

“I have never met a person who is not interested in language.” Steven Pinker

“Language is the archives of history.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Slang is a language that rolls up its sleeves, spits on its hands, and goes to work.” Carl Sandburg

Course Syllabus: English 424: History and Grammar of the English Language

Spring 2016

Instructor: Dr. Doris Davis
Office: 221
Office Hours: M 1:00-3:30; 5:00-6:00
 W 9:30-12:00
 TR 9:30-10:30; 2:30-4:00
 Other times by appointment
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Course Number: English 424
Course Title: History and Grammar of the English Language
Course Time: TR 10:30-11:45

Prerequisite: Freshman English
Texts: *The Study of Language, 4th ed*, George Yule

Course Objectives:

Students will

- Understand the sound system of English, including the use of a phonetic alphabet for the transcription of English speech;
- Explore the historical background of the English language, from its Indo-European origins to the modern period;
- Understand the importance of the Oxford English Dictionary;
- Understand and apply the most widely accepted modern approaches to grammar and usage;
- Understand and apply basic principles of traditional and transformational grammar;
- Understand and discuss the significance of social and regional dialects;
- Explore the complexities of human cognitive abilities as related to the acquisition and use of language.

Student Learner Outcomes:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the sound system of English by correctly using a phonetic alphabet to transcribe English speech;
- Articulate the historical background of English by writing about the history in an OED project and by successfully completing assignments and examinations;
- Display knowledge of the grammar of the English language, including its morphology and syntax, by participating in class exercises, by drawing both traditional and tree-diagrams, and by successfully completing examinations;
- Build an appreciation for and develop an understanding of the significance of social and regional dialects by completing class assignments;
- Obtain and display knowledge of the complexities of human cognitive abilities as related to the acquisition and use of language by completing examinations and exercises.

Requirements:

1. There will be various linguistic exercises done both in and out of class that you will be expected to complete.
2. There will be a number of films on the development of English that you will view and be expected to understand.
3. You are responsible for reading all of the chapters listed on this syllabus. Additional chapters from other texts will be assigned.
4. There will be three examinations.
5. The course requires completion of three tests. A test may be made up only if you have received permission for rescheduling prior to the test.
6. A major assignment is the completion of an OED paper. You will be given a handout detailing the specifics about this requirement. **You are required to submit this assignment to turnitin.com. The password for this class is eng424; the course ID is 11490537.**
7. Class attendance and participation. Class attendance is very important in this course. Phonology, morphology, and syntax are not really difficult concepts, but they can be confusing if you don't participate in the classroom activities, including practice in grammar and phonology. Much of the class work will depend on listening to spoken words. Unless you do your practice exercises and come to class when we go over them, you will not do well on the tests. Additionally, you will receive a participation grade based on the work you submit each class period. If you are NOT in class, then you will not receive the points for that day.

Final Grade

The final grade is an average of the requirements as follows:

OED paper	=	30% of grade
Three tests	=	60% of grade
Daily	=	10% of grade

Test dates: February 19, March 24, and May 10

OED Study due: April 28

90-100 = A; 80-89= B; 70-79= C; 60-69= D

Late work policy: I will accept the OED paper late, but the highest grade possible is a "B." If you are not present when we discuss homework or in-class assignments, you should complete the work outside of class, but I do not accept late homework or in-class work later.

Academic Honesty Statement

Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and copying or undocumented use of materials from any source constitute academic dishonesty, and grounds for a grade of "F" in the course and disciplinary action. The student is responsible for reading and understanding the University Policy on Academic Integrity.

Do not copy material from the internet or any other source without documentation. This act constitutes plagiarism.

