HU3910 Language Issues in the World: History, Future, Identity   Summer, 2005

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Course Description
Who are you, linguistically? How does your language reflect and shape who you are? How do you make linguistic choices that will affect your future? What is the history of the influences that shaped the language(s) that you speak? What will be the future of English and other world languages? This course considers these and related questions in seeking to understand how your linguistic history, future, and identity are intertwined.

The world harbors an amazing diversity of languages, estimated at nearly 6,000 in number. Yet roughly a third of the world’s population speaks or has routine contact with one language: English. It has become a lingua franca, the de facto “global language” - to the benefit of its native speakers and the chagrin (and perhaps detriment) of other languages’ speakers.

This course investigates the history of the English language, that is, how English arrived at its present state: what its roots are, how (within a half century) it came to hold such a dominant position, and what this means for the future of thousands of other languages that are facing rapid decline. We will consider what factors support or threaten a language and its speakers, and what is lost when the world’s linguistic “biodiversity” shrinks.

We will discuss linguistic opportunities and choices—or lack of choices, in some cases—in how we come to speak like or differently from others around us, as we shape our linguistic identity and our future out of the resources of our linguistic histories.

Required Texts

Course Objectives
• To study what factors shape linguistic identity, from history to technology, front desires to be like or different from others.
• To understand how English developed, and why it came to hold its present pre- eminent position in the world.
• To learn about other language situations in the US and world, to consider the impact of current linguistic trends regarding English.
• To become better-informed citizens with respect to linguistic questions and their consequences.

Course Requirements
• Participation 20%
  - Attendance/Active engagement
  - Weekly short assignments
• Exam #1 (5/26) 20%
• Exam #2 (6/16) 25%
• Final Project 35%
  - Conference w/ VB (6/1-6/2) 2%
  - Prospectus & outline (6/13) 3%
  - Oral presentation & draft (6/20-6/22) 15%
• Portfolio w/ Final Draft of paper (6/23) 15%
TOTAL 100%

Participation
Attendance Policy
Regular attendance and preparation are the only ways to keep up with the pace of ideas and information exchange in this class. We will frequently discuss material in class that is NOT covered in the books or put on reserve or e-mail. It is also YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to read the material before class and to come prepared to discuss it, and to arrange for someone to pick up any handouts or lend you notes if you miss class; I cannot give “make up” lectures.

You learn linguistics by doing it; thus, active engagement in class participation is very important. If you miss class, you deprive yourself of important practice and information, as well as depriving the class of your viewpoint and ideas. Each unexcused class absence after the first subtracts 1 point from your grade. However, missing more than four class periods may zero out the full 20% of your participation grade. Be sure to notify me in writing of any legitimately excusable absences—in advance, if possible.
Readings and Short Assignments
Come to class with the reading assignment listed for that day read, and prepared to discuss the topics contained in the readings. It is critical to keep up with the readings assigned so that you are able to intelligently discuss the questions we consider.

You will be asked to prepare brief (usually 1-2 pp.) assignments, responses to specific questions or exercises, that will help you prepare for discussion of the issues raised in class. These are graded credit/no-credit, and are due at the start of the class where they are listed. Because the assignments will be discussed in class, late assignments will not be accepted (except in extraordinary circumstances, such as illness, etc.).

Examinations
The two short-answer and essay examinations during the semester cover the material up to that point in class and in the texts. It is absolutely critical to buy and read the texts. We cannot cover all material in the class, and I will assume that you be familiar with the general issues raised by the authors. All examinations must be your own work.

Final Project
The final project is a series of steps towards the preparation of a presentation and a ten-page paper dealing with some issue or debate in the content areas covered in the class. After some discussion in class of possible topics and group memberships, students will have meet with VB in individual conferences to explore resources and/or work with group members, resulting in a Research Prospectus due 6/13.

On the days of the Oral Presentation (6/20-6/22) each person will speak for 10 minutes, turning in a Preliminary Draft of the final paper for comments, including full citations and references, as well as a copy of any overheads or materials used for the oral presentation. I will make extended comments on the oral presentations and drafts, and you will be expected to take this into account in preparing a revised Final Paper for submission at the end of class (by 3:30 PM on Thurs., 6/23).

You will submit the Final Paper in a Portfolio along with all previous project work (Prospectus and Outline; Oral Presentation notes, overheads, and Preliminary Draft). To receive full credit for the last 15% of the grade, there must be clear evidence of significant revisions to the preliminary draft. It is critical that you keep copies of all stages of work to submit in your final portfolio; if you work in a group, you need to keep a separate copy for your own portfolio. I will give more details on this process and the project later in the semester.

