

English 239, Spring 2004  
 Dr. Christina M. Heckman  
 MWF 9:00-9:50, Lewis 102  
 MWF 10:00-10:50, Lewis 102

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 Office hours: T-Th 11:00 AM-12:00 PM, 1 PM-2 PM  
 or by appointment

## **ENGL 239: HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

### **COURSE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:**

The purpose of this course is to familiarize you with the development of English, from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present day, as a vibrant, living, dynamic, continually changing mode of human communication through which its speakers represent and transform their lives and their world. In the course, we will discuss both the internal aspects of English, such as changes in its sound system, syntax, grammar, and lexicon, and its external history, including the effects of invasions, migrations, settlement patterns, trading, colonialism, and other cultural changes on English.

During the first part of the course, we will focus on Old English and Middle English, from the Germanic invasions of Britain in the fifth century to the earliest stages of the Protestant Reformation in the late fifteenth century. Because these early phases of English are very different from the language we speak today, early in the course we will necessarily emphasize grammar and vocabulary as we develop a familiarity with both Old English and Middle English. We will continue with Early Modern and Present-Day English, focusing on the spread of English around the world, linguistic changes due to standardization, British colonization, contact between English and other languages, and the dialectical diversity of English.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** To accomplish the goals described above, you will be required to:

1. Come to all classes on time, thoroughly prepared with questions and comments about the assigned material;
2. Complete assigned workbook exercises, which we will discuss as a class and in small groups;
3. Complete quizzes, which will generally take place at the end of each chapter;
4. Write two papers, one of 3-4 pages and one of 4-5 pages; and
5. Complete a midterm exam and a final exam.

New terms will come quickly in this course; you should keep a notebook with terms and their definitions. These terms will be covered in the quizzes, midterm exam, and final exam. The exercises in your workbook and on ERES are extremely important; you cannot expect to master the concepts outlined in the textbook without investing some time in their practical application. The format for classes will be informal lecture and discussion. You must arrive to class on time; tardiness is very distracting (particularly during quizzes) and disrespectful to everyone present. The course is full, the classroom will be crowded, and you will not be able to sneak in quietly, so please be prompt. Your active engagement in our class meetings is also crucial for the success of the course. It would be ideal for everyone to make at least one comment per class; with thirty students and approximately fifteen hundred years of language history to cover, that may not be possible, but we should do everything we can to approximate that goal. Always come to class ready to ask questions, make comments, and respond to your classmates' contributions to the discussion. Sharing your ideas and insights benefits everyone in the room, making our time together more enjoyable and rewarding. Remember also that your participation in the course is not limited to the classroom. I'll be keeping six scheduled office hours per week; never hesitate to make use of them.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS (AVAILABLE AT THE CAMPUS BOOKSTORE):**

*A Biography of the English Language*, by Celia M. Millward

Workbook to accompany *The Biography of the English Language*, by Celia M. Millward  
*How to Talk American: A Guide to Our Native Tongues*, by Jim Crotty

You will also need occasionally to consult reference works such as the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the *Middle English Dictionary* (both available in the reference section of the library or online through OBIS), and *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (available online at [beowulf.engl.uky.edu/~kiernan/BT/bosworth.htm](http://beowulf.engl.uky.edu/~kiernan/BT/bosworth.htm))

You will find attached a list of readings and exercises on reserve or ERES (password “engl239”). You are responsible only for those items noted in the Daily Schedule.

**LATE WORK:** Late papers will result in a deduction in the grade for the assignment. With so many students in the course, it is very important that you organize your schedules carefully and submit your work on time. The assignments for both papers are provided on page 2; I expect you to think about these papers and approach me with any questions you may have well in advance of the due dates.

**GRADING:** Grades will be distributed as follows:

Attendance and preparation for class:	20%
Quizzes:	30%
Paper #1 (3-4 pages):	10%
Paper #2 (4-5 pages):	15%
Midterm exam:	10%
Final exam:	15%

**PAPER TOPICS:** The assignments and due dates for the papers are listed below; see me with your thoughts and questions. You should know in advance that the use of Courier font and the passive voice in student writing are my greatest pet peeves. You will need to use the passive in the first paper in particular, but you should avoid it if you can. Your writing will be stronger, clearer, and more concise if you use action verbs whenever possible. I expect you to proofread and polish your drafts very carefully, correcting all typos, spelling mistakes, and errors in grammar or punctuation before you submit your papers.

