What Makes Germanic Germanic?
Dr. Gary Miller

A language family is defined by the innovations and retentions that are shared by all of its members. Innovations occur in all parts of the grammar and lexicon. A common language also presupposes a common culture which can be reflected in the grammar.

A single language that can be called Proto-Germanic made certain innovations after splitting off from 'central' Indo-European. Subsequently, Proto-Germanic speakers migrated in different directions and the separation enabled evolution of different dialects, which became Gothic, Old Norse, etc.

Barring extreme circumstances such as language shift, a language family naturally has a shared lexicon (the same core vocabulary across the languages) and morphological system. These will have both retentions and innovations.

This talk will itemize the twenty-five key innovations that characterize the Germanic languages and set them apart as a family from their Indo-European ancestor language as well as from their sister languages Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, etc.