

Sensorveiledning, IRSK2303
Celtic Mythological Texts
Høst 2023

General information about the subject and teaching

In this course students read and discuss Celtic mythological texts from medieval Ireland and Wales, read in translation. Students acquire an overview of the medieval literature that contains mythological themes or content that was composed in Old and Middle Irish and Middle Welsh and are introduced to various methods for analyzing this material.

The teaching method consists of both lectures and discussions. The qualifying assignment consists of an essay question of 3-5 pages. The course may be taken as part of a specialization in Celtic philology within the BA field of Norse and Celtic studies, or as an elective course. No prior knowledge of Celtic Studies, Irish Studies, or medieval literature is assumed.

Examination format

The exam is a 3-day home examination in the form of an essay question. These are the instructions the students receive:

Essay: Speech in Celtic Mythological Texts

*Length: 4-5 pages (1.5 line spacing), excluding bibliography.

*Select a style guide (Chicago, MLA, Harvard, etc.) and use it consistently. Your essay must include a bibliography. Your essay should have a thesis statement that is precisely defined, and the argumentation should be systematically presented. Remember to support your statements with evidence drawn from the texts.

A striking aspect of many of the texts we have read in this course are the vivid dialogues and conversations that the characters engage in. Write an essay (4-5 pages, plus bibliography) in which you select and discuss several examples of speech in the texts that we have read for this course. You must discuss at least one Irish and one Welsh text that we have read for the course. You may use secondary material if you choose, but it is not required. Your essay must address how the examples you choose relate to 'mythological,' 'supernatural,' or 'otherworldly' aspects of these texts.

You will need to restrict your analysis in some way, in order to be able to make a persuasive argument within the page limit. You could, for example, choose to restrict your analysis to one or two types of speech, such as poetry, prophecy, insult, introductions, or negotiations; or you could focus your analysis on the speech of individuals in specific roles (otherworld lord or lady, mortal ruler, etc.) or the speech occurring in certain kinds of relationships (husbands and wives, or siblings, or ruler and court, etc.). These are just suggestions; you are not limited to these examples.

Some questions that you might take as a starting point for your discussion are:

What sorts of speech do different characters use, and why? How does the status, origin, and/or gender of the speaker(s) relate to what kinds of speech they use, and with whom?

There are many examples of wordplay, deception, and misleading speech in these texts—what role does this sort of speech play? Who engages in it, and what does this tell us about the nature or morality of these characters?

Examination assessment

It is expected that the student will answer the essay question on the basis of syllabus literature and teaching given in the course. The question is designed to allow the students a degree of leeway in how they choose to answer; good judgment in how they elect to do this is an aspect of the evaluation. The question has been designed to be cumulative, in order to allow the students to demonstrate knowledge acquired over the full semester. Students must include at least one Irish and one Welsh text in their essay. They may draw upon secondary literature in their essay if they choose, but it is possible to achieve an “A” result without including secondary literature in the essay. It is expected that the student will be able to answer the assignment in clear language with good examples, clear language, good argumentation and clear conclusions.

“A”: Outstanding

An “A” exam will display excellent reasoning and strong, clear academic prose. The arguments will be compelling and well-supported by relevant citations from the course material. The essay will be well-organized and demonstrate the candidate’s strong ability to draw supporting material together into a coherent, persuasive whole. The exam will demonstrate a high degree of independence and excellent judgment from the candidate.

“B”: Very good

A “B” exam will display very strong reasoning and strong, clear academic prose, but not at the level of an “A” exam. The discussion will be well-supported by relevant citations from the course material, and the candidate will exhibit a solid degree of independence and good judgment.

“C”: Good

A “C” exam will display good reasoning and strong, clear academic prose, but not at the level of a “B” exam. The arguments will be supported by relevant citations from the course material, but there may be weaknesses in interpretation and argumentation. The candidate shows good judgment and independence in the most important areas.

“D”: Fairly good

A “D” exam will display acceptable reasoning and argumentation, with some significant shortcomings. The candidate displays a degree of independence and judgment, but to a lesser degree than a “C” exam.

“E”: Adequate

The performance satisfies the minimum requirements, but no more. The candidate shows little judgment and independence.

“F”: Not satisfactory

Performance that does not satisfy the professional minimum requirements. The candidate exhibits both a lack of judgment and independence.