**PAPER #1 (3-4 pages):** Etymology project: Find a word in the *Oxford English Dictionary* that peaks your interest and will give you significant material to discuss in 3-4 pages. The choice of word is important, so make sure take your time to think about it before you decide. Demonstrate the manner in which this word exemplifies language change in English, discussing the various influences on the word through time. These influences may include migration, conquest, political or cultural change, intellectual exchange, trading, fashion, religious practice, popular trends, or other factors. The *OED* tends to depend very heavily on print sources for its examples; you should feel free to point out and supplement any gaps you perceive in the *OED*'s discussion of the word you choose. DUE MONDAY, MARCH 15.

**PAPER #2 (4-5 pages):** Select one of the general options in the list below and research an aspect of English language usage. You must consult at least three secondary sources in addition to the course texts; only one of these secondary sources may be an online source. Based on your research, argue a thesis that addresses the use of English on both the micro- and macro-levels: that is, discuss both details (changes in morphology, phonology, syntax, vocabulary) as well as how these details contribute to larger cultural changes and issues.

Options: English as a global language: usage in Britain, the Americas, Australia, Africa, Asia  
 Regional dialect variation in the U.S.

Dialects in literature (Chaucer, Shakespeare, Twain, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, etc.)

Specialized uses of English: news reporting, scientific language, legal language, religious language, political speeches, sports commentary, advertising  
 Social variations in English: differences of class, gender, age  
 Popular culture (film, television, music, comic books, etc.): contributions to language change  
 Propose your own topic in writing on an aspect of English language usage  
 DUE FRIDAY, MAY 14.

**PLAGIARISM:** All work submitted for this course is governed by the Oberlin College Honor Code.

**OTHER INFORMATION:** Please turn off all pagers and cell-phones before you enter class. Papers must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins, with parenthetical citation for course texts. If you are documenting sources other than course texts, please use parenthetical citations and list of works cited. For more information on citation guidelines, consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

**DAILY SCHEDULE:**

- M Feb 9: Introduction to course; orientation to course texts  
 W Feb 11: *A Biography of the English Language* (hereafter *BEL*) ch. 1, "Introduction"  
 F Feb 13: Language Play: "Through the Looking Glass" (ERES); "Oh, the Thinks You Can Think!" (handout); Bryson, "Word Play" (handout); "Official Language of California" (handout); workbook (hereafter WB) 1.5, 1.7
- M Feb 16: Dictionaries: Bryson, "Order Out of Chaos" (ERES); McCrum, "Dr. Johnson's Dictionary" (ERES); Burnley, Sourcebook (Johnson) (ERES); the *Oxford English Dictionary* (handout); WB 1.13  
 W Feb 18: Quiz on ch. 1 and dictionaries; *BEL* ch. 2, "Phonology"  
 F Feb 20: Continue "Phonology;" Cable, "The Sounds of English" (ERES); WB 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.11, 2.12
- M Feb 23: Quiz on ch. 2; *BEL* ch. 3, "Writing"  
 W Feb 25: Continue "Writing;" WB 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.9; graphic systems (handout)  
 F Feb 27: *BEL* ch. 4, "Language Families and Indo-European," pp. 44-62; exercise, "The Indo-European Family" (handout); Algeo, "Indo-European Languages" and "Language Types" (ERES)
- M Mar 1: Quiz on ch. 3; work on Grimm's Law (handout: read the explanation on the first few pages, and then complete the exercise on pp. 15-16 first before you go back to pp. 13-14) (CMH out of town)  
 W Mar 3: *BEL* ch. 4, pp. 62-end; Grimm's Law and Verner's Law (handout); WB 4.5, 4.6, 4.7  
 F Mar 5: Finish ch. 4; review cases (p. 69), cognates (pp. 71-72); WB 4.8-4.9
- M Mar 8: Quiz on ch. 4; *BEL* ch. 5, "Old English," pp. 76-82 (outer history)  
 W Mar 10: *BEL* ch. 5, pp. 82-106 (OE Phonology and Morphology); WB 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7  
 F Mar 12: OE Cases; WB 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.16, 5.17
- M Mar 15: PAPER #1 DUE; *BEL* ch. 5, pp. 107-34; WB 5.21, 5.22, 5.23; video clip, "The Mother Tongue"

