

BRITAIN BEFORE 1000 CE

Britain before 1000 CE: Migration, Myths, & Material Culture

N.B. The following syllabus is written for a 6-week summer term, taught in 2017

This course explores the transformation of Roman Britain into medieval England between c.410-1066, with particular focus on Late Antiquity (the fourth through seventh centuries). During this period of transformation, British society was fragmented, reimaged, and rebuilt. This course focuses on three key themes for understanding this transformation: migration, myths, and material culture. Historians who study Britain in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages use archaeological evidence alongside written sources, because few written texts survive. This class will expose students to a variety of evidence types, including historical texts, literature, archaeology, and physical anthropology. In particular, it will explore how groundbreaking archaeological and anthropological discoveries of the past two decades have challenged long-held beliefs about Late Antique and Early Medieval Britain. Students will learn how to synthesize these different kinds of evidence into new narratives about the origins of England, and in the process will gain an appreciation of the diverse and unique peoples, communities, and life experiences which flourished in the half millennium between the collapse of Roman rule and the Norman Conquest.

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- Demonstrate mastery of current scholarly debates about the origins of England
- Learn how to critically evaluate a variety of types of historical evidence (historical texts, literature, archaeology, and scientific evidence), and synthesize these sources into coherent historical narratives
- Be able to describe how different chronological scales of analysis allow different interpretations of the past, and use these tools to explain the relationship between events, social processes, and deep time
- Critically evaluate how myths about the past are retold by later groups to influence contemporary debates
- Cultivate empathy with and understanding of humans who lived very different lives in a very different time from our own

Required texts

Fleming, R. 2011. *Britain after Rome: The Fall and Rise, 400 to 1070*. Penguin. ISBN 014014823X

Higham, N.J. and Ryan, M.J. 2013. *The Anglo-Saxon World*. Yale University Press. ISBN 0300216130

Other reading assignments will be posted to Canvas (<http://elearning.ufl.edu>).

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Assignments

1. Online Discussion Posts (25 points)
2. Class participation (5 points)
3. Map quiz (5 points)
4. Primary source analysis 1 (15 points)
5. Argumentative essay (20 points)
6. Primary source analysis 2 (15 points)
7. Final project (Digital Timeline) (15 points)

= 100 points total

Online Discussion Posts (25 points)

DUE: 12 noon each day before class

Each day before class, every student will write a short (approximately 10-sentence per reading) summary of the day's assigned texts. The goal of this assignment is to teach students habits of critical reading, note taking, and summarizing. These summaries will also help students to prepare for class discussions, and will serve as a reference to assist completion of the final end-of-semester project.

Reading responses will be graded satisfactory (full credit), incomplete (half credit), or unsatisfactory (no credit). A 'satisfactory' response demonstrates honest effort to understand the text, but does not need to be perfect or provide the 'right' answer. Careful reading is only the first step in learning; our discussions during class meetings will tackle any confusions or difficulties students encounter on your first reading before class.

Students may skip four responses during the semester without penalty. Skipped responses beyond the allowed four will be graded unsatisfactory (0%).

Reading responses must be submitted through Canvas (<http://elearning.ufl.edu>), as comment replies to each day's discussion topic. Responses are due by 12 noon each day before class.

Response format: Most daily discuss posts will ask students to write a single paragraph (approx. 10 sentences) which summarizes the argument made in the assigned article or chapter(s). It will also ask students to write one or two questions about the readings that they would like to raise during class discussion.

The instructor will read these responses before class, and use them to help shape class discussion around points in the readings which students found interesting, confusing, or worth considering in greater depth.

Class participation (5 points)

Students are expected to regularly participate in class discussions by listening carefully to their classmates, asking questions, and giving thoughtful comments and responses.

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Pop quizzes

If the class regularly fails to complete the assigned readings and/or reading responses, the instructor reserves the right to give unannounced pop quizzes in class.

Map quiz (5 points)

DUE: July 3 (in class)

This quiz will test students' ability to identify the major historic counties and regions of Britain.

Primary source analysis #1 (15 points)

DUE: July 10

Written texts tell a story, and in the process emphasize certain details while omitting others. These agendas and omissions are easy to spot in texts from modern periods, because we can compare a text against other contemporary documents to see how its version of events diverges. It can be more challenging to identify the agendas and omissions of early medieval texts, however, because few documents survive to provide context for comparison. We must rely upon clues within the documents themselves.

For this assignment, describe what you identify to be the purpose for which Gildas wrote *On the Ruin of Britain*. Support your claim with evidence from the text. Discuss how Gildas' purpose for writing--his agenda--may have caused him to emphasize some facts while omitting others. Describe evidence in the text which supports this discussion. How might Gildas' emphases and omissions change how we read his work as a historical source? Length should be 4 pages, 12pt double-spaced Times New Roman, excluding bibliography.

Primary source analysis #2 (15 points)

DUE: July 31

In this paper, students will compare two primary sources: the *Lives of Saints Cuthbert and Columba*, or the assigned excerpts from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and *Historia Brittonum*. How do the two authors approach their histories? What is each author's agenda, how do these agendas compare, and how do they differ? How does comparing and contrasting these texts help us understand their value as historical sources?

