

English 311: Fall 2016
Introduction to the English Language:
Linguistic Histories, Social Identities, and Nonhuman Languages

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 Class Location: EB 137

Tues./Thurs.: 9.30a-10.45a
 Office: English Building, 4th Floor
 Office Hours: Thurs., 11a-12p

Course Description:

For all of the handwringing about the state of the English language—amidst our continual and collective efforts to police each other’s grammar, speech, and writing—little attention is devoted to the study of English itself in the college classroom. In spite of English’s ever-expanding influence, how much can we really say about where it came from? How we use it? How it shapes our social identities? And where it’s going?

These questions serve as the foundation for this class, which seeks to provide an overview of the English language from social, linguistic, rhetorical, and historical perspectives. In this course, we will take a winding and unconventional tour through the past, present, and future(s) of English(es)—and by comparison, non-English languages—as filtered through varied and diverse subject matter. Topics of inquiry include: medieval print culture, American Sign Language, profanity, hip hop, emojis, “honeybee dance language,” and code.

As such, extending our understanding of English histories, processes of change, and language ideologies into these non-English domains will not only challenge us to reconsider what language is, what it does, and how it operates across varying media and modes (visual, gestural, aural). It will also grant us insights into how alternative, nonstandard, and nonhuman forms of language reciprocally broaden and deepen our comprehension of English.

**Coursework for this class includes discussions, presentations, essay assignments of varying length, and multimedia projects. No prior knowledge of linguistics or English language history is required.

Student Learning Outcomes for “Introduction to the English Language”:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- 1.) Understand how English and non-English languages are shaped by political, cultural, economic, and other contextual forces.
- 2.) Thoughtfully engage with, analyze, and contest histories and theories concerning English and non-English languages.
- 3.) Develop a rich sense of how language helps inform, mediate, and create social identities pertaining to race, gender, and sexuality.
- 4.) Consider how language is not a phenomenon limited to humans, grasp how it works in these nonhuman contexts, and determine what studies of nonhuman language can tell us about English.
- 5.) Compose and present sophisticated arguments relating to this subject matter and support said arguments with ample evidence, analysis, and attention to detail.

Course Texts:

Course readings and materials will be made available online through our course website; you won't need to purchase any textbooks for this class. It is imperative, however, that you're able to access said course readings during our class meetings. Whether you print these materials out or access them via a laptop, tablet, or other electronic device is up to you.

Grade Breakdown and Major Assignments (*):

Major course assignments for this class are listed below. For each major assignment, a corresponding assignment sheet and grading rubric will be published on the course website.

*Lexical Invention Assignment (10%)

—*Peer Review Workshop*: Thursday, September 8

—*Assignment Due*: Thursday, September 15

*Critical Linguistic Autobiography (15%)

—*Peer Review Workshop*: Tuesday, October 4

—*Assignment Due*: Thursday, October 13

* Circumlectio (15%)

—*Assignment Due*: Tuesday, November 1

*Final Multimedia Language Project (25%)

—*Project Proposal Due*: Thursday, November 10

—*Presentations / In-Progress Workshops*: Tuesday, November 29 — Tuesday, December 6

—*Final Project Draft Due*: Tuesday, December 13

Leading Discussion (10%): Everyone will be responsible for leading discussion on one day of class with a partner. This task has two parts: you should engage your peers in the assigned reading for the day, and you should apply the ideas from said readings to some real world example(s). Possible approaches include creating a prompt for in-class writing, small-group discussion questions, a whole-class activity, bringing in objects for us to practice analyzing, sharing a recent and relevant news story, exploring how the reading applies to some issue in your major or future career, or some combination of the above.

The point is not for you to lecture, but for you to gain experience in facilitating discussion and to help your peers gain a deeper understanding of the day's topic. Plan for your discussion or activity to last 30 minutes (a little less than half the class period). If you're struggling to come up with discussion topics, please make an appointment to speak with me or drop in to see me during my office hours.

Participation (25%): Participation means coming to class prepared to talk about the assigned readings, discussing you and your peers' works-in-progress, and actively engaging with in-class writing exercises and activities. In class, I expect you to listen attentively to your peers and to respectfully challenge the source material as well as the assertions of your classmates.

In addition to verbal participation, this grade also includes all homework and blog post assignments, the likes of which will be evaluated for thoughtfulness and on-time completion. Homework and blog posts turned in and posted late will not receive credit.

