

English 230: English Historical Linguistics

Spring 2008

Ms. Dobbs

Office: Mears 213, ext. 3018

Office Hours: TTh 4:15-4:45, W 3:30-5, or by appointment

409 Her Gotan abræcon Rome burg, and næfre sibþþan Romane ne ricsodon on Bretone.

449 Pa comon þa menn of þrim mægþum Germanie: of Eald-Seaxum, of Englum, of lotum.

1066 Ða com Wyllelm, Eorl of Normandige, into Pefnesea on Sancte Michaelles mæsse æfen, and sona þæs hi fere wæron, worhton castel æt Hæstingaport. Pis wearð þa Harold Cynge gecydd, and he gaderade þa mycelne here, and com him togenes æt þære haran apuldran.

An Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, ed. M.J. Swanton

Ye knowe ek that in forme of speche is chaunge
Withinne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
That hadden pris, now wonder nyce and straunge
Us thinketh hem, and yet thei spake hem so . . .

Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, II, 22-25

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Description: We'll consider general principles of historical linguistics and the particular history of the English language by studying phonological, grammatical, and semantic (and sometimes orthographic) changes from Proto-Indo-European to Proto-Germanic to Old English to Middle English to Modern English. At the end of the semester, we'll take a quick look at pidgins, creoles, and Black English, a dialect of current Modern English. English is a good language to use for the study of historical linguistics because it has gone through so many changes and because written records exist for these changes. Each period of linguistic history will be set in the context of "external" historical events. Reading are extensively supplemented by lectures.

Requirements include: careful preparation (plan on about four to five hours per class); regular and punctual attendance (class starts promptly at 8; come early enough so that you're settled by then); frequent written exercises; a written research study on the linguistic histories (orthographic, phonological, morphological, function, semantic) of six related words (clear an exploratory list with me by 8B **at the latest**; final list is due in class 9A; your study is due Wednesday, April 30th); a ten-minute oral presentation based on this study (13B, 14A, or 14B); four thirty-minute mini-exams, and a final, cumulative examination. On pages 6-11, I've included extensive examples from past research studies. You could take a look at these pages now to get an idea of the sort of material we'll deal with.

Your course grade will be determined through the combination of: written and in-class exercises, 20%; four mini-exams (the lowest of the four grades will be dropped when I figure your average), 30%; linguistic study, 20%; oral presentation, 5%; final exam, 15%; attendance and punctuality, 10%. This last category has the weight it does because most days, we need you at the board at 8 AM doing an exercise. If you arrive at 8, you can delay the class.

Texts: Algeo, John and Pyles, Thomas, *The Origins and Development of the English Language*, 5th ed. Algeo, John and Butcher, Carmen Acevedo, *Problems in the Origins and Development of the English Language*, 5th ed.

Videos: As part of your class preparation, you **must** view the required tapes on reserve in the Burling Listening Room. The videos offer you two important advantages in learning: they give you visual material on which to hang information and you hear the various dialects of English. The schedule for viewing is:

- by 3A, "An English Speaking World" (60 minutes; from *The Story of English*, call number St716)
- by 5B, "The Mother Tongue" (first 30 minutes; *The Story of English*)
- by 6A, "Medieval Manuscripts" (30 minutes; call number M4621). Recommended: "A World Inscribed: The Illuminated Manuscript" (24 minutes; call number W8916). A more general look at manuscript production than the required video.

- by 9A, Recommended: "Art and Life in the Middle Ages: The Luttrell Psalter" (36 minutes; call number Ar7125)
- by 9B, "The Mother Tongue" (last 30 minutes; *The Story of English*)
- by 11B, "A Muse of Fire" (60 minutes; *The Story of English*)
- by 13A, "Black on White" (60 minutes; *The Story of English*). Recommended: "Daughters of the Dust"

Readings: All the readings are in *Origins*; the exercises are in *Problems*. Most of the charts, etc. I use in class for my lectures can be found on the Web at <http://web.grinnell.edu/individuals/dobbs/JGrimm> and are indicated on the syllabus by italics. Before class, print out files indicated for a particular class, so that you have copies in class at the time I'm referring to them. **Don't wait to the last minute!**

Preparation: As a method of preparation in this class, I strongly suggest you develop a routine something like this one: 1) read the entire chapter on the assigned day to get an overview of the material, but not, at that point, to gain mastery of it; 2) reread sections of a chapter relevant to a given day's work before the class in which I lecture about it; finally, 3) reread those sections again after my lecture and, this time, aim for mastery. In a word, your study periods should be made up of going back over material in order to master it and of going forward in anticipation of new material coming up in lectures.

