



rare photo of Old English speakers

English 3720: Development of Modern English

Fall 2006, Section 42764: Tuesday 6:00-9:30 p.m. in 3050 Schneider

Instructor: Dr. Lisa Minnick

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Course Page: <http://www.retroflexive.com/3720main>

From the catalog: English 3720 traces the development of modern English from its beginnings to the present, examining historic and linguistic influences on change in both spoken and written English. It explores theories of language development, with emphasis on their practical implications.

Course description, purpose, and objectives: In this course, students will learn basic language description skills and linguistic terminology, and we will discuss the development and history of the English language. In doing so, we will focus on the beginnings of English in the fifth century in Britain through the development of American English to present representations of English around the world. We will analyze the external factors impacting the language, including the influences of conquering peoples, literary and other developments in written language, and migration patterns, while also analyzing the internal elements of the evolving language, including lexical development, sound changes, and grammatical shifts. We will focus on how and why language changes and why variation exists among speakers of the same language. The approach will be descriptivist and variationist; that is, special emphasis will be given to issues of linguistic diversity, how prestige and non-prestige varieties of English evolve(d), and how understanding attitudes about language, politics, and power is crucial to an understanding of how English originated, how it functions among its native and non-native speakers, and how and why standards emerge. We will also explore the development of English into a global lingua franca and discuss the implications of its increasing influence. Applications of the history of English to the teaching of English will also be considered.

Required Text: Algeo and Pyles, *The Origins and Development of the English Language*, 5th ed., Thomson, 2004. *Note: Additional readings and other media (film, video, etc.) may also be assigned. Stay in the loop!*

Assignments and grading:

Final exam	25%
Midterm exam	20%
Paper	20%
Exercises and quizzes	15%
Presentations	10%
Attendance and participation	10%

Exams: The midterm will include all material covered during the first half of the semester and the final will cover the second half as well as important earlier material. Each exam will include identifications and short answer questions in addition to problems (such as phonetic transcriptions) relevant to the current course material.

Paper: This assignment is an opportunity for you to apply concepts learned in class and to present the results in journal-article format. We will discuss the assignment and topic ideas in class. Please note that this course requires college-level research and writing skills, that I will expect your paper to achieve the quality appropriate at the 3000 level, and that papers will be graded accordingly. You will need to research, develop, draft, revise, and edit conscientiously over the assignment period in order to complete this assignment satisfactorily.

Exercises and quizzes will help keep you on track and up to date. Learning the discipline of linguistics is a cumulative process. Gaps in your knowledge early on can cause problems later.

Presentation: Each student will prepare an individual presentation and lead the class discussion on researched and textual materials. We'll set up a schedule for these early in the semester.

Attendance and participation: The Development of Modern English is a very interesting topic but a demanding course, requiring a solid set of skills and base of knowledge that you will have to master early on, and therefore active participation is a must. This means you need to be present every day to the extent that it is humanly possible. Readings, discussions, and activities complement each other, so you need to be in class in order to participate in all components of the course. We will cover a tremendous amount of material during each class meeting. If you must miss class, my policy for a class that meets only once a week is to permit only on "freebie" absence. By "freebie," I mean that I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. I also mean that's all you get. Exceptions can only be made in cases of serious illness (such as those requiring hospitalization) and other documentable emergencies. If you miss additional class meetings, there may be a substantial deduction in your course grade. Habitual lateness is also an attendance issue. Minimal absences reflect favorably. Excessive absences don't, and three or more may result in a course grade of F. It is each student's responsibility to stay on top of all course material and assignments when a class meeting is missed.

Course Policies

Academic honesty: All work you turn in for this class must be your own, with all outside reference sources properly cited and acknowledged. Plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, any kind of falsification or forgery, computer misuse, multiple submission, complicity, and any other type of academic dishonesty on any exams or work assigned for this course, will not be tolerated in any form. **You are required to read and comply fully with the policies and definitions outlined in the Western Michigan University statement on academic integrity, available in the undergraduate and graduate student catalogs and online at <<http://www.osc.wmich.edu/academicintegrity/catalog.html>>.** If there is reason to believe any student has been involved in academic dishonesty, he or she will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. The student will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s) and have the opportunity for a hearing. Please consult with me if you are in doubt about how to cite a source in your paper, whether a source is appropriate, whether a citation is needed, if you are not sure what level of help on an assignment constitutes complicity or collusion, or with any other academic integrity questions. As I am also required to uphold the standards of academic integrity, my policy is zero tolerance for any type of deception, and I do not want for any of you to find out the hard way how seriously I take this.

