

ENL 326 History of the English Language
Dr. Michael Barry
M 6:40 p.m.-9:10 p.m. Briggs 126

Texts:

Language: Readings in Language and Culture. Sixth Edition. Edited by Clark, Eschholz, and Rosa. St. Martin's, 1998.

Burnley, David *History of the English Language: A Source Book*. Second Edition. Longman, 2000.

A hardbound dictionary is recommended.

Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course should have mastery over, or familiarity with the complexity of, some of the reasoning or history behind the following tenets or claims: (1) All languages are in transition and all, from a linguist's point of view, are morally equal and usually functionally equal; (2) English dominates the world today in a way unimagined years ago, and thousands of minor languages are threatened; (3) Philosophers disagree about the most basic function of language, and these disagreements can be bluntly represented by essays such as those by J.L. Austin and Ludwig Wittgenstein; (4) Transformational-generative grammar represents a revolution in linguistics; (5) People are not always their own best informants of their patterns of speech. And ... more concrete historical information: (6) Old English differs from Middle English by being an inflected language, and by being made up of a largely Germanic vocabulary base. (7) Middle English differs from Modern English especially in the pronunciation of its long vowels, which resemble a little bit those of most of the European languages; (8) Early Modern English is easily understood by speakers of Modern English, but was less regular in its grammar and spelling. And ... control of the following areas of knowledge: (9) What articulatory phonetics is all about, and how to transcribe speech phonetically; (10) What morphology is, as defined by the essays on the subject in the Clark, Eschholz, and Rosa reader; (11) Some individual word origins and some patterns in word coinage; (12) How children learn language; (13) How dialects of English differ, and just what the politics of dialect differences amount to. If you do not know various words for parts of speech and grammatical features of English (what an adjective is, say, or what passive voice is), you can do well in this course, but you will be at a disadvantage, and you will surely have to learn many of these terms before the end of the term in order to understand some of the readings.

Course Policies and Grades: A good excuse, a really good reason for missing class, is not the same as coming to class. Do not miss. Essays due in 6th and 13th weeks: 16% each. Project due November 3: 32%. Final exam: 18%. Exercises and reading notes: 18%.

Plagiarism and Documentation:

I will spend some time in this course on the techniques by which student writers give credit when they borrow ideas, research, statistics, or language from sources. Failure to properly document sources is called plagiarism, and by the end of this course, I hope that no student will have a problem with it. When it is done intentionally, plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty that should be met with failure for a course, or worse. When it is done unintentionally, professors cannot necessarily see that it is unintentional, and therefore meet it with the same penalties. So you will hear more about this concept; in the meantime, remember that changing an idea into your own words does not release you from the obligation to give credit. Also remember that the use and understanding of quotation marks is absolutely essential if you use the language of a source.

Conferences:

You may stop by the office or make an appointment whenever you want. My office is 218 Briggs, and office hours are T 10:00-12:00 and W 1:30-2:30. And by appointment.

Email: barrymg@udmercy.edu.

Phone: 313-993-1050.

Calendar Syllabus

- Sept. 8 Politics of Linguistics. Prescriptive and descriptive usage study. Relationship of the study of the history of a language, the systematic-ness of a language, and the variation in a language at any given time.
- Sept. 15 Phonology. Grammar terms. Language Families. Vestiges of old sounds that are preserved in new language, both individually and culturally. Read Roberts, "A Brief History of English," Aitchison, "Language Change," Ohio State University Language Files, "Family Tree and Wave Models," and Callary, "Phonetics," in the Clark, Eschholz, and Rosa collection.
- Sept. 22 Dialect. Regularization. Word Generation. Read Ohio State University Language Files, "Minimal Units of Meaning: Morphemes," Markwardt and Dillard, "Social and Regional Variation," Shuy, "Dialects: How They Differ," and Labov, "Study of Nonstandard English," in the Clark, Eschholz, and Rosa collection.
- Sept. 29 Phonology and Morphology exercises due. Read Earl Shorris's essay, "The Last Word," in the August 2000 *Harper's*.
- Oct. 6 Photocopies from Jonathan Culler, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Jacques Derrida.
- Oct. 13 3-5 page synthesis or explanation essay due.
- Oct. 20 Variation in accordance with ethnic or gender affiliation. ASL. Language Acquisition. Photocopies from Harlan Lane and Helen Keller. Also, from the Clark, Eschholz, and Rosa collection: Emmorey, "Sign Language" and both essays by Deborah Tannen.
- Oct. 27 Language Acquisition, continued. Read Moskowitz, "Acquisition of Language," Lenneberg, "Developmental Milestones in Motor and Language Development,"

- Aitchison, "Predestinate Grooves," and Fromkin and others, "The Development of Language in Genie" in the Clark, Esccholz, and Rosa collection.
- Nov. 3 Project findings due. (Probably the equivalent of a 5-page essay, with supporting documents.)
- Nov. 10 Transformational-generative grammar, the brain. History of English: Anglo-Saxon. Photocopies from Noam Chomsky's Syntactic Structures. Also, Pinker, "Tower of Babel" and Heny, "Syntax: The Structure of Sentences" in the Clark, Eschholz, and Rosa collection.
- Nov. 17 History of English: Middle English
- Nov. 24 History of English: Modern English before the 20th Century
- Dec. 1 History of English: 20th Century. Readings for this date will include some portion of the "Language, Variety, and Culture" chapter in the Clark, Eschholz, and Rosa collection. 3-5 explanation or synthesis essay due on changes in English.
- Dec. 8 (7:30 p.m.) (Final exam)