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ENG 2901-600: Structure of English

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Overview

Structure of English

Spring 2021 | 3 credits

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the grammar and socio-cultural aspects of the English language. This section of the course is designed to help you learn to describe and analyze the structure of sentences in English and, as such, focuses primarily on syntax—though phonology (pronunciation), morphology (word forms), and semantics (meaning) will also be discussed. Because most of the students enrolled in this course plan to become teachers or writers, we will discuss applications for teaching and implications for prescriptive grammar (the "rules"), but the course itself is more concerned with describing how English works than with teaching rules for writing. Throughout the semester, we will discuss the cultural and social factors that shape the varieties of the English language and our views of those who speak them. Ideally, this course will heighten your understanding of the complexity of the English language and help you develop strategies for communicating clearly and effectively in speech, writing, and teaching.

Learning Objectives

This semester, you will learn to:

- describe and analyze how sentences are constructed in English
- recognize and appreciate varieties of English
- describe how cultural beliefs shape our views of English speakers
- use grammatical and linguistic knowledge to make careful choices in your own speech and writing and/or to improve your ability to teach oral or written English
- employ concepts and technical terms related to grammar and linguistics
- diagram phrases and sentences

Required Course Materials

Course readings

For this course, we will use a textbook along with accompanying videos and articles that will be

provided to you through D2L:

- van Gelderen, *An Introduction to the Grammar of English*, revised edition (provided by TRS)
- Individual articles as assigned (available as PDFs on D2L)

Technology needs:

To complete this course successfully, you will need to have access to the following:

- **Regular access to a computer with reliable internet.**
- **D2L and Zoom** (available through D2L). The majority of our course will take place within D2L, and we will use a range of features, including email, discussion boards, content, and dropbox. Our live sessions will take place within Zoom, which you can access from inside our course.
- **Microsoft Word.** For the purposes of our course, the Office 365 version available to all students should be sufficient.
- **Adobe Reader or Adobe Acrobat.** You will need to open and read PDFs.
- **A scanner, digital camera, or Smartphone camera.** I will be teaching you to diagram sentences in this course, and at times, you will be required to submit your completed diagrams. These diagrams are easiest to draw by hand, and you can then scan or photograph your completed diagrams and send the file to me as a .PDF or .JPG.
- **Headphones or speakers** that can be plugged into your computer.
- **Access to a printer [recommended].** Many of the exercises we're going to complete in this class are easiest (and fastest) if you mark them by hand. Each week, I will try to indicate those exercises that I recommend printing and completing by hand, so you can print all of them at once.

We won't be using advanced features of any technologies, so you should be able to use help menus and internet resources to help you carry out any tasks outside of D2L. I will try to provide assistance in using any D2L technologies, but if you're unsure how to complete a task in D2L, let me know, and I'll provide more information. You can also call the ITS Help Desk at (217) 581-HELP. Be sure to ask for help well in advance of assignment deadlines.

Course Requirements

Reading questions: Most reading assignments will be accompanied by a set of reading questions for you to answer. Because repeated exposure to grammar and linguistics improves comprehension, you may be asked to read or view some readings multiple times, answering different questions each time. These questions are structured in D2L in the form of a "quiz," but you have the option of

taking the reading quiz as many times as you choose up until the assignment deadline. (Quizzes lock at the start of class time on the day they are due.) The system is set to record your highest graded attempt for each set of reading questions. The reading questions quizzes are not timed, and you may use your text.

Graded weekly homework and quizzes: Learning the underlying structure and grammar of English can be challenging, but the more exposure you have to a concept, the easier that concept becomes. In this class, you will see A LOT of very brief practice exercises in the modules and in our live (online) class sessions. These practice exercises will include answer keys for immediate feedback. Each week, you will also have one or more graded homework assignments or quizzes that will give you an opportunity to demonstrate your command of that week's material. These assignments will allow only one attempt and must be submitted by 11:59 pm on the date they are due. These homework assignments are not timed, and you may use your notes and textbook.

Discussions: Studying English involves more than just the analytical structure itself. We also want to think about how language operates in our society and across cultures. During many weeks of the semester, you'll have a brief assigned reading or prompt that you will discuss with others in the course. Your grade on these discussions will be based on the thoughtfulness of your contributions and the substance of your responses to others.

Exams. You will take three exams over the course of the semester. Each exam will be cumulative. The exams will have time limits. You may use your notes and textbook during exams.

Textual analysis paper: You will choose two texts and analyze their linguistic patterns and draw conclusions based on that analysis. You will present your analysis and conclusions in an academic paper.

Idiolect essay: An "idiolect" is the variety of language used by an individual. After learning about different varieties of English, you will write a reflective essay about your own idiolect and what influences have shaped your own speaking and writing of English.

