HU3910 Language in the World  Spring, 2006

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Classroom: 11:108
Class time: TR 3:35-4:50
Class e-list: hu3910-l
Office: Walker 323
Class time: TR 2-3
Office hours: TR 2-3, and by appointment

Course Description
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. Yet this “English” is not simply one homogeneous object; it is fair to speak of “World Englishes” in the plural.
This course investigates the history of the English language—and it many variations: how English arrived at its present state: what its roots are, how—withing the last half century—it came to hold such a dominant position, and what this means for the future of thousands of other languages. Just as this course is about the vitality and variation of English, it also considers the mortality 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.

Each one of us will play some part in the future of languages, not only English, but others as well, so we must become better informed about our choices and their consequences.

We will also consider the ethics of linguistic research (and its application to other research domains as well), to understand our obligations in the study of language and other related scientific, social-scientific, and humanistic domains.

Course Requirements

Course Objectives
• To understand how English(es) developed, and why it came to hold its present pre-eminent position in the world.
• To learn something about other languages in the world, to consider whether they are “safe” or “endangered” and why—and so what?
• To learn, evaluate, and practice data collection methods (primary, secondary, and tertiary research).
• To consider ethics in research and writing in the study of languages in the world, in particular, but applicable to many other research domains.
• To become better-informed citizens with respect to linguistic questions and their consequences.

Course Requirements

• Participation 15%
  - Attendance/Active engagement
  - Weekly reading responses
• Exam #1 (2/7) 15%
• Exam #2 (3/2) 15%
• Exam #3 (4/4) 15%
• Short presentation on another language (Weeks 9-10) 5%
• Final Project 35%
  - Preliminary prospectus (due 2/14) 1%
  - Conference w/ VB (Week 6) 2%
  - Revised prospectus & bibliography (2/28) 2%
  - Oral presentation & draft (Weeks 13-14) 10%
  - Portfolio w/ Final Draft of paper (Fri., 4/30) 20%
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 second counts -0.5 points. However, missing more than five class periods zeroes out the full 10% of your full participation grade. Be sure to notify me in writing of any legitimately excusable absences—in advance, if possible.

Reading Responses and Essays
Come to class with the assignment listed for that day read! It is critical to keep up with the readings assigned so that you are able to intelligently discuss the questions we consider. To prepare for class, you will do weekly reading responses (typed, 1-2 pp.), to help get you thinking about issues for discussion.
Examinations
The essay examinations during the semester cover the material up to that point in class and in the texts. It is absolutely critical to read the texts. We cannot cover all material in the class, and I will assume that you will be familiar with the general issues and approaches 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 ten-page paper dealing with some issue or debate in the content areas covered in the class. After some discussion of possible topics and group memberships, students will have some time in class to explore resources and/or work with group members, resulting in a Preliminary Prospectus. During Week 6, students will meet with me in Conferences, in groups or individually, to work through ideas and resources for the paper. This stage culminates in an extended paragraph per person or group, outlining the research area with definitive research questions and naming resources consulted.

On the day of the Oral Presentation (Weeks 13-14) each person will speak for 10-15 minutes, plus turn 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 (approximately 10 pages apiece) for submission at the end of class (by 4 PM on Friday, 4/20).

You will submit the Final Paper in a Portfolio along with all previous project work (Preliminary Prospectus; Revised Prospectus and Outline; Oral Presentation notes, overheads, and Preliminary Draft). To receive full credit for the last 10% 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/AvoidingPlagiarism.html
2) The University's Academic Integrity Policy:
   http://www.admin.mtu.edu/dos/academic.integrity.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).
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<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1/10  Introduction: rise of English, fall of other languages? Varieties of English.</td>
<td>1/12  Timelines &amp; terminology; standards &amp; not The prehistory of English: Indo-European Reading: Crystal 1-14; N&amp;R 1: ix-25</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1/17  Talking about linguistics: sounds, morphemes, words, syntax (handout on IPA: phonetic alphabet)</td>
<td>1/19  Origins of Old English, OE dialects Reading: Crystal 1&amp;2: 15-56</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1/24  OE lexical and stylistic diversity Reading: Crystal 3&amp;4: 57-104</td>
<td>1/26  Transitions to Middle English Reading: Crystal 5-7: 105-158</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1/31  Reading: Crystal 3&amp;4: 57-104</td>
<td>2/2  Reading: Crystal 5-7: 105-158</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/7  Exam #1</td>
<td>2/9  Winter Carnival - No Class</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2/14  Early Modern English: Muse of Fire Reading: Crystal 11: 254-284 RESEARCH CONFERENCES (prelim. prospectus due)</td>
<td>2/19  Early Modern English Reading: Crystal 12-14: 285-364 RESEARCH CONFERENCES</td>
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<td>2/21  Modern English Reading: Crystal 15-16: 365-418</td>
<td>2/23  Englishes in the World Reading: Crystal 17-18: 419-483</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>2/28  And change goes on Reading: Crystal 19-20: 484-535 Revised prospectus due</td>
<td>3/2  Exam #2</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/14  A world of diversity (in other langs.) Other languages: Navajo (&amp; Codes) Reading: N&amp;R 2: 26-49</td>
<td>3/15  Lost words, lost worlds Reading: N&amp;R 3: 50-77 PRES. ON OTHER LGS.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>3/28  Why something should be done Reading: N&amp;R 7-8: 150-75</td>
<td>3/31  Sustainable futures Reading: N&amp;R 8: 176-204</td>
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<td>4/4  Exam #3</td>
<td>4/6  So what about the future of world languages?</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>4/11  *STUDENT TALKS</td>
<td>4/12  *STUDENT TALKS</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4/18  *STUDENT TALKS</td>
<td>4/20  Summary; Evaluations</td>
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