



Rare photo of actual speakers of Old English

English 3720: Development of Modern English
Fall 2011, MW 4:00-5:50 p.m. in 3037 Brown

Instructor: Dr. Lisa Minnick

Office: 923 Sprau

Office hours: Tuesdays 3:30-5:30 p.m. and by appointment

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Class blog and web resources: English3720.wordpress.com

Course description:

English 3720 traces the history the English language from its prehistory through its beginnings in Britain and its continuing development to the present day, including the development of American English as well as English(es) spoken around the world. The course explores sociohistorical and linguistic influences on the language and explores theories and mechanisms of language change.

Learning objectives: Students who complete the course successfully will acquire the following:

- language description skills, including phonetic transcription.
- working knowledge of terminology used in the discipline of linguistics.
- understanding of the external (social, political, intellectual) influences on language change.
- understanding of the internal (linguistic) mechanisms of language change.
- awareness of how standard varieties are authorized and institutionalized.
- understanding of English as a global lingua franca and the implications of its influence.

Required texts and other materials:

- Baugh and Cable, *A History of English*, 5th edition (Prentice Hall, 2001, or Routledge, 2002).
- Additional readings available electronically.
- \$5 fee card, available at the WMU bookstore at the Bernhard Center.

Assignments and values:

Final exam	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Research project	20%
Quizzes	15%
Homework and activities	15%
Attendance and participation	10%

All students will need to sign up for a WordPress account in order to access course materials and participate in online discussions.

Assignment descriptions

Exams: The midterm will cover the prehistory of English through Old English, and the final will cover Middle English and beyond. Both exams will include phonetic transcriptions, articulatory descriptions, identifications, and terminology and both will incorporate material from lectures, discussions, and readings.

Research project: As the final course project, students will work collaboratively on an inquiry into some aspect of the history of the English language. This is an opportunity for you to apply concepts from the course in an experiential way and to present your findings to the class as well as in writing. Extensive guidance will be provided and expectations for quality of work will be high.

Quizzes: In this course, you will learn the International Phonetic Alphabet and other language description skills and linguistic terminology. Quizzes are opportunities for you to practice applying this knowledge as part of your preparation for the advanced instruction in English linguistics that occurs in ENGL 3720.

Homework assignments and activities are designed to help you acquire and develop the skills and knowledge you will need for the course, as well as make it possible to explore topics beyond our classroom discussions and to collaborate and exchange ideas in creative ways.

Course Policies

Attendance and participation: I think this course is fun and interesting, but it is also demanding. Some of the material is quite difficult and requires sustained effort to learn. Success in the course requires mastery of a set of skills and base of knowledge that you will have to acquire early on, and your active participation in this process 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, and we cover a lot of material during each class, much of which would be difficult to learn on your own.

My policy is to permit three “free” absences, although you should understand that because of the challenging nature and amount of material covered, missing even a single class can put you at a serious disadvantage. By “free,” I mean no questions asked and also 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. Excessive absenteeism will result in a substantial deduction in your course grade. Five or more absences may result in a course grade of E. It is each student’s responsibility to stay on top of all course material and assignments and to get the notes from a classmate following an absence. Missed classes cannot be made up in office hours or at any other time. Leaving at the break counts as an absence.

Arriving late to class and leaving early should be kept to a minimum. If you’re late, you risk missing important course content which may be over by the time you get there. Late arrivals can also be distracting to other students and the instructor. The same goes for leaving early. If you are late, please stay after class to make sure you have been marked present. Habitual lateness will result in a reduction of your attendance score and hence your course grade.

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.

Makeups: Quizzes, in-class assignments, and other such activities cannot be made up if missed because of lateness or absence. Makeups or extensions on major assignments, such as exams or project deadlines, must be arranged in advance of due dates in order to avoid penalties, and you will have to make – and document – a pretty strong case in order to be granted an extension or makeup.

Classroom etiquette: You are encouraged to read and think critically and of course are not required or expected to agree with everything you read or hear in this class. In my experience, learning works best when an open dialogue is encouraged. We don't all always have to agree, but we should always treat one another with respect. This class should be a place where everyone feels comfortable generating, expressing, and challenging ideas. Your help in reaching this goal is essential. Please familiarize yourself with the **WMU Student Code** <http://www.wmich.edu/conduct/docs/WMU_studentcode.pdf>. Students who do not 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 impede full participation. Your active participation is part of your course grade, of course, but you should understand that nothing interesting will happen for you in class without your input. That is, the class will be as interesting as you make it. If you are unprepared and disengaged, you're not going to have a very good time of it.

No recording of any kind – audio, video, photographic, or otherwise – is permitted in this class without the informed consent of all students and the instructor. Everyone in this class has a right not to have their voices and/or likenesses recorded without their knowledge and permission, including the instructor.

Learning the discipline of linguistics is a cumulative process. Gaps in your knowledge early on can cause problems later. Let me know as soon as you can if you feel like you're getting behind. My job is to help you learn this stuff, so by all means take advantage of this resource by coming to office hours, talking with me after class or during the break, or making an appointment to meet.