Assignments

Week

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| 1 | <p>A. Exercise: Dealing with the Evidence
Introduction to the Course
What is Language?</p> <p>B. What is Language? (continued)
Read Chapter 1.
General Background on Historical Linguistics and Some Terminology (Related to Classification and Methodology)</p> |
| 2 | <p>A. General Background (continued)
"Laws" of Language Change
Theoretical Explanations of Why Language Changes
<i>1. Language Change</i></p> <p>B. Mini-Exam #1
Current Modern English: Phonology</p> |
| 3 | <p>A. Read Chapter 2.
The sounds and signs that you must learn for consonants are those with key words on the chart on page 25. Similarly, for vowels learn are those with key words on the chart on page 27. You might find some of the material on page 28 useful for transcribing your own speech in the exercises for the next couple of weeks, but you need to master only those I've indicated. We'll use a very broad transcription and lump these dialectal variations together under their closest relatives.</p> <p>Exercise 2.14: Transcription For this and all subsequent transcription exercises, be prepared to describe the individual sounds.
More Features of Current Modern English
View "An English Speaking World" (60 minutes)</p> <p>B. Exercise 2.15: Transcription
Writing Systems (especially cuneiform)
Read Chapter 3. You don't need to master the information about specific Greek adaptations of Semitic graphemes (41) or specific Roman adaptations of western Greek forms (41-42), although it's fun to know about these adaptations and you should have a general idea of how the adaptations worked. Skim the section on English writing; we'll come back to it piecemeal as we move through the semester.</p> |

- 4 A. Exercise 2.17: Transcription
Proto-Indo-European: History and Language (Phonology and Morphology)
 Read Chapter 4 (55-78). You do not need to master detail about non-Indo-European languages (59-61), but you should have a general sense of what those languages are. Similarly, attend carefully to the discussions about Indo-Iranian Languages through Hellenic (64-67), but you need not commit that information to memory.
 2. *Proto-Indo-European Phonology*
- B. **Mini-Exam #2**
Proto-Germanic & Germanic (with a glance at Celts and Romans): History
- 5 A. Read Chapter 4 (76-85). You don't need to master the information about specific differences among the three branches of Germanic (82 ff), but you do need to know what the branches are.
 Exercise 3.11: Runes: Eighth-Century Ruthwell Cross
 Proto-Germanic: Phonology
 Morphology
 Lexicon and Semantics
 Writing System (Runes)
 3. *Grimm's Law*
 4. *Verner's Law*
 5. *Proto-Germanic Phonology*
 6. *The Futhorc*
- B. Exercises 4.14, #3: Grimm's Law. With each word in the exercise, be prepared to **describe all steps** involved in the First Sound Shift.
Old English (449-1066): History
 View "The Mother Tongue" (**first** 30 minutes)
- 6 A. Exercise 3.12: Old English Manuscript: Eleventh-Century Insular Hand. Transliterate only the first four lines (78) of the exercise.
 View "Medieval Manuscripts" (30 minutes) (recommended: "A World Inscribed," 24 minutes)
 Medieval Manuscript Hands
 Read Chapter 5.
 Old English: Orthography
 Dialects
 Phonology (Vowels)
 7. *Manuscript Hands*
 8. *Old English Phonology (Vowels)*
- B. Exercise 5.4, #2: Old English Transcription (Vowels). For this exercise, be prepared to 1) **produce** the sounds that you've transcribed, 2) **describe** the sounds, 3) **describe** the similarities/differences between each pair of OE and CME vowels, and 4) **generalize** for the whole group about where differences/ similarities occur between OE and CME.
 Old English: Phonology (Consonants)
 9. *Old English Phonology (Consonants)*
- 7 A. **Begin investigating words—possibly more than six—for your linguistic study.**
 Exercise 5.6, #5: Old English Transcription (Consonants) For this and **all subsequent** transcription exercises, be prepared to both **perform** and **describe** the sounds in your transcriptions.
 Exercise 5.8, col. #1: Old English Transcription
- B. Exercise 5.8, col. #2: Old English Transcription
 Old English: Morphology
 10. *Old English Noun Declensions*

11. *Old English Morphology: Nouns*
12. *Survivors of Old English Nouns*
13. *Old English Demonstrative Pronouns*
14. *Old English Adjectives*
15. *Old English Personal Pronouns*
16. *Old English Interrogative Pronouns*
17. *Old English Verbs*