Assessment

The grade breakdown for assignments is below. Note: I reserve the right to make additions and alterations to this assessment breakdown should the need arise. Students will be informed in class and in writing prior to any changes being made.

Assignment	% grade
Exam 1	10

Exam 2	10
Final exam	15
Analytical project	20
Idiolect essay	10
Weekly homework & quizzes	20
Discussions	15

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

90–100	A
80–89.9	B
70–79.9	C
60–69.9	D
59.9 and below	F

At the end of the semester, if a student's grade is within 0.9% of the next highest letter grade, I will use the following to determine whether the grade will be rounded up:

- Student attended most weekly synchronous class sessions and/or regular office hour appointments with Dr F
- Student met almost all quiz, discussion, exam, and assignment deadlines. All work was complete at the time of submission.
- Student took regular, timely advantage of additional opportunities for practice (e.g., optional self-assessments and exercises posted to D2L, one-on-one meetings with Dr F)
- Student participated well with peers during synchronous class breakout activities and in discussions

Course Etiquette

In an online course, most communication is done through written messages either in private posts or public discussions. It is important that students in online courses be especially sensitive to how messages and sentiment are communicated and received. Please keep the following in mind:

Remember you are communicating with real people.

Students and instructors in your course have feelings, lives, jobs, families and a myriad of other issues that you may know little about. Once you have finished writing something, and before you send it, re-read it looking at your words from someone else's perspective. How would they see it? Could it be misinterpreted? Could you rephrase to make it clearer or more on topic?

Write clearly and professionally.

In any course-related communication (emails, chats, discussions), use standard proper English with correct grammar. Using slang, errors in mechanics, and shortcuts maybe difficult for others to understand. Avoid ALL CAPS, bolding and underlining. It could be misinterpreted. Avoid offensive language. Also make sure to sign your name to any post.

Be kind and ethical.

Do not belittle other students or the instructor. You may disagree with what someone says, but focus on the issue, not the person. Behave online as you would in person. Be forgiving of the mistakes of others.

Help others.

If someone asks a question, answer it if you are sure of the correct answer or if you have insight that could be helpful.

Additional course policies**Deadlines.**

Due dates for homework and assignments are available in the course modules on D2L. Unless otherwise indicated, reading questions must be completed prior to class time and quizzes, homework, and assignments must be completed by 11:59 pm on the date indicated. Late projects, homework assignments, and discussion posts will be docked 5% or 2 points, whichever is greater, per day until they are submitted.

Both papers must be submitted and all three exams taken in order to pass this course.

Prompt, professional communication.

Online communication is common at universities and within many professional organizations, and this class will offer you plenty of opportunity to practice. Participation looks different in an online environment than a face-to-face environment, but active, positive interaction remains an important part of successful classes. To that end, I direct your attention to the following course policies:

- Log into D2L at regular intervals (at least four times per week) to see if there are emails, discussion board posts, or assignment feedback that you should respond to.
- Write all class correspondence (e.g., emails, discussion posts, text messages) professionally. I may provide you with (private) feedback on the style, tone, content, and organization of your emails, texts, discussion board posts, etc. To help you get started, here's an old, but still useful, blog post of [tips for emailing a professor](#).

- Communicate regularly with classmates and course instructors. If you receive a message but you cannot immediately provide what has been requested, send an acknowledgment that you have received the message and indicate when you will provide the requested information or material.

Academic honesty.

Scholarly integrity and ethics--students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. If you are in doubt of the appropriate way to identify your source, check with me before turning in the assignment. If you have any questions regarding appropriate handling of sources, collaboration, or past work, talk with me before turning in an assignment.

If circumstances arise during the semester that may impact your ability to maintain our course policies, address the situation as you would in a workplace—professionally, courteously, and in advance.

Electronic Writing Portfolio

Any individual written text-based assignment of 750 words or more may be submitted from this class to the Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP). In this course, either the idiolect essay or the analytical project are likely to meet the criteria for the EWP. The deadline for submitting a project from this class to EWP is Wednesday, April 28.

Information for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by McAfee 1210, or call (217) 581-6583 to make an appointment. After you meet with OSDS, set up an appointment with me, and we'll put together a plan to maximize your success in the course.

The Student Success Center / Writing Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call (217) 581-6696, or go to McAfee 1301.

Students who would like assistance with writing assignments from this or any other course may go to the Writing Center. The Writing Center works with students from all disciplines, majors, and academic backgrounds at any stage of the writing process. To make an appointment, go to www.eiu.edu/writing

Information for Students who May Be Struggling

If I see you struggling in the course (especially if you miss two or more deadlines in a row without communicating with me), I will try to contact you in person or by email to see if I can help. If I don't hear back from you, I will use the University's Early Alert system, which means your RA (if you live on campus) or someone from the Academic Success Center will try to contact you to offer help. This isn't meant to "get you in trouble," but to help you avoid trouble.



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