This course studies the Latin literature composed in the British Isles (Ireland, Wales, Anglo-Saxon England) during the period A.D. 400-1100, and surveys the varieties of Latin language used across that geographical and chronological range. The aim of the paper is the acquisition of familiarity with the principal Insular Latin authors and texts, and of the ability to situate these within the literary and historical context of early Insular Culture. At the end of the two-year course, students should also have acquired the ability to read both prose and verse texts in the original Latin, and translate them accurately. Although the emphasis is upon literary and cultural history, there is also scope for more detailed study of specialised aspects of the literature, such as style, rhetoric, and sources. The teaching is focussed on a number of set texts, copies of which are made available to students at the beginning of each year.

Classes and lectures

University teaching for the course consists of a mix of classes and lectures. The lectures operate on a two-year cycle in Michaelmas Term, alternating between Anglo-Latin literature and Celtic Latin literature (British Latin, Cambro-Latin and Hiberno-Latin), for each of which there will be six lectures, providing a broadly chronological overview, to be attended by both first- and second-year students. In Lent term there will be four lectures on genres and topics within Insular
Latin literature for first-years only, followed by four for second-years only. All of the lectures are accompanied by handouts, providing a full bibliography, illustrative examples from the Latin texts being discussed, as well as maps or manuscript images where relevant.

The lectures are complemented by a series of University language and text-reading classes at which attendance is required. For those who have started the course with little or no previous knowledge of the language, there will be two classes a week in the Michaelmas and Lent terms, and then one a week for the first half of Easter term (28 in total). These will offer a basic grounding in Latin grammar and syntax (Beginner’s Latin). For those who come already having studied Latin, there will be one weekly class in Michaelmas and Lent terms, and in the first half of Easter terms (20 in total), which will be dedicated to working through a selection from the prescribed texts (translating and commenting in detail on grammatical or literary points), in an order, and at a pace, tailored to the needs of the class. In the second year there will again be one weekly class to continue with work on set-texts, integrating the previous year’s beginners with more experienced Latinists.

It should be stressed that students taking this paper will be expected to spend time in private study reading works cited in the bibliographies distributed at each lecture, and to devote a certain number of hours per week to Beginner’s Latin grammar exercises or to preparing texts for the translation classes.

Supervisions

Attendance at lectures and classes will be further complemented by college supervisions (usually eight in total across the two years of Part I) which will be arranged by your Director of Studies. These will be used to acquire practice at writing essays, and to cover in detail selected topics within the course, as determined by your supervisor who will take into consideration your particular interests and needs.

Examinations

Both the Prelim. paper and the Part I paper will consist of two compulsory questions and choice of two essays: the first compulsory question will offer three short passages taken from the set texts for translation and grammatical/syntactical commentary, and will be worth 30% of the total mark (i.e. each short passage is worth 10%). The second compulsory question will be an unseen passage, with a glossary, for translation into English, and will be worth 20% of the total mark. The rest of the paper will consist of some twelve or so essay questions, from which two must be selected (each of which will be constitute 25% of the marks).

Please note that it is not advisable for those who begin the course with no Latin to enrol themselves for the Prelim. Examination, but rather to take a Lent-Term Preliminary Assessment Test (PAT) in Latin. The PAT will consist of short passages from the texts read in the classes, for translation and grammatical commentary, and an unseen passage (with a glossary) for translation.
Prescribed texts for the Preliminary Examination for the ASNC Tripos, Paper 9, 2006 onwards; a selection from the following:


Prescribed texts for the ASNC Tripos, Part I Examination, Paper 9 from 2007 onwards; a selection from the following:

The same as the above, plus Adomnán, *Vita S. Columbae* i. 19-20, ii. 27, iii, 6-10; Ædiluulf, *Carmen de abbatibus*, lines 692-795; Æthilwald, *Carmen de peregrinatione*, lines 1-106; Aldhelm, *Carmen rhythmicum*, lines 1-114, and *Enigmata* i, ii, iii, iv, xi, xiii, xv, xvi, xviii-xix, xxx, xxxii, xlxi, liv, lxxxix; Asser, *Life of King Alfred* cc. 20-25, 76-9; Altus prosator stanzas 1-5, 17-19; Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* V.12-14; Boniface, *Enigmata de uirtutibus*, v, *Enigmata de uitiis*, iv-v; Byrhtferth, *Vita S. Ecgwini* Epilogus and I.13; Columbanus, *Epistula* v.1-5; Gildas, *De excidio Britanniae* cc. 27-31; Lantfred, *Translatio et miracula S. Swithuni*, cc. 1, 3 and 35; *Liber monstrorum* i. 1-30; Rhygyfarch, *Vita S. Dauidis*, cc. 1-9, 15-19.

