The History and Structure of English

Theron Francis, Ph.D.

Instructor: Theron Francis, Ph.D.
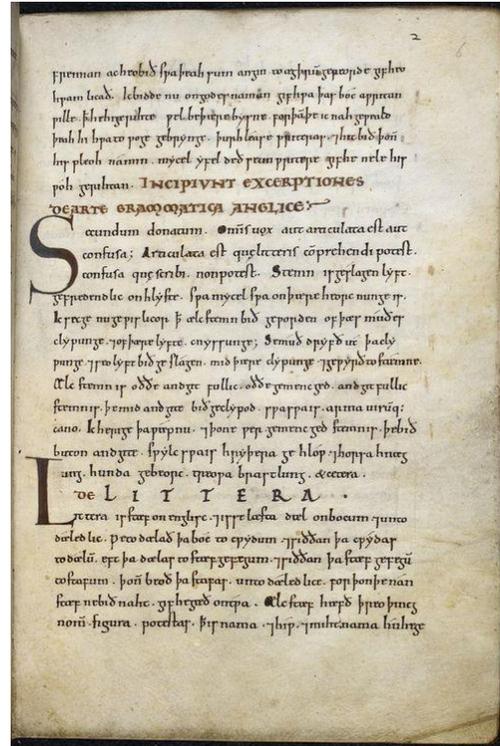Email: tfrancis@sulross.edu
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A course on the evolution of English over time and space and the structure of language in sentences, words and sounds.

Text page with large initials and Latin and Anglo-Saxon script, from Ælfric's Grammar, England, second half of the 11th century, Royal 15 B xxii, f. 2. British Library.

Web-delivered, online course.

Methods of Delivery through Blackboard
1. Online screen-capture Lectures
2. Discussion Posts on Lerer's *Inventing English*
3. Blackboard Quizzes on Lerer's *Inventing English*
4. Practice Exercises in *Language Files* uploaded to Blackboard chapter assignments.

Textbooks

Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics. (2016). 12th Edition. Eds. Hope Dawson and Michael Phelan. Columbus, OH: OSU Press.

Lerer, S. (2007). *Inventing English: a portable history of the language*. New York: Columbia.

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY COURSE DESCRIPTION

The structural essentials of English, with some treatment of the historical development of the language, from Anglo-Saxon to modern English.

Instructor's Course Description

There are two goals of the course. Exploring the history of English will show us how the language has changed and continues to change. Languages change through contact with other languages. They change due to influence from within as well as from without. Languages are dynamic and multi-faceted. There is not one true, correct English from which we can prescribe ideal rules. The word "language" and the word "English" are both problematic terms. There are many dialects of English and therefore many Englishes. Some forms of speech may be more appropriate in certain contexts--and academic and written varieties of a language tend to be prescribed and formulaic--but no variety is

essentially better than any other. Studying the history the English will reveal how the language has gone through many versions while being diverse in its varieties or dialects. I have selected the book *Inventing English* by Seth Lerer, which--unlike a textbook--is readable in style and can be read like a novel. I plan to read Lerer's book with you while also reading and doing exercises from *Language Files.* In this way we will be reading the history of English at the same time will are informing ourselves on how language works.

In addition to covering the influences which changed the language, this course also covers the underlying structure of the language. It is the structure of language in general--universal grammar in Chomsky's terms--which makes change, variation, and creativity possible. The descriptive study of samples of language helps to show the underlying biological underpinnings of language, which are structurally patterned.part of our biological predisposition. Structure--in sounds, words, and sentences--explains creativity in language. From a few structural patterns, there is infinite variety in what we can say. Because of structure, most of what we say every day is absolutely original and was never said or heard before. To master the structural aspects of the language, I chose *Language Files,* 11th edition, produced by the Ohio State University's Department of Linguistics. The textbook provides readable explanations of linguistic patterns which are followed up by "practice" exercises that use the empirical method of descriptive linguistics. We will cover the first five sections of the book: the introduction, phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntax.

DEPARTMENTAL ENG 5308 STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLOS):
The student will be able to…
1. Understand the formal aspects of language: syntax, morphology, and phonology in English.
2. Understand language shift in sound, grammar, and meaning.
3. Understand language change in English in terms of cultural contact, globalization, and diversity.
4. Practice basic corpus analysis in order to develop a descriptive understanding of language.
5. Acquire a basic theoretical vocabulary for linguistics and English grammar.

English Program Learning Objectives:
Graduating students will demonstrate that they can
1. Construct essays that demonstrate unity, organization, coherence, and development
2. Analyze literary works by applying principles of literary criticism or theory
3. Produce research papers that demonstrate the ability to locate a variety of acceptable sources, employ them effectively through quotations or paraphrases, integrate them smoothly into the writer's own prose, and document them correctly using MLA format
4. Demonstrate creativity or originality of thought in written or multimedia projects
5. Compare/contrast and analyze major works and periods within World, English, and American literature.

Projects
1. Blackboard Discussion posts on Lerer's *Inventing English.* (5/200 points)
2. Quizzes on Lerer's *Inventing English*: midterm and final. (Each 50 points/100 total)
3. "Practice" exercises in Language Files. (5 @ 80 points each/400 total)
4. Term Paper on a linguist or philologist from history (300 points total; including statement of purpose and peer review 25 points each)
5. Class Participation (100 points)

1. Blackboard Discussions (200 points; 40 points each post, 5 total)
These are essentially short response papers of 300-500 words in length. Identify a passage with a topic that interests you. Then interpret, elaborate, apply or question the ideas in the passage.

2. Quizzes on Lerer's *Inventing English* (100 total points/ Each quiz 50 points)
These will be small scale, low stakes quizzes with multiple choice questions. The goal of these quizzes is to get read and retain key terms and concepts. We will have one quiz after reading the first half of the book around week four and a second quiz during exam week.