Students with disabilities should contact Ms. Beth Denhartigh at the beginning of the semester at 387-2116 or by email at beth.denhartigh@wmich.edu so that any physical, learning, vision, hearing, psychiatric or other disability can be documented and accommodations arranged. Please note that a disability determination must be made by Ms. Denhartigh's office before accommodations can be made.

Late work is generally frowned upon in college and elsewhere, and this class is no exception. Arrangements must be made *in advance* (and you'll need a documentable explanation). Unexplained late work (or excuses after the fact) will not be accepted and a grade of zero will be assessed for the assignment.

Being late to class should be kept to a minimum. Please make it a habit to be in class on time. Otherwise, you risk missing important course content (such as instructions or quizzes) which may be over by the time you get there. Also, when you walk in late, it is distracting to other students. The same goes for leaving early. It is your responsibility to stay on top of what goes on in class whether you are there or not. If you are late, it is your responsibility to stay after class to make sure you have been marked present. Absences resulting from uncorrected lates count as absences. Habitual lateness will result in a reduction of your participation score and hence your course grade. Leaving at the break will be recorded as an absence.

Makeups: Daily assignments, exercises, quizzes, presentations, and in-class activities cannot be made up if missed because of lateness or absence. Makeups on major assignments, such as exams or papers, must be arranged with me in advance of due dates in order to avoid penalties, and you will have to make a pretty strong case in order to be granted an extension.

Classroom etiquette: You are encouraged to read and think critically and thus you are not required to agree with everything you read or everything that is said during discussions in this class. In my experience, learning works best when an open dialogue is encouraged. All thoughtful contributions are welcome; I ask only that everyone be respectful during class discussions. The goal is for our classroom to be a safe place to flex your intellectual muscles, where everyone feels comfortable generating, expressing, and challenging ideas. Your help in reaching this goal is essential. Also, please familiarize yourself with and adhere to Western Michigan's code of student conduct at <http://www.osc.wmich.edu/studentcode/conduct.html>. Students who are not willing or able to abide by the code and respect the rights of everyone to a comfortable teaching and learning environment will be asked to leave.

Other etiquette issues: Sleeping, eating, grooming, reading non-course materials, doing homework, having conversations, using any kind of electronic communications device, and other such activities are discouraged because of their disruptive and impolite nature, and also because they keep you from fully participating. Your active participation is part of your course grade, of course, and also, nothing interesting will happen in class without your input. That is, the class will be as interesting as you make it. Showing up on time and prepared (that means completing all reading assignments and other homework and being ready to work when you get here) will help your grade as well as enhance your learning experience.

Formatting for all written assignments: All hard copies of assignments must be **word-processed (typed) and double-spaced**, including papers and any written homework assignments. All papers must have **1" margins** and follow **MLA or Chicago style for page headings, page numbering, formatting and documentation** (we'll go over this in class). For formal essays, I recommend using Times New Roman 12 or a comparably sized sans serif font (like Arial), if you prefer. **Electronic copies of assignments will not be accepted in lieu of hard copies.** Graded assignments and exams will generally be returned within one to two weeks.

If you would like extra help with course material, you are always welcome in my office. There is no need for an appointment if you would like to drop by during my office hours (Tuesday afternoons from 3-4:30 p.m.), but please make arrangements with me if you are not free during office hours so that we can set up a time to meet. Also, please email me any time if you have questions or concerns.

Workload: I won't sugar-coat it; the workload for this course is substantial, with challenging (and plentiful) reading assignments, challenging new skills and terminology to master, and other assignments. You will need to keep up with all readings and other deadlines as assigned because if you aren't prepared, you will have a hard time understanding what is going on, and you won't be able to participate in class discussions, both of which will (1) make things boring for you and (2) be detrimental to your progress in the course.

A word to the wise: Failure to follow directions is one of my two pet peeves; the other is failure to listen or read carefully when instructions are being given. The first is almost always a result of the second. **Credit will not be awarded to work which does not properly respond to all requirements of the assignment.** If you are ever not clear on what is being asked of you, I invite you to check with me either in person or via email.

Grading criteria for all assignments:

A	= 4	Excellent (not merely good or above average) work. Excellent work means work of the highest quality.
BA	= 3.5	
B	= 3	
CB	= 2.5	
C	= 2	
DC	= 1.5	
D	= 1	
F	= .5	for work that does not meet minimum standards; 0 for work not turned in.

