



Department of History

HTST 546
Formation of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms
Fall, 2020

Instructor: Dr Courtney Konshuh

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Office Hours and Method: Tues, 2-3pm or by appt: Zoom room 968 1315 4785

Course Delivery: Zoom room 942 5207 2666, password hwaet

Originally Scheduled Class Times: Thursday, 14:00-16:45

Synchronous Class Times: Thursday 14:00-15:20; 15:40-16:45

Description

This course is designed to introduce advanced history students to the primary sources and historiography of the Anglo-Saxon world. Given the scarcity of contemporary documentary evidence for large portions of this period, it is important for students to become familiar with non-documentary primary sources. Such sources include those revealed by archaeology, numismatics, and art history. Scholars must learn to use these sources in their efforts to understand the existing documentary sources and place them in a wider historical context.

The Anglo-Saxon period, stretching from the fifth to the late eleventh century, witnessed the birth of the English people, the establishment of Christianity and the development of the English language. This course will look at the early part of this period, exploring the impacts of the Roman departure from England in 409 through the Germanic invasion into the formation of early kingdoms. In this period, there were many attempts made to unify the island peoples, religiously, ideologically, and politically. We will be looking at the early kingdoms through the Heptarchy, exploring different kingdoms as well as thematic means of kingdom creation and strengthening, such as administrative attempts to consolidate power, Christianity as a unifying force, trade, and diplomacy between kings. This course seeks to show the diversity and uniqueness of the different areas of Anglo-Saxon England, and various forces which resisted ultimate unification in the tenth century.

Learning Outcomes

This course will provide students with a wide knowledge of the early and middle Anglo-Saxon period as well as in-depth knowledge on a particular topic. Participants in this course will be expected to fix quickly upon an individual research topic based on a historical person, primary documentation, or a significant object or set of objects important in an attempt either to unify or break up Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. This topic should be chosen in consultation with the course

instructor. Students will write a chapter analysis to practice critical reading. Throughout the semester we will read and discuss significant articles concerning various aspects of Anglo-Saxon history and historiography. Beginning in the sixth week of class students will lead a section of the class in exploring a topic of their choosing. This serves two purposes: enriching other students' knowledge of a subject they will not be exploring in depth and promoting the depth and breadth of your own knowledge of a topic by being able to explain and explore it with others. Intensive discussion at this level will lay the foundation for a well threshed-out individual research paper.

Resources

Required Texts for Purchase

Yorke, Barbara. *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England*. London: 1990. Available [digitally](#) via the library and from the bookstore. Required readings from this text appear below as BY.

You can order this book through the bookstore [here](#).

Recommended Texts

Arnold, C.J. *An Archaeology of the Early Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*. London, 1988,1997.

Available [digitally](#) via the library. This provides an introduction to the archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon period. It is possible to do well in this course even if you hate archaeology, but it is easier to do well if you have a good understanding of how to use material culture.

Bassett, Steven. *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*. London: 1989. There is a chapter in this volume on each of the kingdoms. There is a version in the library but because of Covid I am not able to place it on reserve, so please make sure you get ahold of it in time to scan the relevant chapter for your research project, and return it so others can also use it.

Blair, John. *Building Anglo-Saxon England*. Princeton, 2018. Available [digitally](#) via the library. This is a difficult but rewarding read and will be the basis of your review assignment. I suggest you read the intro and first couple chapters as well as the chapter you review.

Higham, Nicholas and Ryan. *The Anglo-Saxon World*. New Haven, 2013. This is the standard introductory textbook to the period. If you are brand new to this area, I suggest you read the first

Kirby, D.P. *The Earliest English Kings*. London, 1991, 2000. Available [digitally](#) via the library. If Kirby contradicts Yorke, trust Yorke.

Salway, Peter. *Roman Britain: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, 2015. Most of this volume is available via google books or amazon. It is cheap. His not-short-at-all history of Roman Britain is available to [borrow](#) on the Internet Archive.

Indispensable Primary Sources

Bede. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Eds. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and Roger Mynors. Oxford: 1969. Available [digitally](#) on the Internet Archive. This is the best translation of the original Latin available. You will find many editions and several online – none of these are as good as Colgrave/Mynors. If you cite Bede (in Latin or in English) in a written paper, I will expect you to use this edition.

Gildas. *The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*. Ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom. Chichester: 1978. Available [digitally](#) on the Internet Archive. This is the best translation of the original Latin available. You will find many editions and several online – none of these are as good as Winterbottom. If you cite Gildas (in Latin or in English) in a written paper, I will expect you to use this edition.