3. "Practice" exercises in *Language Files* (400 points; 5 exercises at 80 points each)

These exercises come from the "practice" section at the end of each unit in the *Language Files*. I will try to limit the scale of the assignments. You will have to turn in about one set of exercises per week through the middle 10 weeks of the course.

4. Term Paper on a Linguist or Philologist in History
(300 points including statement of purpose and peer review)
Please submit a statement of purpose one month prior to submitting the paper. Your paper must provide linguistic examples and you must analyze the examples in terms of structure. What did the linguist think an aspect of language ranging from the history of language, to artificial language, from language development in children, to animal language and writing systems?

GRADING
You can earn up to 1000 total possible points. The number of points needed to earn the following grades are: 900-1000=A, 800-899=B, 700-799=C, 600-699=D, 0-599=F.

Projects	Due Date	%	Points
Discussions	5 posts	20	200
Quizzes on Lerer	7.26 & 8.10	10	100
Practice Exercises	5 total, 80 points each	40	400
Term Paper	Semester End: July 6	30	300
Total Points Available		100	1000

DEADLINES
Unless otherwise specified, all assignments will be turned in at the beginning of class on their due dates. All alternative arrangements must be approved before the relevant deadline. Late work without previous arrangement with me will only be accepted upon demonstration of extenuating circumstances**.**

DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT
Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as Smarthinking, library resources, such as online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

DEADLINES
Unless otherwise specified, all assignments will be turned in at the beginning of class on their due dates. All alternative arrangements must be approved before the relevant deadline. Late work without previous arrangement with me will only be accepted upon demonstration of extenuating circumstances**.**

Blackboard
If you confront technical issues which interfere with your ability to use Blackboard, contact the LTAC (Lobo Technology Assistance Center) at 432-837-8888 or https://techassist.sulross.edu

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartze, M. Ed., L.P.C., in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas   Telephone: 432-837-8691. E-mail: mschwartze@sulross.edu .

Writing Center and Academic Learning Center

The Writing Center is located in MAB 102 and the Academic Learning Center is located in FH 213. Tutors are available to help you with any problems you may have with an assignment. Take advantage of this service any time you need help. The tutors are there for you. You may contact the Writing Center at extension 8270 and email writing@sulross.edu

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Dishonest acts, such as plagiarism (using words or a specific author's ideas from another source without acknowledging the source) or collusion (having other people write parts of your paper for you), may result in an "F" on the assignment and may lead to a disciplinary hearing conducted through the office of the Dean of Students, which could result in suspension or expulsion from SRSU. If you have questions about whether your use of other sources (such as books, websites, friends, or Writing Center tutors) is fair or not, please ask before turning in the work that you have a question about.

Dates	Activities	Practice Exercises and Discussion Posts	Quizzes and Papers
Week 1	**Introduction to Linguistics**		
7.6 Th	Read Lerer Introductory Chapter "Finding English, Finding Us"		
7.7 F	Read Lerer Chapter 1 "Caedmon Learns to Sing"		
Week 2			
7.10 M	*Language Files* 1.1"What is a Langauge" 1.2 "What You Know When You Know a Language" 1.3 "Other Aspects…" 1.4 "Design Features of Language" pp 1-26	**Lerer: Discussion Board Post 1 on the introduction "Finding English, Finding Us" and chapter 1 "Caedmon Learns to Sing"**	
7.11 T	Lecture on *Language Files* 1		
7.12 W		**Complete *Language Files* Practice Exercises Unit 1, pp 33-36, Numbers 1-26**	
7.13 Th	Read Lerer Chapter 2 "From Beowulf to Wulfstan"		
7.14 F	Lecture on *Language Files* Unit 2: Phonetics		
Week 3	**Phonology**		

7.17 M	Read Lerer Chapter 3 "In This Year"		
7.18 T		**Lerer Discussion Board Post 2 on chapters 2 & 3**	
7.19 W		**Complete *Language Files* Practice Exercises Unit 2, pp 95-101, Numbers 1-24**	
7.20 Th	Read Lerer Chapter 4 "From Kingdom to Realm"		
7.21 F	Read Lerer Chapter 5 "Lord of this Language"		
Week 4	**Morphology**		
7.24 M	*Language Files* Unit 3: Phonology 107-140		
7.25 T	Lecture on Phonology	**Lerer Discussion Board Post 3 on Chapters 4 & 5**	
7.26 W		**Complete *Language Files* Practice Exercises Unit 3, pp 141-48, Numbers 1-30**	Quiz on Lerer, Chapters 1-5
7.27 Th	Read Lerer Chapter 6 "I Is as Ille a Millere as Are Ye"		
7.28 F	Read Lerer Chapter 7 "The Great Vowel Shift and the Changing Character of English"		
Week 5			
7.31 M	*Language Files* Unit 4: Morphology 153-183		Last Day to Drop course with a W
8.1 T	Lecture on Morphology	**Lerer Discussion Board Post 4 on chapters 6 & 7**	
8.2 W		**Complete *Language Files* Practice Exercises Unit 4, 184-94, Numbers 1-37**	Term Paper Statement of Purpose Due
8.3 Th	Read Lerer Chapter 8 "Chancery, Caxton, and the Making of English Prose"		
8.4 F	*Language Files* Unit 5: Syntax 201-35		
Week 6			
8.7 M	Lecture on syntax	**Lerer Discussion Board Post 5 on chapter 8**	
8.8 T			
8.9 W		**Complete *Language***	**Term Paper Due**

		Files **Practice Exercises Unit 5, pp 236-42 Numbers 1-27**	
8.10 Th 8.14	Final Examination Grades submitted by instructor for continuing students		Quiz on Lerer Chapters 6-8