Argumentative essay (20 points)

DUE: July 21

Textual, isotopic, genetic, and archaeological evidence each offer a different perspective on the 'Anglo-Saxon' migrations of the fifth century. In this essay, you will critically analyze what each of these four types of evidence can (and cannot) tell us, compare these methods against one another, and synthesize these divergent perspectives into a narrative in which you take a stand

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for a particular position. A successful essay will extensively cite appropriate readings from the syllabus, but outside research is discouraged. Length should be 6-7 pages, excluding bibliography.

Final project: Digital Timeline (15 points)

DUE: August 4

Students will create an interactive digital timeline using the online program <https://timeline.knightlab.com>. This timeline will tell a historical narrative, using research drawn from course readings. This narrative should trace the changing impact of one of the following themes on British identity from the Roman empire through the Norman Conquest: migration, myths / narratives about the past, or material culture.

Course policies and resources

Grade scale

A > 93, A- > 90, B+ > 87, B > 83, B- > 80, C+ > 77, C > 73, C- > 70, D+ > 67, D > 63, D- > 60, E > 60

Attendance

Attendance in class is required. Two unexcused absences will be permitted. Students with more than two unexcused absences will lose 2% from their total course grade for each absence. Excused absences may be granted for special circumstances, as outlined in the undergraduate catalog: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Excused absences should, whenever possible, be arranged in advance. Students may be asked to provide documentation for excused absences in accordance with university policy.

Policy on paper revision and resubmission

Revising and resubmitting manuscripts is a crucial skill professional historians must master. Students will be given the option to revise graded papers, in response to instructor feedback, and resubmit them for a new grade.

Students who choose to revise graded papers in response to instructor feedback should submit a revised version of a paper, along with a cover sheet detailing the revisions made and the original, marked copy of the paper, to the instructor within a timeframe outlined by the instructor. Revised papers will be re-graded on the overall quality of their content and the extent to which concerns from the original version were successfully resolved by the author.

Only polished, complete papers can be submitted for revision. Partial or rough drafts will not be re-graded, except by prior arrangement.

The final project cannot be revised, due to the time constraints of the course.

Late assignments

Late papers and makeup assignments will only be accepted by prior arrangement (at least 24 hours before the deadline), or under exceptional circumstances.

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Class etiquette

Please arrive on time (if you are running late, please try not to slam the door as a courtesy to your fellow classmates). Cell phones, tablets, and laptops should not be used in class except for reading assigned texts and taking notes. Students who use electronics to text, check social networking apps, or play games will be asked to leave the classroom so as not to distract their fellow classmates.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, which is the attempt to claim someone else's writing or other creative work as one's own, is cheating, unethical, dishonest, and a violation of university policy and is strictly prohibited. Students who plagiarize will fail the assignment, and will be reported to the university for further disciplinary action. For more information on UF's policies on plagiarism and cheating, see the Student Conduct & Honor Code:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/scer/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

University policy on accommodations for students with disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

University Health and safety resources

- **U Matter, We Care:** If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- **Counseling and Wellness Center:** <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.
- **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS):** Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
- **University Police Department:** 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Class schedule and reading assignments

Week 1 (June 26-30)

Monday: Introduction

- Fleming, R. 2011. *Britain after Rome: The Fall and Rise, 400 to 1070*. Penguin. (Read the introduction)

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- Higham, N.J. and Ryan, M.J. 2013. *The Anglo-Saxon World*. Yale University Press. (Read the introduction)

Tuesday: Deep time in the British landscape

- Fleming, chapter 13
- Semple, S. 1998. A fear of the past: the place of the prehistoric burial mound in the ideology of middle and later Anglo-Saxon England. *World Archaeology* 30(1): 109-26.

Wednesday: Roman conquest, colonization, and local resistance

- Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, books LXI and LXII (Boudica's revolt)
- Leach, S., Eckardt, H., Chenery, C., Muldner, G. and Lewis, M. 2010. A Lady of York: migration, ethnicity and identity in Roman Britain. *Antiquity*, 84(323): 131-145.

Thursday: What has the Roman empire ever done for us? High culture vs. everyday life.

- Gerrard, J. 2013. *The Ruin of Roman Britain*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3 and pp. 236-43.
- Fleming, chapter 1

Friday: The fifth century collapse of Roman Britain

- H&R, chapter 1
- St. Patrick, 'Letter to Coroticus'
- *Optional*: Halsall, G. 2013. *Worlds of Arthur*. Oxford University Press, chapter 5.

Week 2 (July 3 – 7)

Monday: Early Anglo-Saxon England: a new period and a new people?

- H&R, chapter 2
- Gerrard, J. 2015. Synthesis, Chronology, and 'Late Roman' cemeteries in Britain. *American Journal of Archaeology* 119(4): 565-572.
- *Optional*: Halsall, chapter 2.
- **MAP QUIZ**

Tuesday: No class (July 4)

Wednesday: Textual accounts of the Anglo-Saxon invasions

- Gildas, 'On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain'
- *Optional*: Halsall, chapter 4.