Grading scale for all assignments:

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

University Policies

Religious Observances Policy: The University is a diverse, multicultural enterprise and, as a community, we jointly embrace both individual responsibility and dignified respect for our differences. It is WMU's general policy to permit students to fulfill obligations set aside by their faith. It is the University's intent that students who must be absent from scheduled classes to fulfill religious obligations or observe practices associated with their faith not be disadvantaged. However, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with his/her instructors in advance. It is in the student's best interests to approach each instructor expeditiously and with sufficient notice so that the rights and responsibilities of the instructor are not disrupted. I ask to be informed early in the semester if you must miss class for religious reasons.

Students with disabilities should contact Disability Services for Students at 387-2116 so that any physical, learning, vision, hearing, or other disability can be documented and accommodations arranged. Please note that a determination must be made by the Disability Services office before accommodations can be made.

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. **All students are required to read and comply fully with the policies and definitions outlined in the Western Michigan University statement on academic honesty, which is available online at <http://www.wmich.edu/conduct/academichonesty/definitionsofviolations.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 for your project, 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.

English 3720 Weekly Schedule

I reserve the right to make minor adjustments or massive changes to the following schedule as a result of interference from reality. Please refer frequently to our class blog for news, announcements, and schedule changes (English3720.wordpress.com). These things happen.

Also, please be aware that lectures and discussions will not be recapitulations of readings; rather, readings, lectures, and discussions complement one another. Therefore, it is important that you **come to class each Monday having read the week's assignments** except where otherwise noted.

Week 1: Introduction to the history of English and how to study it.

Sept 07

Wednesday, Sept 07: Introduction to course.

- Why the history of English matters.
- 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 the phonetic alphabet.

Sept 12-14

Come to class Monday having read Algeo & Pyles, "The Sounds of Current English." Discussion topics:

- The International Phonetic Alphabet.
- Places and manners of articulation.
- Fun with IPA: Learning phonetic transcription.

Week 3: Before English: The Indo-European hypothesis and language relatedness.

Sept 19-21

Homework 1 is due Monday, September 19.

Come to class Monday having read Baugh and Cable, chapters 1-2, and Singh, "Language Families and the Pre-history of English." Discussion topics:

- Historical linguistics and its genesis.
- Language relatedness and theories of language change.
- Proto-Indo-European and the Indo-European hypothesis.
- Practice transcription and articulatory descriptions.

Week 4: English as a Germanic language (no, really!) and the First Sound Shift.

Sept 26-28

Quiz 1 is Monday, September 26.

Continue to work through Baugh and Cable, chapter 2, and Singh, “Language Families and the Pre-history of English.”

- From Indo-European to Germanic.
- The First Sound Shift.

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

Oct 03-05

Homework 2 is due Monday, October 03.

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 3. Discussion topics:

- England before English.
- Invasions and external influences on the language.
- Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian influences.
- The earliest literature in English.

Week 6: Old English phonology, grammar, and lexicon.

Oct 10-12

Quiz 2 is Monday, October 10.

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 4. Discussion topics:

- Phonological features and sound change in Old English.
- Synthetic and analytic languages and the grammatical system of English.
- The Old English lexicon.
- Variation in Old English and the impact of language contact.
- Research projects assigned (due Week 14).

Week 7: Midterm exam on all material up to and including Old English.

Oct 17-19

Monday, Oct 17: Complete discussion of Old English and review for exam.

Wednesday, October 19: Midterm exam

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

Oct 24-26

Read Baugh and Cable, chapters 5-6. Discussion topics:

- Some very silly kings.
- The Norman Invasion.
- French and English in England.

Week 9: Middle English phonology, grammar, and lexicon.

Oct 31-Nov 02

Homework 3 is due Wednesday, November 02.

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 7. Discussion topics:

- Sound changes, grammatical shifts, and new words.
- Variation, change, and contact in Middle English.
- Middle English literature.

Week 10: Evolution and revolution: Early Modern English. Language consciousness and standardization.

Nov 07-09

Last date to withdraw from classes: Monday, November 07 (not that you’d want to).

Quiz 3 is Monday, November 07.

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 8. Discussion topics:

- How English became modern.
- Language consciousness, prescriptivism, and linguistic authority.
- Variation and standardization.

Week 11: Early Modern English phonology, grammar, and lexicon.

Nov 14-16

Homework 4 is due Wednesday, November 16.

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 9, and Bodine, “Androcentrism in Prescriptive Grammar.”

- Phonological, grammatical, and lexical developments.
- The Great Vowel Shift (and the Great Great Vowel Shift Game!).
- Literature in Early Modern English.

Week 12: Later Modern English and Present-Day English...at last!

Nov 21-23

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 10. Discussion topics:

- Language and empire.
- Culture, technology, and the English language .
- English on the road: North America and beyond.

Wednesday, November 23: No class. Thanksgiving break.

Week 13: Postmodern English? American English and English around the world.

Nov 28-30

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 11. Discussion topics:

- American English: A new global standard?
- English in the twenty-first century.
- The politics and economics of English around the world.

Week 14: Last week of class! Presentations, the future of English, and review for the final exam.

Dec 05-07

- Project presentations.
- What's next for English? Make your predictions!
- Review for final exam.

**Research projects are due electronically by midnight on Thursday, December 08.
Please refer to project assignment handout for complete instructions.**

Final exam: Monday, December 12, 5-7 p.m.