Digital Course Components:

*WordPress Course Site: Our course site is as follows: UIUCEng1311.wordpress.com. I will use this website to post announcements, assignments, resources, and our course syllabus and schedule. You are responsible for keeping up to date with our course site. Feel free to follow the blog if you prefer to receive e-mail updates when I post new entries.

***Individual Course Blog:** You will all need to create a course blog as well, either through WordPress or another blogging site of your choice. Your blog will serve as a platform to post your homework assignments and engage with class material. In addition, your site will be attached to the course blogroll. In other words, it will be public to both me and your classmates, so be sure to keep that in mind when posting.

***Compass 2G:** All major assignments will be submitted through Compass 2G since it is generally more secure and private than our WordPress course site. I will also use Compass 2G to post your grades and to provide feedback on your projects. If you're unfamiliar with Compass 2G or don't know how to submit files or access grades through this platform, please don't hesitate to ask me for assistance.

***E-mail:** On occasion, I will send brief e-mails to your university e-mail addresses with reminders, resources, and/or clarifications on assignments. I check my e-mail daily and usually respond within one business day; I expect you to do the same. Legally, I'm not permitted to give out or discuss grades via e-mail, so if you'd like to discuss these matters, please set up a time to meet with me face to face instead.

Grading Policy:

Each major assignment listed above will be graded out of 100 points. You will receive a corresponding letter grade based upon the quality of your work as well as a completed evaluation rubric and written feedback for each project. Letter grades for these assignments will be posted on Compass 2G. In addition, your final grade will be calculated on a 100-point scale and converted to a letter grade using this system:

A = 93-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	F= Below 60
A- = 90-92	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 63-66	
	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	D- = 60-62	

For those keeping track at home, the UIUC-wide GPA calculation is as follows:

A+ = 4.0	B+ = 3.6	C+ = 2.33	D+ = 1.33	F= 0
A = 4.0	B = 3.0	C = 2.0	D = 1.0	
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	D = 0.67	

Assignment Submission / Presentation Policy:

All projects and homework assignments will either be submitted on your course blog or Compass 2G. When submitting files to Compass 2G, please title your files as follows: "LastName_[nameofassignment].docx" (for example, "Middleton_WordHistory.docx"). You will receive more specific submission instructions for all projects and assignments throughout the semester.

Whether submitting assignments for homework or delivering in-class presentations, plan ahead for technological setup and potential pitfalls. Technology can be wonderful, but it is never reliable, so always have a back-up plan. I highly recommend backing up your written and multimedia files to a flash drive, external hard drive, and/or cloud storage.

In the case of presentations, you must be prepared to present or otherwise speak about your work on the first date listed for presentations on the calendar. If you are asked to present and are not prepared, you will lose points for that project.

All major assignments are due on the specific due date as it appears on the course calendar. As noted below in this syllabus, projects not submitted by these deadlines will be docked ten points per day they are late.

Attendance:

Your presence and active participation in this course is critical to your success in this class since most of the course consists of in-class discussion and peer feedback. Attendance at all class sessions is expected.

That said, I have chosen not to implement an attendance policy in this course because I believe that attendance policies are inherently ableist. I feel that such guidelines and language are prejudiced against students with mental, physical, and other sorts of disabilities that might prevent them from making it to class, on time, or at all. If there's something going on in your life that's regularly making it difficult to participate—whatever that means to you and whether disability-related or not—please let me know and we can figure out a system of accommodations that'll work for you.

As mentioned above, this course is structured in a way that's discussion heavy; it can only work when you're actively participating in class. So please do be present in the ways that you can since it'll make our learning better for everyone.

Extensions and Late Work:

Everyone is permitted one extension for major projects. This means you may turn in one of this course's major assignments up to 48 hours past the original deadline with no effect on your grade and no need for an explanation.

If you choose to use your extension, please let me know by e-mail before the class period in which the assignment is due. The further in advance you do so, the better. Asking for an extension in person minutes before our class starts will not suffice.

Extensions aside, unexcused late work will result in a lower grade. Projects turned in late will automatically lose 10 points per day (every project is graded out of 100 points). For example, a project due Thursday could receive a maximum of 90 points if turned in on Friday and a maximum of 80 points if turned in on Saturday. As noted above, late work that falls under your participation grade—presentations, short homework assignments, and in-class activities—cannot be made up. In addition, missing a day in which you are signed up to lead class discussion will result in a zero for the assignment unless there's an extenuating circumstance (and in which you've notified both me and your discussion partner ahead of time).