- W Mar 17: OE Dialects and Literature: *BEL* ch. 5, pp. 134-39; Burnley, “Cædmon’s Hymn” and Anon, “Beowulf’s Fight with Grendel’s Mother” (ERES)
- F Mar 19: Review for midterm exam; *BEL* ch. 6, “Middle English,” pp. 142-46 (outer history); Baugh & Cable, “General Adoption of English” (ERES)
- M Mar 22: Midterm Exam (chs. 1-5)
- W Mar 24: *BEL* ch. 6, pp. 146-62 (ME Phonology and Graphics); Pronunciation of Chaucer’s English (handout)
- F Mar 26: ME Morphology: *BEL* ch. 6, pp. 162-81; WB 6.8, 6.9
- M Mar 29:
- W Mar 31: SPRING BREAK
- F Apr 2:
- M Apr 5: Review Middle English; *BEL* ch. 6, pp. 181-211 (ME Syntax, Lexicon, Semantics)
- W Apr 7: *BEL* ch. 6, pp. 211-22; WB 6.16; Middle English Dialects (handout)
- F Apr 9: ME Literature: Chaucer and Late Medieval Drama (handout)
- M Apr 12: Quiz on ch. 6; *BEL* ch. 7, “Early Modern English,” pp. 224-35 (outer history); Swift, “A Proposal for the English Tongue” (ERES)
- W Apr 14: EME Phonology and Graphics: *BEL* ch. 7, p. 250-65; WB 7.3, 7.4
- F Apr 16: EME Morphology, Lexicon, Semantics: *BEL* ch. 7, pp. 265-99; WB 7.7, 7.9, 7.10, 7.11
- M Apr 19: EME Dialectical Variation: *BEL* ch. 7, pp. 248-49; Bryson, “Becoming Americans” (ERES); Burnley, “Wilson/Nashe” and “Donne/Harley” (ERES)
- W Apr 21: EME Literature: Shakespeare, *Love’s Labour Lost* (ERES); pronouncing Shakespeare (handout)
- F Apr 23: EME in the Americas: McCrum, “A Muse of Fire” (ERES); Bryson, “Revolutionary Accents” (ERES); language loyalties in early America (handout)
- M Apr 26: Present-Day English in the U.S.: *BEL* ch. 9, pp. 344-60; Bryson, “Varieties in English” and “Manifest Destiny” (ERES); McCrum, “Scots-Irish” (ERES); video clip, “The Guid Scots Tongue”
- W Apr 28: Black English: *BEL* ch. 9, pp. 360-63; Dillard, “Development of Black English” (ERES); Rickford, “Spoken Soul Intro” (ERES); Baldwin, “If Black English Isn’t English” (ERES); Hurston, “Their Eyes Were Watching God” (ERES)
- F Apr 30: Black English: McCrum, “Black English” (ERES); video clip, “Black on White;” Black English and music (handout)
- M May 3: Tour of special collections at the library? (to be confirmed)
- W May 5: Video, *American Tongues*; Crotty, *How to Talk American*
- F May 7: Finish *American Tongues*; Crotty, *How to Talk American*
- M May 10: Global Englishes: *BEL* pp. 393-406; English in Asian and African literatures (handout)
- W May 12: Video, “Next Year’s Words;” finish global Englishes
- F May 14: PAPER #2 DUE; review for final exam
- W May 19, 7:00 PM: Final Exam for section 02 (10:00-10:05 class)
- Th May 20, 9:00 AM: Final Exam for section 01 (9:00-9:05 class)