Swanton, Michael, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. London: 1996. This is the best translation of the Chronicle available. Unfortunately it does not exist digitally and our library only has one copy. I will provide copies of some of the relevant sections. If you can't get a hold of it the Whitelock translation is a good second choice. Avoid the other 17 versions the library has, and especially the avoid the 19th century versions you'll see online. These are really awful translations.

Whitelock, Dorothy. *English Historical Documents, Vol I*. Ed Greenfield (1979). Available [digitally](#) via the library. This is the single best resource for the period. It provides a wide range of documents in translation, often with an introduction. If you can't get a hold of a better edition, this is always the next best choice.

Digital Resources

The History Student's Handbook <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/29/history-students-handbook-2019.pdf>

Oxford Database of National Biography <https://www.oxforddnb.com/>

The Electronic Sawyer charter database <https://esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk/>

Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England <https://pase.ac.uk>

Corpus of Early Medieval Coin Finds <https://emc.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/>

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Old English) <http://asc.jebbo.co.uk/>

Caveat!

In general our library is not blessed with a wealth of resources on this period, so I request that you all be very considerate in your use of library books. Please return them quickly, as many others will require the same volumes, or be prepared to share/share images of relevant pages. I will make a discussion forum on D2L for you to request books from each other – if it is not in the library, chances are one of us has it. You will probably need some [inter-library loans](#) which can take several weeks to arrive, so request these early! I also recommend you create an account at the [Internet Archive](#), which allows you to digitally 'borrow' books for 1 hour or, if they are out-of-print, for an unlimited amount of time.

Assessment

Weekly Reading Report and In-class Engagement 25%

Discussion in class is taken very seriously at the 500 level. If you are not prepared to engage in conversation in this class be prepared to receive a poor grade. Reading summaries are the basis of class discussions. You will be expected to submit an informal weekly reading report that discusses the assigned readings. An informal report is intended to demonstrate to the instructor that you have prepared your material for in class discussion. The expectation is that you will come to class with at least 1-2 informed questions which you would like to discuss with your colleagues. As the term progresses it will be increasingly important to consider the class readings

in relation with your own research project wherever possible. At the end of every class you will receive a grade from 0-2 for your participation. If you have a valid reason for missing class which you discuss with me in advance, or an emergency arises, I may allow you to submit your reading report for 1 point.

Weekly Research Reports can be submitted hand-written and photographed or typed, approx. one page or 300 words. During the weeks of student presentations, you will email your reports to the student presenting on the sources they selected.

1 October: Chapter Response 20%

1250 words with properly formatted bibliography

An analysis or response to one chapter from John Blair, *Building Anglo-Saxon England* (Princeton, 2018). You may use any of chapters 4-8. Only respond to ONE chapter and try to use a chapter that you think will help with your research project.

A response is a formal analysis and evaluation of a chapter. It is not a simple summary of the chapter, but rather an evaluation, and your response will have an argument (thesis statement) which you prove with evidence (taken both from Blair's text and from the primary and secondary sources he references). You must give some consideration as to how this book fits into the historiography, provide a clear description of major sources and the purpose of the investigation, and evaluate the chapter's contribution to current studies. Please review the History Student's Handbook, pp. 17-20 for more guidance.

Upload to Response folder on D2L

In-class presentation 15%

Each student will lead 60 minutes of a session on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor. This includes you selecting primary and secondary sources for the class to read, a 20 minute presentation, and leading a 40 minute discussion. I will guide you through this process, you will be well prepared. You can choose your topic and presentation date after the second session – there will be a link on D2L.

The purpose of a presentation is to help you to write a better research paper. This assignment will prepare you to give formal presentations at the MA level and in a job setting. You will write most of your paper in advance of the presentation, present some of your findings to the group and guide the class through a discussion of some important research questions. Finally, you will use the feedback and perspectives you gain in class to rewrite/restructure/finish your research paper. This process mimics that academic process of article-writing.

You choose a small selection of primary documents around which your presentation will be based. These materials will be loaded onto D2L one week in advance of the presentation for your fellow students, along with guiding questions and a thesis statement so your classmates can orient themselves as to what they should focus on in their readings. Your presentation (20 minutes) will provide the class both with some background to the topic as well as introduce areas which you would like to cover in the following class discussion (approx. 40 minutes). This can be anything that you think will be relevant to your research paper. It is helpful to have a handout, powerpoint, or outline to distribute so the class can follow your presentation and stay on task for

the discussion; you can also put important primary or secondary quotations on a handout for points you discuss during the presentation or as a discussion aid. Including a list of primary and secondary sources in your presentation and/or handout is helpful in case your classmates are interested in your topic and wish to read more about it. **N.B.** If you have not seen me at least twice by one week before your presentation to confirm your topic and primary sources, I will not allow you to present and you will receive 0 for both presentation and research paper.