Personal Electronics Policy

It is abundantly clear that we live in an increasingly technology driven and enabled world. Of course, you may bring your own laptop / tablet to class in order to read, annotate, write, and/or search for materials relevant to the course.

For many of us, our phones are an integral part of our lives, and of course, we (unconsciously) check them dozens of times per day. I recognize these habits and urges, in part, as informed by new literacy practices, especially where you might be very well using your phone as a media technology in its own right. As such, I do not wish to police or shame cell phone use during class. If you feel like you might be inclined to use your phone briefly during class, all I ask is that you leave your device on your desk and be acutely aware of when, how, and how much you use it during class.

That is not to say that you are permitted to tune out on these devices during class. If I notice that you are more engaged with your phone, tablet, or laptop than with course activities, I will send you an e-mail after class to remind you that our sessions should be devoted to our daily discussions and tasks. Should this reminder not discourage "inappropriate" use of your device in the future, these habits will negatively affect your participation grade for the course.

Classroom and Course Etiquette

In this course, you will undoubtedly work with students who differ from you in terms of identity, whether that's in terms of gender, race, nationality, language background, age, or beyond. Regardless of these differences, you must absolutely respect the attitudes and contributions of your classmates, even if their perspectives differ from your own. As such, (Cis)Sexist, racist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, and/or xenophobic remarks or behavior will not be tolerated, nor will any additional form of harassment. These attitudes are counterproductive to safe and inclusive learning, and they have no place in this classroom, much less anywhere else.

It follows that I envision our class environment—both in its physical and digital iterations—as a safer space in which everyone feels welcome to participate. Please be respectful of your peers' verbal contributions to class and their work, as we will all be working together to promote a rich, comfortable learning environment.

As noted above, classroom etiquette also extends into networked spaces, specifically with regard to e-mail communication and blog activity. In your e-mails to me and to your peers, please be sure to include a title explaining the subject of the message, a greeting (“Hi Logan”), a clear explanation of your question/concern, and a signature.

Please allow at least 24 hours for an e-mail response from me. By no means do I consider e-mail correspondence an appropriate substitute for office hour conversations (in-depth discussions about major assignments, talking through writing processes, etc.).

Academic Integrity Policy (Plagiarism)

The University of Illinois has high standards of academic integrity set out in Article 1, Part 4 of the University Student Code, which I uphold.

All written work submitted in this course is expected to be your own, with any wording and/or idea taken from any other source fairly attributed. To use phrases and/or ideas from any other source as if they were your own, whether accidentally or deliberately, constitutes plagiarism. Submitting your own work for more than one course without permission of both instructors can also constitute plagiarism. The Student Code sets out possible consequences of plagiarism ranging from failure on the assignment to suspension or dismissal from the University, and it specifies that ignorance of these standards is not an excuse.

Students in this class should familiarize themselves with the [Code](#). If you have questions about fair use or documentation, please do not hesitate to consult me.

Students Requiring Accommodation:

Everyone learns differently and benefits from different kinds of support. Please get in touch with me if you would like to discuss your individual learning style and/or needs and how this course can best accommodate them, whether you have a documented disability or not. If you have a disability that requires accommodation for you to succeed in this class, you may want to contact the [Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services](#) (DRES) for additional support.

Writers Workshop:

The [Writers Workshop](#) provides free, one-to-one help to all UIUC writers. The Workshop's consultants can help with any kind of assignment, in any class, and at any stage of the writing process. While the Writers Workshop is not an editing service, tutors will help students with anything related to their writing, including grammar, brainstorming, organizing, polishing final drafts, citing sources, and more. Bring a draft to revise or just stop by for help with getting your ideas together.

The Writers Workshop offers 50-minute sessions by appointment in five locations: the Undergraduate Library, Grainger Library, Ikenberry Commons, Burrill Hall, and the Pennsylvania Avenue Residence Halls. You can drop-in for a quick 15-30 minute session in 251 UGL during the evening on M-R. The Workshop also sponsors writing groups and provides hands-on presentations about academic writing skills.

