Course Description
The world harbors an amazing diversity of languages, estimated at nearly 7,000 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 perhaps detriment of other languages’ speakers. But this “English” is not simply one homogeneous object; it is more accurate to speak of “World Englishes.” Yet it is not inevitably the dominant language; it is has a complex history and an uncertain future (if judged against the rise and fall of other dominant languages, e.g., Latin).

This course investigates the history of the English language, and its many variations: how English arrived at its present state: what its roots are, how—with 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.

Required Texts

Background reading (strongly recommended)

Videos
*The Story of English: “The Mother Tongue,” “Muse of Fire”*
*True Whispers*

Course Objectives
- To understand how English (and its current variants) developed, and why it came to hold its present pre-eminent position in the world.
- To learn about other languages in the world, to consider whether they are “safe” or “endangered” and why—and so what?
- To understand the social and material factors that influence the rise and fall of world languages and their civilizations.
- To become better-informed citizens with respect to linguistic questions and their consequences.

Course Requirements
- Participation 10%
  - Attendance/Active engagement
  - Reading responses/quizzes, as necessary
- Exam #1 (2/14/08) 10%
- Exam #2 (3/4/08) 10%
- Exam #3 (4/3/08) 10%
- “Majority Report” on another dominant language (Weeks 2-7) 15%
- “Minority Report” on an endangered language (Weeks 9-11) 15%
- Final Project 30%
  - Preliminary prospectus (due 2/12) 1%
  - Conference w/ VB (Week 5) 2%
  - Revised prospectus & annotated bibliography (3/20) 2%
  - Oral presentation & draft (Weeks 12-14) 10%
  - Final Draft of paper (by M 4/28) 15%
  - Portfolio

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 involvement and information, as well as depriving the class of your viewpoint and ideas. Each unexcused class absence after the second counts -1 point. However, missing more than five class periods zeroes out the 10% of your 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. If you are not keeping up with reading, I will require weekly reading responses or give short reading quizzes.

**Majority and Minority Language Reports**

The goal of these reports is to have you actively participating in the research and presentation of information and perspectives to the class, discussing the situation of other dominant and endangered languages. Through these 5-7 min. class reports, students will come to see how the languages people speak are contextualized within a matrix of social and material forces. These are due Weeks 2-7 (Majority Report) and Weeks 9-11 (Minority Report).

**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 work with group members, resulting in a Preliminary Prospectus (3/20). During Week 5, 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 definite research questions and naming resources consulted (Revised Prospectus 3/20).

On the day of the Oral Presentation (Weeks 12-14) each person will speak for about 15 minutes. Due on that day is a Preliminary Draft of the final paper, including full citations and references, as well as a copy of any powerpoint slides, 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 Monday, 4/28).

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 15% of the grade, there must be clear evidence of significant revisions to the preliminary draft, unless the first draft was an A+!

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) The University's Academic Integrity Policy: http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html

2) Purdue University’s guide to citation (APA and MLA) http://owl.english.purdue.edu/

**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 Events (may be revised as necessary)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | 1/15 Introduction: rise of English, decline of other Igs; timelines & terms; I. overview  
   Reading: Fennell 1: 1-14 | 1/17 What it takes to be a world language.  
   Where have all the languages gone?  
   Reading: Ostler: Preface, 1, 2: xix-25  
   Nettle & Romaine (N&R) 1: 1-25 |
| 2  | 1/22 Indo-European history  
   Demonstration “Majority Report”  
   Reading: Fennell 2: 15-54 | 1/24 Old English; video: *The Mother Tongue*  
   Reading: Fennell 3: 55-93 |
| 3  | 1/29 Middle English  
   Reading: Fennell 4: 94-134 | 1/31 Early Modern English  
   Reading: Fennell 5: 135-166 |
| 4  | 2/5 video: *Maze of Fire* | 2/7 Winter Carnival - No Class |
| 5  | 2/12 Present Day English; Review  
   Reading: Fennell 6: 167-204  
   Research confs; Prelim. Prospectus | 2/14 EXAM #1 |
| 6  | 2/19 English in the US  
   Reading: Fennell 7: 208-40 | 2/21 World-Wide English  
   Reading: Fennell 8: 241-269 |
| 7  | 2/26 The Career of English  
   Reading: Ostler 12: 456-521 | 2/28 The Current Top 20; Looking Ahead. Review  
   Reading: Ostler 13: 525-533; 14: 534-559 |
| 8  | 3/4 EXAM #2 | 3/6 video: *True Whispers: the Navajo Code Talkers*  
   Demonstration: short “minority report” on Navajo |
|    | SPRING BREAK | NO CLASS |
| 9  | 3/18 A World of Diversity  
   Reading: Nettle & Romaine 2: 26-49 | 3/20 Lost words, lost worlds  
   Reading: N&R 3: 50-77; Revised Prospectus |
| 10 | 3/25 The Ecology of Language; Biological waves  
   Reading: N&R 4: 78-98; N&R 5: 99-125 | 3/27 Economic waves  
   Reading: N&R 6: 126-149 |
| 11 | 4/1 Why something should be done; Sustainable Futures; Review  
   Reading: N&R 7: 150-75; 8: 176-204. | 4/3 EXAM #3 |
| 12 | 4/8 On giving presentations?/Pres | 4/10 Research Presentations |
|    | Research Presentations | 4/17 Research Presentations |
| 13 | 4/22 Research Presentations | 4/24 Summary: So why should we care? Evaluations  
   Final papers due Friday, 4/25 |
| 14 |            |          |

Other assignments not listed:

Weeks 3-7: “Majority reports”: 10-15 min. presentations on the status of other "world" languages (see, e.g., Ostler, *Empires of the World: A Language History of the World* and other research)

Weeks 9-11: “Minority reports”: 7-10 min. presentations on the status of other endangered languages (see, e.g., [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com) and [www.omniglot.com](http://www.omniglot.com))