The History and Structure of English

A course on the evolution of English over time and space and the structure of language in sentences, words and sounds.
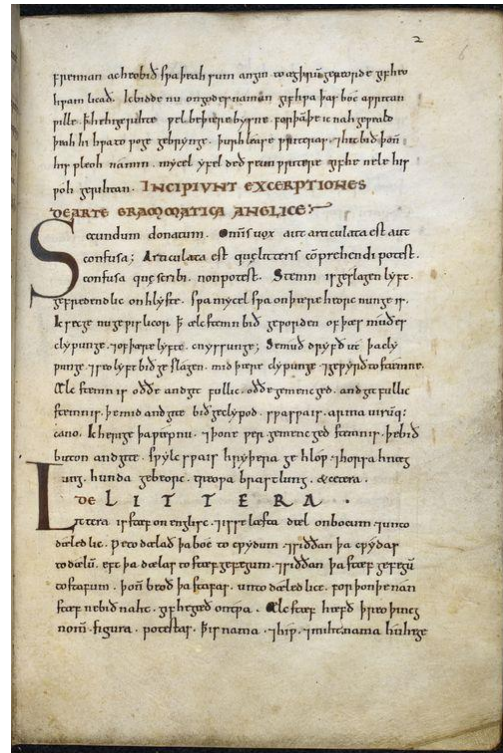
Theron Francis, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: If you would like to meet to discuss assignments—email me and we will schedule meetings on Bb Collaborate.

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.

Textbooks

Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics. (2022). 13th Edition. Eds. Hope Dawson, Antonio Hernandez, and Corey Shain. 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 of 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, 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,* 13th 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.

Since this is a graduate course, what's most important is your research and discovery of ideas. This is a holistic introduction to linguistics. Although we will only cover the early history of English and the formal study of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, you can compose a research paper in any subfield of linguistics, including historical; indigenous languages and language extinction; first language acquisition; second language acquisition; psycho- and neurolinguistics; sociolinguistics; writing systems; animal communication; AI and computational linguistics. My own first graduate level linguistics paper was in the field of sociolinguistics. I was interested in the author Nikos Kazantzakis and I knew that he wrote in the demotic or common language rather than prescribed "classical" Greek. I wrote a research paper on Kazantzakis and diglossia in Greece. You will have to write one research paper on a subject in linguistics of your own choice.

Course 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.

Marketable Skills
1. Students will communicate effectively in writing and speaking.
2. Students will use different research strategies to address problems and develop ideas that engage a variety of perspectives.
3. Students will recognize how social and cultural contexts shape meaning and language.

Projects
1. Blackboard Discussion posts on Lerer's *Inventing English.* (5/150 points)
2. Quizzes on Lerer's *Inventing English*: midterm and final. (Each 50 points/150 total)
3. "Practice" exercises in Language Files. (5 @ 60 points each/300 total)
4. Term Paper (300 points total; including statement of purpose and peer review 25 points each)
5. Class Participation (100 points)

1. Blackboard Discussions (150 points; 30 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 four chapters of the book and a second quiz on the second four chapters.

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.

4. Term Paper
(400 points; 50 additional points for statement of purpose and peer review)
Please submit a statement of purpose and meet with me by Collaborate to discuss a term paper idea. Research in descriptive linguistics tends to be empirical. However, as a summer class we have a time limitation that makes it difficult to design a research methodology. Your research will current research on a subject in applied or pure linguistics.

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	15	150 (30 points each)
Quizzes on Lerer	2, 50 points each	10	100
Practice Exercises	5 total, 60 points each	30	300
Term Paper Statement of Purpose and Peer Review	25 points each	5	50
Term Paper	Semester End	30	400
Total Points Available		100	1000

Deadlines
Unless otherwise specified, <u>all</u> assignments will be turned in at the <u>beginning</u> of class <u>on</u> their due dates. All alternative arrangements must be approved <u>before</u> 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 and Counseling Services
Any student who because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. If an accommodation is needed, students must present their accommodation letter, obtained from Accessibility Services, as soon as possible. Please note that instructors are not permitted to provide classroom accommodations to a student until the appropriate verification has been received. Accessibility Services is in Ferguson Hall room 112. You can make an appointment by calling Mary Schwartze Grisham at 432 837-8203.

Tutoring at the English Department's Online Writing Center
The English Department provides tutoring through Blackboard Collaborate. I will assign extra credit for major assignments receiving feedback from the tutors in the English Department's Online Writing Center.

SRSU Library Services
The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine. Offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

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.

Incompletes
Incompletes will only be granted if there is a valid reason why the student is unable to complete the course work and at least 50% of the course assignments are completed.

Distance Education Statement
Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, 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. 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. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

Blackboard
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COURSE CALENDAR

Dates	Subjects	Assignments	Resources and Major Assignments
Week One			
7.10 M	Lerer Introduction		
7.11 T	Lerer Chapter 1		
7.12 W		Discussion Post 1 on Intro and Chapter 1 in Lerer	
7.13 TH	Lerer Chapter 2		
7.14 F	.		
Week Two			
7.17 M	Lerer Chapter 3	Discussion Post 2 on Chapter 2 and 3 in Lerer	
7.18 T			
7.19 W	Lerer Chapter 4	Discussion Post 3 on Chapter 4 in Lerer	Quiz on Lerer, Chapters Intro, 1-4
7.20 TH	*Language Files* Introduction What is Language?		
7.21 F			
Week Three			
7.24 M		Language File 1 Practices pp. 32-35 Exercises 1-24 Due	
7.25 T	Language File 2 Phonetics		
7.26 W			
7.27 TH		Language File 2 Practices pp. 93-99 Exercises 1-23 Due	
7.28 F	Language File 3 Phonology		
Week 4			
7.31 M			Submit Statement of Purpose and schedule Bb Collaborate conferences
8.1 T		Language File 3 Practices pp. 140-46 Exercises 1-25	

		Due	
8.2 W	Lerer *Inventing English* Chapter 5		Last Day to drop with W
8.3 TH	Lerer *Inventing English* Chapter 6	Discussion Post 4 on Chapter 5 and 6 in Lerer	
8.4 F	Lerer *Inventing English* Chapter 7		
Week 5			
8.7 M	Lerer *Inventing English* Chapter 8	Discussion Post 4 on Chapter 7 and 8 in Lerer	Quiz on Lerer, Chapters Intro, 1-4 Available through end of semester
8.8 T	Language File 4 Morphology		
8.9 W			
8.10 TH		Language File 4 Practices pp. 190-96 Exercises 1-26 Due	
8.11 F	Language File 5 Syntax		
Week 6			
8.14 M			**Term Paper Due**
8.15 T	No Final Exam	Language File 5 Practices pp. 245-49 Exercises 1-21 Due	
8.16 W			Grades submitted to Registrar