Main Location: 251 Undergraduate Library

E-mail: wow@illinois.edu

Satellite Locations: Ikenberry, Grainger, Burrill, PAR

Phone: 217.333.8796

Website: <http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop>

Changes to Syllabus / Course Schedule

This course syllabus and its corresponding schedule are subject to change. You will be notified of any such changes in class and in writing (most likely through e-mail or the course website).

English 311: Fall 2016
Introduction to the English Language:
Linguistic Histories, Social Identities, and Nonhuman Languages

Act One: Linguistic Histories, Ideologies, and Modalities

Week One	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, August 23 —Course Introduction	---	---
Thursday, August 25 —“Where Do New Words Come From?”: Linguistic and Lexical Invention	Merriam-Webster, “Where Do New Words Come From?” OED, “New Words Notes: September 2016” Oxford Dictionaries, “How Our Dictionaries Are Created”	Blog Post #1: See Course Site for Instructions

Week Two	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, August 30 —“And Here’s Where We Begin”: Processes and Ideologies of Language Change **Lexical In(ter)vention Prompt Assigned	Aitchison, “The Ever-Whirling Wheel,” from <i>Language Change: Progress or Decay?</i> (3-18) Crystal, “The Future of Englishes,” from <i>The Language Revolution</i> (6-41)	Blog Post #2: See Course Site for Instructions
Thursday, September 1 — “And Here’s Where We (Also) Begin”: Multilingualism in Old and Early Modern English	Townend, “Contacts and Conflicts: Latin, Norse, and French,” from <i>The Oxford History of English</i> (75-106) Blank, “The Babel of Renaissance English” from <i>The Oxford History of English</i> (262-98)	

Week Three	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, September 6 — Language and Literacy: Early Print Culture	Parkes, “The Literacy of the Laity,” from <i>The Medieval World</i> (555-75)	Blog Post #3: See Course Site for Instructions
Thursday, September 8 — Language and Literacy: Later Print Culture (+ Peer Review Workshop)	Claridge, “From Manuscript to Printing: Transformations of Genres in the History of English,” from <i>The Oxford Handbook of the History of English</i> (304-13)	Read through your peer review partner’s rough draft. Provide both marginal comments and a paragraph-length endnote, and bring either a print or digital copy of your partner’s draft to class. Email me the annotated version of your partner’s work before class.

Week Four	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, September 13 —Exploring the Rhetoric and Style of (Spoken) Language	Watts, “From Polite Language to Educated Language: The Re-Emergence of an Ideology,” from <i>Alternative Histories of English</i> (155-72) Millar, “Eloquence and Elegance: Ideals of Communicative Competence in Spoken English,” from <i>Alternative Histories of English</i> (173-190)	Blog Post #4: See Course Site for Instructions
Thursday, September 15 —Exploring the Rhetoric and Style of (Gestural) Language	Bulwer, <i>Chirologia: or the Natural Language of the Hand and Chironomia: or the Art of Manual Rhetoric</i> (xiii-xxxix, 1-7, 151-54)	Lexical In(ter)vention assignment due. Be prepared to talk about your work in class.

Week Five	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, September 20 —Language x Mode: American Sign Language **Critical Linguistic Autobiography Prompt Assigned	Butler, “Where Access Meets Multimodality: The Case of ASL Music Videos”	Blog Post #5: See Course Site for Instructions

Week Five	Reading	Assignments Due
Thursday, September 22 —Language x Mode: Transmodality	Horner, Selfe, and Lockridge, “Translinguality, Transmodality, and Difference: Exploring Dispositions, Change in Language, and Learning” (1-46)	- - -

Act Two: Language and Social Identity

Week Six	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, September 27 —The Sociality of Language: Policing Linguistic Encounters	Cameron, “On Verbal Hygiene,” from <i>Verbal Hygiene</i> (1-32)	- - -
Thursday, September 29 —The Sociality of Language: Making Sense of Slang and Profanity	Adams, “What Is It?: The Essentials of Slang,” from <i>Slang: The People’s Poetry</i> (1-53) OR Adams, “Profanity: The Great Debate(s),” from <i>In Praise of Profanity</i> (1-57)	Blog Post #6: See Course Site for Instructions