All the set-texts and teaching materials for this course will be made available to students in class, but can also be found on the Raven password-protected Insular Latin CamTools site (https://camtools.cam.ac.uk/) to which all students will be given access.
ANNOTATED SCHEME OF LECTURES

Michaelmas Term 2014:

INTRODUCTION TO ANGLO-LATIN LITERATURE
LECTURES FOR FIRST- AND SECOND-YEARS

1. The beginnings of Anglo-Latin literature
   The arrival of St Augustine and establishment of schools; Theodore and Hadrian’s Canterbury school and
   their teaching

2. Aldhelm
   Aldhelm’s career and writings; the characteristics of his style

3. Bede
   Bede’s career and writings; a look at some samples from his Biblical commentaries; Bede as
   hagiographer

4. Alcuin
   Alcuin’s career and writings; a look at Alcuin’s poetry and the theme of transience; Alcuin’s personal
   letters

5. The ninth Century
   The decline of Latin literacy during the Viking invasions, and its revival under Alfred; Asser’s Life of
   King Alfred

6. The tenth century
   The continued revival of Latin; the ‘hermeneutic style’; Ælfric as a reaction to the pompous obscurity of
   the hermeneutic style

Lent Term (the same each year):
THEMES IN INSULAR LATIN LITERATURE

FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS (first four weeks):

1. Classroom colloquies
   The learning of Latin in Insular schools; the earliest colloquies; De raris fabulis and its various layers and
   reworkings; the Colloquia Hisperica; Ælfric, Ælfric Bata and the theory behind colloquies

2. Travels I: Real
   Maps as a way to describe the known and unknown world; itineraries; travel as centripetal or centrifugal
   i.e. the two understandings of pilgrimage; the Bordeaux itinerary; the journal of Egeria; Willibald’s
   Hodoeporicon compared with Adomnán’s De Locis Sanctis

3. Travels II: Imaginary
   The Irish monastic ideal of peregrinatio and written evidence for traveller-monks; Navigatio S. Brendani
   – genesis, structure and function; Liber monstrorum and its polemical purpose
4 Letters
The theory of letter-writing; oral delivery; letter-collections as specimens for imitation; the letters of Aldhelm, Columbanus, Alcuin, and those from Bonifatian mission

FOR SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS (weeks 5-8):

1 Riddles
Symphosius’s riddles as model; Aldhelm’s *Enigmata* – purpose and originality; Aldhelm’s imitators (Tatwine, Eusebius, Boniface); comparisons with the Old-English riddles

2 Saints’ Lives I: England
The origins of hagiography (the early martyrs; the classic *Vitae*); the earliest Insular examples; characteristics of the genre; other types of hagiography (*inuentiones*, *translationes*, *miracula*); 10th-century revival and 11th-century explosion

3 Saints’ Lives II: Ireland, Wales, and Brittany
The earliest Irish hagiography (Brigit; Patrick; Columba); the great collections of Irish Lives; Breton Latin lives of Welsh and Cornish saints; Wales as a late starter in the eleventh century (Rhygyfarch; Lifris); collections of Welsh saints’ Lives and their function

4 Visions
Dream-visions of the afterlife; the Biblical and apocryphal background; the visions in Gregory the Great’s *Dialogi*; Classical models; visions in Bede’s *HE*; the vision of the monk of Wenlock in Boniface’s Letter 10; Felix’s *Life of Guthlac*; the relationship of dream-visions to near-death experiences; dream-visions in preaching and propaganda

Michaelmas Term 2015:

INTRODUCTION TO CELTIC-LATIN LITERATURE
LECTURES FOR FIRST- AND SECOND-YEARS

1 Roman and Sub-Roman Britain, and St Patrick
Explanation of course and lecture-scheme; the introduction of Latin into Roman Britain; the Roman education system; the departure of the Romans and its effect; vulgar Latin; evidence for the state of sub-Roman schooling in Britain; noted British authors (Pelagius, Faustus); Patrick’s career; the *Confessio*; the *Epistola ad Coroticum*; Patrick’s Latin.

2 Gildas
Reconstruction of Gildas’s life; the *De Excidio Britanniae*: function, structure; Gildas’s Latin and his knowledge of rhetoric; the implications of his Latin style for an understanding of intended audience.

3 Early Ireland and Columbanus
Brief introduction to Latin learning and literature in Ireland; Columbanus’s career; his writings and those now rejected from his corpus; his Latin and his use of rhetoric; his reading; Columbanus and rhythmical poetry.
4  Ireland in the seventh century
The characteristics of Hiberno-Latin learning; Virgilius Maro Grammaticus; Bernhard Bischoff’s reconstruction of the corpus of Irish Biblical exegesis and subsequent demolition (or otherwise) of his arguments; examples of genuine 7th-century Irish scholarship

5  Adomnán
Columba and Iona; the Altus Prosator; Adomnán’s career; his De locis sanctis, the Vita S. Columbae and its function; Adomnán’s Latin style

6  Cambro-Latin Literature
Nennius and the Historia Brittonum; the Liber Commonnei; fragmentary evidence of Welsh and Irish scholars; Asser and his Life of Alfred; Sulien of Llanbadarn Fawr and his family