

Definitions: The **informal essays** vary slightly in form from week to week but are typically 1-3pp. summaries and analyses of the theses, arguments, and methodologies of the works under consideration.

There are two options for the **formal essays**.

Either:

1) **Two essays**, each 12 pp. in length (min.). Students will write close analyses of an aspect of the work of one or more historians, with topics set by me and generally drawn from material considered in seminar. There are four due dates for these essays, and you may choose among them according to your schedule and preferences. Everyone may write more than two essays but I will count only your highest three grades when calculating your final grade for the seminar.

Due dates:

first essay: M 2/13 by 7pm

second essay: M 3/20 by 7pm

third essay: M 4/24 by 7pm

fourth essay: M 5/15 by noon

Or:

2) **Seminar paper**. Due at the end of the term, this essay should be 25pp. in length and consider in detail an important aspect of our period and its modern interpretation. Topics will be developed in advance with the assistance of the instructor. Seminar papers will most often be in the form of an historiographic essay that analyzes a debate in the secondary literature or the work of one or more historians who have shaped the analysis of our period. Requirements for the seminar paper: 1) Topics must be approved by me no later than 10/21, with 2) an annotated bibliography due no later than 3/24. 3) Rough drafts are due at the Thanksgiving holiday and final drafts are due no later than 5/15.

Class participation is a subjective measure of your contributions to the seminar. This score reflects not how much you talk, but how constructively you contribute to the discussion, and the degree to which your contributions reflect a thorough and detailed reflection on the material under consideration.