Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

Fall 8-15-2019

ENG 4901-600: History of English Language

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Eastern Illinois University

Fall 2019 / English 4901
History of the
English Language
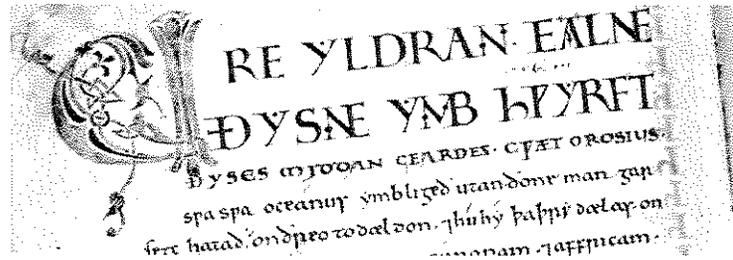
Prof. Angela Vietto
Cell phone: 217-549-3203 (calls or texts welcome 9 am – 9 pm Eastern Time, 7 days/week)
Virtual office hours: Wednesdays 4-5 pm, Sundays 7-8 pm, & by appointment (I'll be available in the online class meeting room, or by phone)
Physical office hours: 3341 Coleman, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:30-3:30, & by appointment

Course Description: English is a living language, one that has changed over time and which has developed many variations based on the global spread of the language. In this course we will explore the forces that act on languages to generate such changes, the specific history of English, and the political and social forces acting on it. We will pay special attention to the contemporary varieties of English in the United States and to the social and political debates surrounding our contemporary language.

(The official course description from the catalog, if you're interested, reads pithily: "Historical, geographic, and social dialects of English; phonological changes and other alterations in the structure and vocabulary of the English language.")

Text from TRS:
Baugh & Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 5th ed.
(Additional resources will be provided in D2L)

Learning Objectives

The course is intended to enable you to do the following:

1. Explain how and why a living language like English changes over time.

2. Describe major changes over time in English syntax, sound, and lexicon.

3. Analyze critically attitudes about language change and correctness.

4. Describe the history of Standard English and explain its relation to other varieties of English.

5. Identify and contextualize distinctive historical linguistic features in literary and nonliterary texts from various periods.

6. Describe the influence of other languages on English and provide evidence for the importance of that influence.

7. Apply your knowledge of the history of English to relevant current discussions, such as educational policy, pedagogical practice, social policy, or writing.

Students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Graduate Students and Undergraduates: This course is open to both upper-division students at the undergraduate level and to graduate students. Like all courses at the 4750-4999 level, the course has some additional expectations for graduate students. Specifically, graduate students will have additional responsibilities in many of our online discussions (these will be specified in the instructions for the discussions) and will be asked to make greater use of secondary research sources and, where appropriate, primary sources in exercises as well as in the final project (again, these additional requirements will be listed in the instructions for the individual assignments).

The Student Success Center: Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (http://www.eiu.edu/~success) 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 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

The Electronic Writing Portfolio: Any written project of 750 words or longer written for this class would be suitable for submission to the EWP. Submissions must be made by the last day of finals week at the end of the semester. *Earlier deadlines apply for graduating seniors.* The Electronic Writing Portfolio requirement does _not_ apply to graduate students.

English Teacher Education Majors: Students seeking Teacher Certification in English Language Arts should provide each of their English Department professors with a copy of the yellow form called "Application for English Department Approval to Student Teach" before the end of the semester. These forms are available in a rack outside the office of Dr. Melissa Ames (3821 Coleman Hall).

The English Department Statement on Plagiarism: Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Office of Student Standards. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

Keeping up with the class: If you have successfully completed online courses before, you've probably come up with a system that works for you. If this is your first online course, it's important to be aware that even outstanding students sometimes struggle with online courses because it's easy to procrastinate. As you'll notice as you look through our calendar, although this course doesn't have scheduled group meetings, there are deadlines for participating in discussions and for completing exercises each week. The deadlines are there both so that our discussions can really be discussions and to help you keep up with the class. If you fall behind, I'll be getting in touch with you—not because I take it personally when students miss deadlines (I don't)—but because I want everyone to succeed in the class if they possibly can.

Textbook vs. video:

Our textbook is an excellent source for authoritative information on the History of the English Language (HEL), but it's also a very old-fashioned text (it was originally published in the 1930s!)

So, for the topics we'll cover, I've either created slideshows and videos that cover the material in the text, often with some additions, or I've collected pre-existing resources that do this (often created by distinguished linguists from around the world). In most cases, if you prefer to watch the videos (or listen to audio or read online sources), you will be able to skip reading the chapters. (But you still might want to be able to refer to the textbook to review parts, or to go into greater depth, especially when we get to the final project.)

On the other hand, if you prefer to read the textbook, you will be able to skip most of the videos—but you will want to watch/listen to some of them that go beyond what's in the textbooks, especially the ones that help you hear language change in progress.

In each module, then, I've stated whether there are any sections in the chapters that you should read that are <u>not</u> covered by videos and whether there are any videos that you can't duplicate just by reading the chapter(s) in the textbook.

Assignments, Deadlines & Extensions:

If an emergency arises and you must miss a deadline, please let me know, preferably by text message, <u>before the deadline</u> and simply ask for an extension. If you do this—again, before the deadline—there will be no penalty to your grade. I don't even ask why you need extra time; we all know that life happens, and I trust that you will only ask for extensions when you really need them.

Grading and Assignments   ### Final Grading Scale

Discussion postings	35%
Quizzes	5%
Exercises	35%
Final project	15%
Final exam	10%

A	90-100%
B	80-89.99%
C	70-79.99%
D	60-69.99%
F	59.99% and below

Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1   Aug 19- 25

Module 1: Introductions, Personal Relationship to Language (General introduction to course and class members; introductory personal language freestyle essay; response to classmates' personal language essays; Earley, "The Quare Gene"; discussion of Earley; how our personal experience relates to basic linguistic terms and concepts)

Module 2: PIE, the Indo-European language family, and Old English (a glance ahead at the "big picture" of the history of English; PIE, why we believe it existed, what it is and isn't; the place of English on the family tree; sampling of Old English and some notes on its grammar, sounds, and vocabulary; who spoke Old English, and how did it end up in England?)

Week 2   Aug 26-Sept 4

Module 3: Norman Conquest, Middle English, and Exercise 1: history of a word

Week 3   Sept 5-11

Module 4: Early Modern Era to 19th Century. Exercise 2: origins of a grammar rule

Week 4   Sept 12-18

Module 5: English in the United States. Begin research for Exercise 3: local English study

Week 5   Sept 19-25

Module 6: The 21st Century. Complete Exercise 3

Week 6   Sept 26-Sept 1

Module 7: Contemporary language issues, Common Core and HEL, implications for teaching, implications for writers. Planning final project.

Week 7   Sept 30-Oct 6

Module 8: Final project (Research and writing; conference with instructor; writing group discussion)

Week 8   Oct 7-9

Final project due by Oct 8 at 11 pm

Final exam due by Oct 9 at 11 pm