Week Seven	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, October 4 —Language and Gender: Women and Sexist Language Norms (+ Peer Review Workshop)	Cameron, “The New Pygmalion: Verbal Hygiene for Women,” from <i>Verbal Hygiene</i> (166-211)	Read through your peer review partner’s rough draft. Provide both marginal comments and a paragraph-length endnote, and bring either a print or digital copy of your partner’s draft to class. Email me the annotated version of your partner’s work before class.
Thursday, October 6 —Language and Gender: Women’s Writing as Linguistic Innovation, Invention	Nevalainen, “Women’s Writings as Evidence for Linguistic Continuity and Change in Early Modern English,” from <i>Alternative Histories of English</i> (191-209)	Blog Post #7: See Course Site for Instructions

Week Eight	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, October 11 —Language and Race: Sounding Out	Stoeber, “Introduction: The Sonic Color Line and the Listening Ear,” from <i>The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening</i> (1-28)	Blog Post #8: See Course Site for Instructions
Thursday, October 13 —Language and Race: Speaking Up	Alim and Smitherman, “‘Nah, We Straight’: Black Language and America’s First Black President,” from <i>Articulate While Black: Barack Obama, Language, and Race in the U.S.</i> (1-30)	Critical Linguistic Autobiography assignment due. Be prepared to talk about your work in class.

Week Nine	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, October 18 —Language and Sexuality: Linguistic Representation in Pop Culture ** Circumlectio Prompt Assigned	Eberhardt, “Subjects and Objects: Linguistic Performances of Sexuality in the Lyrics of Black Female Hip-Hop Artists” (21-47)	---
Thursday, October 20 —Language and Sexuality: Stereotypes and Speech Patterns	Thorpe, “Do I Sound Gay?” (Available to stream on Netflix; 77m)	Blog Post #9: See Course Site for Instructions

Act Three: Digital English, Nonhuman Languages, and Linguistic Futures

Week Ten	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, October 25 —Language in the Age of the Internet: Visual Communication	Sternbergh, “Smile, You’re Speaking Emoji,” <i>New York Magazine</i>	---
Thursday, October 27 —Language in the Age of the Internet: Does the Web Change English?	Crystal, “Linguistic Perspectives,” from <i>Internet Linguistics: A Student Guide</i> (1-15)	Blog Post #10: See Course Site for Instructions

Week Eleven	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, November 1 —Other than Human: Evolutionary Frameworks and Animal Linguistics	Tallerman and Gibson, “Introduction: The Evolution of Language,” from <i>The Oxford Handbook of Language Evolution</i> (1-35)	Circumlectio assignment due. Be prepared to talk about your work in class
Thursday, November 3 —Other than Human: Honeybees as Case Study **Final Multimedia Language Project Prompt Assigned	Crist, “Can an Insect Speak? The Case of the Honeybee Dance Language” (7-38)	- - -

Week Twelve	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, November 8 —Language and the Nonhuman Future: Code as Language?	Marino, “Critical Code Studies” Cramer, “Language,” from <i>Software Studies: A Lexicon</i> (172-75)	- - -
Thursday, November 10 —Language and the Posthuman Future: Extraterrestrial Linguistics	Villeneuve, “Arrival” (available to rent on iTunes, Amazon VOD, etc.; 116m)	Final Multimedia Language Project Proposal Due

Week Thirteen	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, November 15 —No Class: Individual Student Conferences	- - -	Be prepared to discuss your final project proposal during our conference meeting
Thursday, November 17 —No Class: Individual Student Conferences	- - -	Be prepared to discuss your final project proposal during our conference meeting

No Class on on Tuesday, November 22 and Thursday, November 24 due to Fall Break—Have a great week off!

Week Fifteen	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, November 29 —Final Student Presentations / In-Progress Workshops	---	Be prepared to present—and discuss—a work-in-progress version of your Final Multimedia Language Project
Thursday, December 1 —Final Student Presentations / In-Progress Workshops	---	Be prepared to present—and discuss—a work-in-progress version of your Final Multimedia Language Project

Week Sixteen	Reading	Assignments Due
Tuesday, December 6 —Final Student Presentations / In-Progress Workshops	---	Be prepared to present—and discuss—a work-in-progress version of your Final Multimedia Language Project

****In lieu of meeting during our scheduled final exam period, you will be posting your final projects to your blog (and submitting your accompanying written rationales to Compass 2G) by Tuesday, December 13th, at 5.00p. If you need to turn in a physical object, please make separate arrangements with me to turn these items in by the same time listed above.*