



rare photo of Old English speakers

## English 3720: Development of Modern English Spring 2008, MW 2:00-3:50 p.m. in 1275 Schneider

**Instructor:** Dr. Lisa Minnick

**Office:** 923 Sprau

**Office hours:** Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 12 noon and by appointment

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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:** Baugh and Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 5th ed.

### Assignments and values:

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Final exam                   | 25% |
| Midterm exam                 | 20% |
| Paper                        | 20% |
| Presentation                 | 15% |
| IPA quiz                     | 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.

**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.

**IPA quiz:** In this course, you will learn the International Phonetic Alphabet and its uses. The IPA quiz is an opportunity to apply this knowledge as a step in your preparation for advanced instruction in English linguistics.

**Attendance and participation:** The Development of Modern English is interesting but demanding, requiring a solid set of skills and base of knowledge that you will have to master early on, so 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 is to permit three “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 four or more may result in a course grade of E. It is each student’s responsibility to stay on top of all course material and assignments when a class meeting is missed. Missed classes cannot be made up in office hours or at any other time.

**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 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. 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.

**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.

### 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 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](mailto: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.

**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.

**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.

**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 (Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 12 noon), 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. Learning the discipline of linguistics is a cumulative process. Gaps in your knowledge early on can cause problems later. Please arrange to meet with me if you feel that you are getting behind.

**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.

#### **Grading criteria for all assignments:**

|    |       |   |
|----|-------|---|
| A  | = 4   | Excellent work (not merely good or above average); work of the highest quality. |
| 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.        |

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. You are encouraged to check our class updates page regularly for news, schedule changes, and announcements. It is online at <<http://www.retroflexive.com/3720updates>>. Our class lectures and discussions will not be linear recapitulations of readings, so please come to class on Monday having read the week's assignments unless otherwise noted.

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

Jan 07-09

Monday, Jan 07: Introduction to course.

For Wednesday, Jan 09: Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 1. Discussion topics:

- 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**

Jan 14-16

Come to class having read article: Algeo and 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: Continue work on IPA and places/manners of articulation. Also, How Writing Fits Into All This**

Jan 21-23

Continue to work through Algeo and Pyles, "The Sounds of Current English." 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 Language Relatedness**

Jan 28-30

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 2. 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 13: Wednesday, April 02).

•**IPA Quiz Wednesday, Jan 30: Transcription and articulatory descriptions.**

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

Feb 04-06

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 3. Discussion topics:

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

**Week 6: Old English continued**

Feb 11-13

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 4. Discussion topics:

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

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

Feb 18-20

Monday: Complete discussion of Old English. Make sure you are up to date on all reading assignments. Review for exam.

Wednesday: Midterm exam.

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

Feb 25-Feb 27

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

- The Norman Invasion.
- Norman influence on language spoken in England.
- The status of French and English in England.
- Social change and linguistic consequences in England.

**Week 9: Spring break! No classes. Enjoy reading more about Middle English during the break!**

Mar 03-05

**Week 10: More about Middle English.**

Mar 10-12

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 7. 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, March 17 (not that you'd want to).**

**Week 11: Evolution and Revolution: Early Modern English**

Mar 17-19

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 8. Discussion topics:

- How Modern English became modern.
- Phonological, morphological, and syntactic changes to the language.
- The Great Vowel Shift (and the Great Great Vowel Shift Game!).

**Week 12: Early Modern English continued.**

Mar 24-26

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 9, and article: Bodine, "Androcentrism in Prescriptive Grammar."  
Discussion topics:

- The rise of prescriptivism and linguistic authority.
- Language variation and standardization.
- Literature in Early Modern English.

**Week 13: Present-Day English...at last! Papers due on Wednesday at class time.**

Mar 31-April 02

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 10. Discussion topics:

- Social and political impacts on language development.
- The sounds, structure, and vocabulary of Modern English.
- English in the United States and Britain.
- Papers due Wednesday, April 02, at class time.**

**Week 14: American English.**

April 07-09

Read Baugh and Cable, chapter 11. Discussion topics:

- Establishing an American English.
- Variation in American English.
- A new global standard?

**Week 15: Last week of class before final exams! The Globalization of English.**

April 14-16

Online readings (linked to updates page): Bolton, "Where WE stands: Approaches, issues, and debate in world Englishes," and Anchimbe, "The world Englishes in the American tongue." Discussion topics:

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

**Week 16: Final Exam: Tuesday, April 22, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.**