Research Paper 40%

Due Wednesday, 11:59pm, six days after your presentation
4000 words, including notes but excluding bibliography

The major writing assignment will consist of a research essay on an aspect of early Anglo-Saxon kingdom formation. It must be based on primary sources (in translation) or on a selection of material objects and supported by secondary scholarly research. You will choose, narrow, and refine your own topic in consultation with the instructor (who reserves to herself a veto on topics). Working with objects and primary sources is difficult and requires more preparation time than projects based entirely on secondary material. Be sure to leave yourself enough time to prepare your paper. Extensions will not normally be granted.

- This is a formal research essay, double spaced with full footnotes and a bibliography (according to the [History Student's Handbook](#) or Rampolla's *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*)
- Students will be expected to choose their own topics within the broader context of the subject matter of the course
- You will be required to use at least three (3) substantial or several shorter primary sources and at least ten (10) secondary sources when writing their papers. This is the minimum of sources you must consult in order to receive a passing grade. If you want an excellent grade, you will consult substantially more.
- Good papers will be free of errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation. They will have a clear structure, consisting of an introduction (with a thesis statement), a body and a conclusion.
- Arguments will be supported with reference to the primary texts, but long quotations (over three lines) should generally be avoided.
- Do not simply summarize readings—I want to read your analysis and viewpoint, supported by strong and thoughtful arguments.
- save your MS Word, Pages, or Open Office document with the filename format LASTNAME Assignment (example: Konshuh Chapter Response), and submit online. Please do not give me pdfs.
- Any student who writes a paper which revolutionises the field of Anglo-Saxon studies will receive an A in the course regardless of your other assignments.

Feedback

I am happy to provide you with detailed feedback on your papers. Please note I do not read emails sent within 24 hours of your receiving your grade. Please wait at least 24 hours before

contacting me so we can have a more productive conversation.

On-Line Instruction Statement

This class will be held synchronously using Zoom. It is also a discussion-based class, and I hope to encourage an open atmosphere as you would find in a 500-level seminar in a regular classroom. For that reason, I hope you are able to use your phone or computer to show your video. I have found that a phone/laptop camera and a cheap pair of headphones works well enough. However, if this is not possible, we will all learn how to interact with the chat features as well as with video.

Three-hour zoom sessions make it difficult to remain focused. I know that some of you will have other things going on in the background or are sharing technology/bandwidth. For the first few sessions I suggest we take a 20-minute break in the middle of class so you have an opportunity to stretch and rest your eyes, but I would like to reassess the class structure as a group after the first two weeks. We can create a 'best practices' guide together based on our experience, any limitations you find with your technology, and any problems we encounter.

Zoom

We're going to be using zoom for this class. If you're a newbie, don't worry, we'll start slow and you'll figure it out fast. You can use zoom in your browser or download the software, and it's pretty simple to set up. Check out our uni guidelines here: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/>

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://ucalgary.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJAvcuuqTksHNJC1uvQ8RN2h6sSUVu91DUv>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Meeting ID: 942 5207 2666

Password: hwaet

Schedule

1. **Sept 10: Introduction to Roman Britannia and course outline**

Secondary Reading: P Salway, *Roman Britain: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, 2015.

2. **Sept 17: Germanic *adventus***

This class will look at the Britons and the earliest Angle, Saxon and Jutish settlers and aggressors. We will explore the written sources, and we will also look at ethnogenesis arguments.

Primary Readings: Gildas, Bede and Anglo-Saxon Chronicle excerpts

Secondary Reading: A. Woolf, "Community, Identity and Kingship in Early England" in W. O. Frazer and A. Tyrrell (eds.), *Social identity in early medieval Britain* (London, 2000): 91-111.

3. **Sept 24: Administration and Organisation**

There were many attempts to unify England politically; we will explore some of the main attempts that were made in the early period. These were done via laws and by restructuring the landscape through elaborate lordship ties.

Primary Readings: Early English laws, Tribal Hidage, Burghal Hidage, some charters

Secondary Readings: C. Warren Hollister, *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions on the Eve of the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1962), 59-84.

4. **Oct 1: Religion and Conversion**

Another way to achieve unity was ideological; by adopting Christianity, smaller kingdoms gained more legitimacy and could call on the support of institutions on the continent. We will look at some famous grave goods in class.

Primary Readings: Accounts of conversion from Bede

Secondary Reading: B. Yorke, "The Adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon Royal Courts to Christianity" in M. Carver (ed.) *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300* (Woodbridge, 2003): 243-257.

5. **Oct 8: Towns and Trade**

The object of this class is to think of the factors that led to the growth of towns in the early and mid-Saxon periods, plus the evidence that we have for them. The primary source is a useful account that gives some indications of long-distance trade.

