



Rare photo of Old English speakers

## English 3720: Development of Modern English

Spring 2010, TR 2:00-3:50 p.m. in 3045 Brown

**Instructor:** Dr. Lisa Minnick

**Office:** 923 Sprau

**Office hours:** Wednesdays 3-5 p.m. and by appointment

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**Course web page:** <http://www.retroflexive.com/3720main>

**Course description:** English 3720 traces the history of 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 using the International Phonetic Alphabet.
- 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:

- Dan McIntyre, *History of English: A Resource Book for Students* (Routledge, 2009).
- Supplemental readings on electronic reserve (link on course webpage).

### Assignments and values:

Final exam	25%
Midterm exam	20%
Term paper	20%
Quizzes	15%
Homework	10%
Attendance and participation	10%

**In order to participate in online discussions and complete electronic assignments, all students will need to join our class Facebook group: English 3720, Spring 2010.**

**Exams:** The midterm will cover beginnings 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 contain material from lecture, discussion, and readings.

**Term paper:** This is an opportunity for you to apply concepts from class and to present the results in journal-article format. I will provide assignment guidelines, and we will discuss these 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. I encourage you to meet with me to discuss your ideas and go over your drafts.

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

**Homework** assignments engage the skills and knowledge you will need for the course, as well as make it possible to explore topics beyond our classroom readings and discussions and to collaborate and exchange ideas in creative ways.

### Course Policies

**Attendance and participation:** I think the Development of Modern English is fun and interesting, but it is also 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 "free" absences. By "free," I mean no questions asked and 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. 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 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.

**Being 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, and it can 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 and participation 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 and in-class assignments and 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 of course not required to agree with everything you read or hear 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 the WMU Student Code at [http://osc.wmich.edu/docs/WMU\\_studentcode.pdf](http://osc.wmich.edu/docs/WMU_studentcode.pdf). Students who are not willing 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 impede full participation. Your active participation is part of your course grade, of course, but also, nothing interesting will happen in class without your input. That is, the class will be as interesting as you make 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 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.

#### **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 Ms. Beth Denhartigh at 387-2116 or [beth.denhartigh@wmich.edu](mailto:beth.denhartigh@wmich.edu) 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 Ms. Denhartigh's 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 integrity, which can be accessed online at <http://osc.wmich.edu/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 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.

## Schedule of Reading and Writing Assignments

Everyone is encouraged to refer frequently to our Facebook Group page and our class updates page at <http://www.retroflexive.com/3720updates> for news, announcements, and schedule changes. These things happen. Lectures and discussions will not be recapitulations of readings, so ***please come to class each Tuesday having read the week's assignments unless otherwise noted*** so that you can participate fully.

### **Week 1: Introduction to the History of English and how to study it.**

January 12-14

Tuesday, Jan 12: Introduction to course.

Thursday, Jan 14: Come to class having read Meyer, "The Study of Language" (online reserve; hereafter 'res').  
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 the phonetic alphabet.**

Jan 19-21

Come to class on Tuesday having read Algeo and Pyles, "The Sounds of Current English" (res). Discussion topics:

- The International Phonetic Alphabet.
- Places and manners of articulation.
- Fun with IPA: Learning phonetic transcription.
- Thursday, Jan. 21: **IPA homework assigned (due Tuesday, Feb 02).**

### **Week 3: Before English: the Indo-European hypothesis, language relatedness, and English as a Germanic language.**

Jan 26-28

Read Singh, "Language Families and the Pre-history of English" (res), and McIntyre, chapter C1.1 (pp. 80-4).  
Discussion topics:

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

### **Week 4: From Indo-European to Germanic; the First Sound Shift. IPA homework due Tuesday; quiz Thursday.**

Feb 02-04

Continue to work through Singh, "Language Families and the Pre-history of English," and McIntyre, ch. C1.1.

- From Indo-European to Germanic.
- The First Sound Shift.
- Paper assigned (due Week 12: April 06).
- IPA homework due Tuesday, Feb 02.**
- IPA quiz Thursday, Feb 04: transcription and articulatory descriptions.**

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

Feb 09-11

Read McIntyre, chapters A1-A2 (pp. 2-11) and D1-D2 (pp. 128-39). Discussion topics:

- England before English.
- Invasions and other influences on language.
- Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian influences.

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

Feb 16-18

Read McIntyre, chapters B1-B2 (36-47), C.1.2-C.1.3 (pp. 84-5), and C2 (pp. 86-91). Discussion topics:

- Phonological features and sound change in Old English.
- Synthetic vs. analytic languages and the grammar of English.
- Variation within Old English and the impact of language contact.

**Week 7: Midterm exam week. Review Tuesday, exam Thursday on all material up to and including Old English.**

Feb 23-25

Tuesday, Feb 23: Complete discussion of Old English. Review for exam.

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**Thursday, February 25: Midterm exam.**

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**Week 8: Spring break!**

Mar 02-04

**Week 9: Middle English, or “Wait, this *still* looks like a foreign language!”**

Mar 09-11

Read McIntyre, chapters A3 (pp. 11-6), C3 (pp. 91-5), and D3 (pp. 139-43). Discussion topics:

- The Norman Invasion.
- French and English in England.
- Social change and linguistic consequences.

**Week 10: Middle English phonology, grammar, and lexicon.**

Mar 16-18

Read McIntyre, chapter B3 (pp. 47-53). Discussion topics:

- Language contact and language change in Middle English.
- Sound changes, grammatical shifts, and new words.

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**Last date to withdraw from classes: Monday, March 22 (not that you’d want to).**

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**Week 11: Evolution and revolution: Early Modern English.**

Mar 23-25

Read McIntyre, chapters A4 (pp. 16-20), B5 (pp. 60-66), and D4 (pp. 144-54). 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: Prescriptivism and standardization: Early Modern English continued.**

Mar 30-April 01

Read McIntyre, chapter A5 (pp.20-5), C4 (pp.95-102), D5 (pp. 154-60) and Bodine, "Androcentrism in Prescriptive Grammar" (res). Discussion topics:

- The rise of prescriptivism and linguistic authority.
- Language variation and standardization.

**Week 13: Later Modern English and Present-Day English...at last!**

April 06-08

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**Papers due by midnight on Tuesday, April 06**

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Read McIntyre, chapters A6-A7 (pp. 25-31) and B6 (pp. 66-70),. Discussion topics:

- Social and political change and the development of English.
- English beyond the British Isles.
- English in the New World.

**Week 14: Postmodern English? American English and English around the world.**

April 13-15

Read McIntyre, chapters A8 (31-4), B7-B8 (pp. 70-78), and C8 (pp. 122-5). Discussion topics:

- English in the twenty-first century.
- A new global standard?

**Week 15: Last week of class before final exam. American English continued; plus, the globalization of English.**

April 20-22

Read McIntyre, chapters B8 (76-8), C7-C8 (pp. 113-25), and D8 (pp. 178-82). Discussion topics:

- Language contact and English around the world.
- The politics and economics of English.
- The future of English.
- Review for final exam.

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**Week 15: Final Exam: Wednesday, April 28 2:45 - 4:45 p.m.**

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