Thursday: Isotopic evidence for population migrations in the fifth century

- Budd et al. 2004. Investigating Population Movement by Stable Isotope Analysis- A Report from Britain, *Antiquity* 78 (299): 127-141.

Friday: Genetic evidence for population movement: ancient and modern DNA

- Leslie, et al. 2015. The fine-scale genetic structure of the British population. *Nature* 519(7543), 309-314.

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Week 3 (July 10-14)

Monday: Material culture evidence: invasion or transformation?

- Fleming, chapters 2-3
- *Optional*: Halsall, chapter 3.
- **PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS #1 DUE**

Tuesday: Living in Late Antique England

- Hamerow, H. 2012. *Rural settlements and society in Anglo-Saxon England*. Oxford University Press. (excerpts)

Wednesday: Dying in Late Antique England

- Ford, W.J. 2003. The Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon Settlement and Cemeteries at Stretton-on-Fosse, Warwickshire. *Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions* 106 (2003).
- Williams, H. 2011. Mortuary Practices in Early Anglo- Saxon England, in D.A. Hinton, S. Crawford, and H. Hamerow (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*. Oxford University Press.

Thursday: What can human bones tell us about life, health, and death?

- Sayer, D. And Dickinson, S.D. 2013. Reconsidering obstetric death and female fertility in Anglo-Saxon England. *World Archaeology* 45(2): 285-297.
- Hawkes, S.C. et al. 2003. *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Worthy Park, Kingsworthy, near Winchester*. Oxford University Press, **pages 185-187**.

Friday: Bones, statistics, and stories: how archaeologists get from raw data to historical narratives

- Härke, H. 1990. 'Warrior graves'? The background of the Anglo-Saxon weapon burial rite. *Past & Present* 126 (Feb): 22-43.

Week 4 (July 17-21)

Monday: The rise of a new elite I: Great hall complexes

- Sykes, N. 2010. Deer, Land, Knives and Halls: Social Change in Early Medieval England. *Antiquaries Journal* 90: 175-93.
- Fleming, chapter 4

Tuesday: The rise of a new elite II: Treasure

H&R, chapter 3

- Thomas, G. et al. 2016. Technology, ritual and Anglo-Saxon agriculture: the biography of a plough coulter from Lyminge, Kent. *Antiquity* 90(351): 742-58.
- *Beowulf* (excerpts)

Wednesday: Law and order in the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms

- Hyams, P. 2003. *Rancor and Reconciliation*. Cornell University Press. (Chapter 1)
- Æþelberht's law code
- Alfred's law code (excerpts)

Thursday: Religious transformation: the rise of medieval Christianity

- Fleming, chapters 5-6
- Bede, *Ecclesiastical History* (excerpts)

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Friday: Christianity and archaeology: can we identify pagans and Christians from burial evidence?

- Carver, M. 2000. Burial as Poetry: the context of treasure in Anglo-Saxon Graves. In E. Tyler (ed.), *Treasure in the Medieval West*, 25-48. York Medieval Press in association with Boydell & Brewer.
- **ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY DUE**

Week 5 (July 24-28)

Monday: Monks and minsters

- Bede, Prose Life of St. Cuthbert
- Adomnan, Life of St. Columba

Tuesday: Farming and production, towns and trade

- Fleming, chapter 7
- Blakelock, E. and McDonnell, G. Early medieval knife manufacture in Britain: a comparison between rural and urban settlements (AD 400-1000), in J. Hosek, H. Cleere and L. Mihok, *The Archaeometallurgy of Iron: Recent Developments in Archaeological and Scientific Research*, 123-136. Prague: Institute of Archaeology of the ASCR.

Wednesday: (Re)-writing the past: two versions of British history

- *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (excerpts)
- Nennius, *Historia Brittonum* (excerpts)
- H&R, chapter 4

Thursday: Vikings attack!

- H&R, chapter 5
- Fleming, chapter 8

Friday: Migration in the viking age

- Chenery et al. 2014. A boat load of Vikings? *Journal of the North Atlantic* 7: 43-53.
- Kerehaw, j. And Røyrvik, E.C. 2016. The 'People of the British Isles' project and Viking settlement in England. *Antiquity* 90(354): 1670-80.

Week 6 (July 31 – August 4)

Monday: Transformations of the Late Anglo-Saxon Period I: The political unification of England

- H&R, chapters 6-7
- **PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS #2 DUE**

Tuesday: Transformations of the Late Anglo-Saxon Period II: Urbanism and economic inequality

- Fleming, chapters 9-11

Wednesday: Reforming religion while reimagining the past

- Semple, S. 2003. Illustrations of damnation in late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. *Anglo-Saxon England* 32: 231-45.
- Wulfstan, 'Sermo Lupis ad Anglos'

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- Ælfric, 'De Falsis Deis'
- Fleming, chapter 12

Thursday: The Norman conquest

- The Bayeux Tapestry
- H&R, chapter 8

Friday: The making of England

- (No reading)
- **FINAL PROJECT DUE**