Primary Readings: Hodoeporicon of St Willibrord; Check out this website:

<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/coins/emc/>

Secondary Readings: Chris Scull "Urban centres in pre-Viking England" in *The Anglo-Saxons* ed. Hines (1998); Hodges "Reflections on Emporia" in *Two Decades of Discovery*, ed. Abramson (2008); Ben Palmer "Hinterlands of Three Southern English Emporia" in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and 'Productive' Sites, 650-850*, eds. Pestell and Ulmschneider (2003).

The next 7 sessions will be devoted to your oral presentations.

6. **Oct 15: Kent**

Secondary Reading: BY ch 2

7. **Oct 22: Essex (incl Middlesex and London)**

Secondary Reading: BY ch 3

8. **Oct 29: East Anglia (incl Lindsey)**

Secondary Reading: BY ch 4

9. **Nov 5: Northumbria (incl Bernicia, Deira, Pictish kingdom)**

Secondary Reading: BY ch 5

10. **Nov 19: Mercia (incl kingdom of the Magonsæte, Hwicce, and possibly Gwynedd)**

Secondary Reading: BY ch 6

11. **Nov 26: Wessex (incl Gewisse, Sussex, Cornwall)**

Secondary Reading: BY ch 7

12. **Dec 3: West-Saxon Expansion under Alfred the Great**

This class will cover the rise of Wessex under King Alfred in the late 9th century; we will also explore a heated debate between Whitelock and RHC Davis, and the effects this had on later historiography.

Primary Readings: Anglo Saxon Chronicle and Asser

Secondary Readings: Whitelock and Davis articles; BY ch 8

Back Matter

Departmental Grading System

The following percentage-to-letter grade conversion scheme is used in all Canadian Studies, History, and Latin American Studies courses, except for HTST 200.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
90-100	A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
85-89	A	4.00	Excellent performance
80-84	A-	3.70	Approaching excellent performance
77-79	B+	3.30	Exceeding good performance
73-76	B	3.00	Good performance
70-72	B-	2.70	Approaching good performance
67-69	C+	2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance
63-66	C	2.00	Satisfactory performance
60-62	C-	1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance.
56-59	D+	1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject
50-55	D	1.00	Minimal Pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
0-49	F	0	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.

Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

- For program advising in the Faculty of Arts, contact the Arts Students Centre (ASC). For information on how to reach the ASC team please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate/academic-advising>
- For Enrolment Services advising (such as admissions, student awards, course registration support, financial aid and student fees) or registration issues, contact the Office of the Registrar. For information on how to reach their team please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/contact-us/enrolment-services-advising>
- For information on Registration Changes and Exemption Requests please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals>

Attention history majors: History 300 is a required course for all history majors. You should normally take it in your second year.

Writing:

All written assignments and written exam responses are assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) and general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented according to the format described in the History Student's Handbook.

D2L: Throughout the course, important material such as lecture outlines and study guides will be regularly posted on D2L. Students are advised to check this regularly.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism occurs when one submits or presents one's work in a course, or ideas and/or passages in a written piece of work, as if it were one's own work done expressly for that particular course, when, in fact, it is not. Please see [*The History Student's Handbook*](#).

Plagiarism may take several forms:

- Failing to cite sources properly
- Submitting borrowed, purchased, and/or ghostwritten papers
- Submitting one's own work for more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s) involved
- Extensive paraphrasing of one or a few sources, even when referenced properly, unless the essay is a critical analysis of those works

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence, and written work that appears to contain plagiarized passages will not be graded. All such work will be reported to the Faculty of Art's associate deans of students who will apply the penalties specified in the *University of Calgary Calendar, Section K: Integrity and Conduct*, <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Academic Accommodations:

Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should contact Student Accessibility Services (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy).

Students needing an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should contact, preferably in writing, the course instructor.

Copyright:

The University of Calgary has opted out of the Access Copyright Interim Tariff proposed by the Copyright Board. Therefore, instructors in all University of Calgary courses will strictly adhere to Copyright Act regulations and the educational exceptions permitted by the Act for both print and digital course material. No copyrighted reading material may be placed on course D2L or web sites without the prior permission of the copyright holders. In some cases, this may mean that instructors will require you to purchase a print course pack from the University of Calgary bookstore or consult books on reserve at the library. For more information on the University of Calgary's copyright policy, see <http://library.ucalgary.ca/copyright>.

Sexual Violence Policy

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

Other Useful Information:

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information on:

- Wellness and Mental Health
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Campus Security and Safewalk (220-5333)

Department Twitter @ucalgaryhist

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