- 8 A. **Mini-Exam #3** (Exercise 5.15 could help you review.)
 Old English: Syntax
 Be prepared to read Exercise 5.15: #1, 2, 6, 9, 11, 12 and to identify in each sentence the functions of nouns.
 Questions about instructions for linguistic research study. (See pages 6 ff)
 18. *Old English Syntax*
- B. Read Chapters 10-12. (I know you'll barely be able to skim these chapters at this time of the semester, but do what you can.)
 Old English: Lexicon, Semantics, and Onomastics (Place Names)
 19. *Semantic Change and Creation of New Words*
 20. *Old English Semantics*
 21. *Place Names*
Deadline for clearing with me an exploratory list for your linguistic study
- 9 A. Exercise 3.13: Middle English Manuscript: Ellesmere Manuscript, Gothic Hand
 Transliterate lines from second "B" to "A"--eight lines.)
Middle English (1066-1500): History
 Read Chapter 6.
 View "Art and Life in the Middle Ages: The Luttrell Psalter" (36 minutes; recommended)
Final list of six words for your linguistic study due in class
- B. Middle English: Dialects
 Lexicon, Semantics, and Surnames
 Orthography
 Phonology (Consonants)
 View "The Mother Tongue" (**last** 30 minutes)
 22. *Middle English: Borrowing*
 23. *Middle English: Compounds and Combinations*
 24. *Middle English: Surnames*
 25. *Middle English Phonology (Consonants)*
- 10 A. Exercise 6.4: Middle English Consonants
 Middle English: Phonology (Vowels and Diphthongs)
 26. *Middle English Phonology (Vowels)*
 27. *Middle English Phonology (Diphthongs)*
Try to have completed Parts A & B of two of the words for your study.
- B. Exercise 6.8: Middle English Transcription. Do the first half, counting down (to doten).
 A useful comparative exercise is the third part of 6.6. We won't go over it in class, but it would be worth your while to work through it.
 Middle English: Morphology
 28. *Middle English Morphology*
- 11 A. Exercise 6.8: Middle English Transcription (Complete the exercise.)
 Middle English: More Morphology
 Syntax
 29. *Middle English Morphology: Pronouns*
 30. *Middle English Syntax*
Early Modern English (1500-1800): History

Read Chapter 7.

31. *Modern English History*

Aim to have completed the investigation of four of the words for your study.

- B. Early Modern English: Orthography
View "A Muse of Fire" (60 minutes)
- 12 A. **Mini-Exam #4**
Early Modern English: Phonology (Consonants, Vowels, Diphthongs)
Great Vowel Shift
32. *Early Modern English (and after) Phonology*
Complete the investigation of your entire group of six words.
- B. Early Modern English and **later**: Morphology
Lexicon and Semantics
Read Chapter 8
33. *Early Modern English And After: Morphology*
34. *Early Modern English Lexicon and Semantics*
- 13 A. **Black English:** Pidgins, Creoles, Decreolization
Phonology
Morphology
Syntax
Lexicon and Semantics
View "Black on White" (60 minutes)
View "Daughters of the Dust" (recommended)
35. *Black English: Pidgins, Creoles, Decreolization*
36. *Black English Phonology*
37. *Black English Morphology and Syntax*
38. *Black English Lexicon and Semantics*
Complete Part C and revise your linguistic study.

April 30 Your linguistic study is due in my office at noon.

B. Presentation of Linguistic Studies

For your **presentation**, select the **three** most interesting of your words. Don't simply read sections of your study to the class; I suggest making note cards for your presentation. Present the phonological etc. history of each of your three words and the conclusions you reached in Part C about patterns in your group as a whole. You need to remember the 10-minute time limit; time yourself at least once before you present. Think about engaging the audience's interest, especially at the beginning, and about using selection (you can't give every detail!) and structure to help your listeners follow what you're saying. I can make transparencies (maximum two) for you, but give me a day's lead time; you can also do a power point presentation, if you know how to do that, but don't spend lots of time arranging images. Look at your audience, speak clearly and at a reasonable pace, and avoid distracting movement. After each presentation, we'll have 5-10 minutes of questions and discussion

- 14 A. Presentation of Linguistic Studies.
B. Presentation of Linguistic Studies

Final exam: May 15, 9 AM

The final exam will be cumulative. It will be a 1000-point exam with a division of points along lines such as these: CME, OE, and ME transcription (45 points), identifications of examples of linguistic change (5 points), definitions (10 points), questions about the historical context of language changes we've studied (15 points), questions about everything else (morphology, orthography, syntax, semantic change, and lexicon (25 points).