Academic Integrity
True learning demands careful attention to words and ideas, our own and others. We must give others' ideas thoughtful consideration if we desire it for ourselves. Likewise, we must respect the rights and responsibilities of intellectual property. Taking someone else's thoughts or words and passing them off as your own is academic theft. Using others' work without proper attribution will result in your failing the assignment, or the class, depending on the scope. However, it is no contradiction that linguists often do their best work in consultation with others; in fact, we must observe how people use language in order to gather our data. You are encouraged to work with others as you prepare assignments for class, and in the final presentation and paper, but all exams must be your own work.

Furthermore, you must contribute your fair share to any group work. Please see me if you have difficulties in understanding where the line lies between consultation and/or quotation vs. plagiarism.

Here are two useful websites to consult:
1) Sharon Wilson's page defining (and avoiding) plagiarism:
   http://www.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/AvoidPlagiarism.htm
2) The University's Academic Integrity Policy:
   http://www.admin.mtu.edu/dos/academicIntegrity.htm

ADA Note
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Dean of Students (x7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (x7-3310).
Schedule of Course Assignments
The following schedule reflects my best estimation of course assignments; this may be adjusted to reflect class progress, interests, or needs as they arise, with notification to class members. Please see me if you have any concerns or questions.

Week 1
T 5/10 Introduction to the History of English: time frames, sound symbols, linguistic structures. Introduction to Language and Identity: What's language got to do with who you are?

Readings: Fennell, Chap. 1: 1-14
Walters & Brody, Forward, Intro: xxiii-xxxvi
Asst. #1: A brief linguistic profile
W 5/11 What's technology got to do with language? How has technology helped to shape the language you use today?
Reading: W&B 3: 133-178
R 5/12 The pre-history of English: Indo-European (and other world languages)
Reading: F 2: 15-54 (skim 34-49)

Week 2
M 5/16 Discuss the "linguistic scavenger hunt"
Discuss research paper, ideas
Video: An English Speaking World
(Optional reading: W&B 1: 1-64)
Asst. #2: An historical linguistic scavenger hunt
T 5/17 Old English/Anglo-Saxon
Reading: F 3: 55-93 (skim 60-77)

W 5/18 Old English, continued
Video: The Mother Tongue
Asst. #3: Some ideas for papers
R 5/19 Middle English
Reading: F 4: 94-134 (skim 97-106, 110-114)

Week 3
M 5/23 How does writing affect language?
Reading: W&B 2: 65-132
T 5/24 Early Modern English
Reading: F 5: 135-167 (skim 138-146)
Asst. #4: language change in English
W 5/25 Early Modern English, continued
Video: Muse of Fire
Review for mid-term Exam #1
R 5/26 MID-TERM EXAM #1

Week 4
M 5/30 NO CLASS; MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY
T 5/31 Discuss Exam #1; set up project conferences
W 6/1 Present day (British) English
Reading: F 6: 167-203
Conferences w/ VB
R 6/2 Language and national identity
Reading: W&B 8: 447-499
Conferences w/ VB
Asst. #5: identity and language choice
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Week 5
M 6/6  English in the U.S.
    Reading: F 7: 208-239
    PROSPECTUS DUE
T 6/7  Multilingual USA
    Reading: W&B 179-272
W 6/8  Native American languages in the US: the case of the Navajo Code-Talkers.
    Asst. #6: language attitude in the US
R 6/9  “Talking while Black”
    Reading: W&B 5: 273-332

Week 6
M 6/13 World-Wide English
    Reading: F 8: 241-268
    Asst #7: Changes in other world languages
T 6/14 Next Year’s Words: A Look into the Future
    video
W 6/15 Language and Gender: His and Hers
    Review for mid-term Exam #2
    Reading: W&B 6: 333-392
R 6/16 MID-TERM EXAM #2

Week 7
M 6/17 Discuss exam; on giving presentations
T 6/18 STUDENT ORAL PRESENTATIONS
    (draft and copies of visuals due)
W 6/19 STUDENT ORAL PRESENTATIONS
    (draft and copies of visuals due)

R 6/20  Summary: So, what does language have to do with your history, your future, your identity?
    Course evaluations
    FINAL PAPER & PORTFOLIO DUE