At any time during the semester, you are welcome and encouraged to stop by during office hours (or make an appointment) to discuss your progress in the course.

Schedule of Reading and Writing Assignments

I reserve the right to make minor adjustments or massive changes to this syllabus as a result of interference from reality. Also, additional activities and readings may be assigned in class. If you come to class every day and follow along with any announced changes, you'll never be out of the loop. You are also encouraged to check our class updates page regularly for news, schedule changes, and announcements. It is on the web at <http://www.retroflexive.com/3720updates>. **Please read all assignments in advance of class discussions. Our class lectures and discussions will not be linear recapitulations of readings, so please come to class having read the week's assignments.**

Week 1: Introduction to the History of English and How to Study It

Sep 05

- Why the history of English is important.
- How and why languages change over time.
- What every student of the English language needs to know about linguistics.

Week 2: The Sounds of Language: Introduction to Phonology

Sep 12

Read Algeo and Pyles, chapters 1 and 2. Discussion topics:

- Places and manners of articulation.
- Fun with IPA: Learning phonetic transcription.

Week 3: Continue work on IPA and places/manners of articulation. Also, How Writing Fits Into All This

Sep 19

Read Algeo and Pyles, chapter 3. Discussion topics:

- Review places and manners of articulation.
- Relationship between speech and writing, and between spelling and sound.
- Practice transcription.

Week 4: Before There Was English: The Indo-European Hypothesis and How Languages are Related

Sep 26

Read: Algeo and Pyles, chapter 4. Discussion topics:

- Historical linguistics and language families.
- The development of Indo-European (and the Indo-European hypothesis).
- From Indo-European to Germanic.
- Practice transcription.
- Paper assigned (due Week 12: November 21 at class time).**

Week 5: Old English, or "This is English? It looks like a foreign language!"

Oct 03

Read: Algeo and Pyles, chapter 5. Discussion topics:

- England before English.
- Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian influences.
- The place of English among Germanic languages.

Week 6: Complete discussion of Old English; review for midterm exam.

Oct 10

Continue to work from Algeo and Pyles, chapter 5. Make sure you are up to date on all reading.
Discussion topics:

- Grammar, morphology, and phonology of Old English.
- Variation within Old English and the impact of language contact.
- The earliest literature in English.
- Review for midterm exam.

Week 7: Midterm Exam: Exam will cover all material up to and including Old English.

Oct 17

Week 8: Middle English, or “This *still* looks like a foreign language!”

Oct 24

Read: Algeo and Pyles, chapter 6. Discussion topics:

- The Norman Invasion.
- Norman influence on language spoken in England.
- The decline of and revival of English.
- Language change and linguistic characteristics of Middle English.

Week 9: More about Middle English.

Oct 31

Continue discussion of Algeo and Pyles, chapter 6. Discussion topics:

- Language change and linguistic characteristics of Middle English.
- Language variation and language contact in Middle English.
- Middle English literature.

Last date to withdraw from classes: Monday, November 06 (not that you'd want to).

Week 10: Evolution and Revolution: Early Modern English.

Nov 07

Read: Algeo and Pyles, chapter 7 and online reserve article: Bodine, “Androcentrism in Prescriptive Grammar.” Discussion topics:

- How Modern English became modern.
- Phonological, morphological, and syntactic changes to the language.
- The rise of prescriptivism and linguistic authority.

Week 11: Early Modern English continued.

Nov 14

Read: Algeo and Pyles, chapter 8. Discussion topics:

- More about changes to the language, including the Great Vowel Shift.
- Literature in EME.
- Language variation and standardization.

Week 12: Present-Day English...at last! Papers due at class time.

Nov 21

Read: Algeo and Pyles, chapter 9. Discussion topics:

- Social and political impacts on language development.
- The sounds, structure, and vocabulary of Modern English.
- English in the United States and Britain.

Week 13: American English.

Nov 28

Online reserve reading to be announced. Discussion topics:

- Variation in American English.
- Perceptions about dialects and correctness.
- A new global standard?

Week 14: Last week of class! The Globalization of English.

Dec 05

Online reserve reading to be announced. Discussion topics:

- English around the world.
- Impacts of English on other world languages.
- The politics and economics of English.
- Review for final exam.

Week 15: Final Exam: Tuesday, December 12, 7:15 - 9:15 p.m.