Class Schedule

Jan. 19	Introduction to class, Read Chapter 1, "The Origins of Language," pp. 1-9.
Jan. 21	Read Chapter 2, "Animals and Human Language," pp. 10-23.
Jan. 26	Read Chapter 3, "The Sounds of Language," pp. 25-40.
Jan. 28	Practice phonemic transcription
Feb. 2	Practice phonemic transcription
Feb. 4	Practice phonemic transcription
Feb. 9	Practice phonemic transcription
Feb. 11	Read Chapter 4, "The Sound Patterns of Language," pp. 41-51.
Feb. 16	Review for Test I, Chapters 1-4
Feb. 18	Test I, Chapters 1-4
Feb. 23	Read Chapter 5, "Word Formation," pp. 52-65.
Feb. 25	Read Chapter 6, "Morphology," pp. 66-79.
March 1	Read Chapter 7, "Grammar," pp.80-95 & Chapter 8, "Syntax," pp. 96-111.
March 3	Read handouts on transformational grammar, practice tree diagramming, review standard grammatical usage.
March 8	Practice tree diagramming and review standard grammatical usage.

March 10	Practice tree diagramming and review standard grammatical usage.
March 15-17	SPRING BREAK
March 22	Review tree diagramming and standard grammatical usage.
March 24	Test II, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and material from handouts
March 29	Provide Lexical Field and 10 words. Read Chapter 16, "Writing," pp. 211-223 and Chapter 17, "Language History and Change," pp. 224-237.
March 31	View "Story of Language," Part 2, "The Mother Tongue"
April 5	View "The Story of Language, Part 3, "A Muse of Fire"
April 7	Exercises on the history of English, handout
April 12	Exercises on the history of English, handout
April 14	Exercises on the history of English, handout
April 19	Comparative Linguistics, handout
April 21	Read Chapter 9, "Semantics," pp. 112-126. & Chapter 10, "Pragmatics," pp. 127-140.
April 26	Read Chapter 12, "Language and the Brain," pp. 156-169.
April 28	OED Study due
May 3	Read Chapter 13, "First Language Acquisition," pp. 170-185 & Chapter 14, "Second Language Acquisition/learning," pp. 186-197.
May 5	Read Chapter 18, "Language and Regional Variation," pp. 239-252. Read Chapter 19, "Language and Social Variation," pp. 253-264.
May 10, 10:30-12:30	Final exam schedule: Test III

Instructions for the OED Paper:

This assignment offers you the opportunity to understand the significance and uses of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). It requires that you spend several hours researching a number of words in a lexical field and then write a description of your research. You may also research the OED online. (Currently, the physical copy of the OED is in the Texarkana College Library. You may use that copy for your research.) If

you are researching online, go to the TAMU-T Library's main page, select Electronic Resources, followed by List of Electronic Resources; then select the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

I. Choose a lexical field (such as farming, cooking, or sewing). Then from that field select at least ten (10) words to research in the OED. For example, if you choose "farming" as a lexical field, you might select "plow" as one of your ten words. The other nine words would also be related in some way to "farming." Because each of you will be researching a different lexical field, you need to inform me of your choice of fields and provide a list of at least 10 words by **March 29**. Your list must be approved. Avoid choosing a field – such as music-- in which most of the words originate from the same language (Italian) and have changed little from their origin. You are hoping to record lexical change and a variety of linguistic origins.

II. Record the following for each of the ten words in your lexical field:

- A. Some of the etymology (source languages) and some of the various spellings of the word, if there are variants
- B. Some of the changes of the word's meaning, if applicable
- C. One or more example quotations
- D. The time period that the word assumed its current meaning
- E. Anything else about the word you find interesting or surprising

III. Write a paper (9 to 10 typed, double-spaced pages) in which you provide the following:

- A. Introduction: This section (one or more paragraphs) provides an overview of your research as it applies to your lexical field. You might provide observations about what you expected to find out about your words and what you actually found.
- B. One or more paragraphs for each of your ten words.
- C. Conclusion: This paragraph might provide observations about the OED.

IV. Attach the paper to your notes on the OED entries for each word. If you copy the OED pages and make notes on the copies, turn in the copies with your paper. You must include your notes to get full credit for the project.

Email statement

After being accepted into a program at A&M-Texarkana, students will receive an official email account. Instructors and students must use the university email address for any correspondence. Students should check their school email account frequently. They are responsible for messages sent to this account.

Disability Accommodations Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the A&M Texarkana Disability Services Office by contacting Mr. Carl Greig, in room UC255A, or by calling 903-223-3062.

