LING 465.01: Structure and History of English

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LING 465 STRUCTURE & HISTORY OF ENGLISH SPRING 2017

Instructor information:
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Learning Outcomes of LING 46 (a description of your successful scholarship):

• Structural
  i) acknowledging advantages and limitations of a prescriptive grammar; understanding and practicing descriptivism (structural linguistic methods) on modern English in its present-day, later, late and early forms (direct observation)
  ii) growing generally familiar with and modestly competent in methods of analyzing language (writing a grammar) at sentence, word (and sound) levels, whose forms in human behavior imply a presence of sets of rules (systems)
  iii) recognizing formations of language-levels by rule-sets as conceivably pure forms (i.e., lacking evident meaning); realizing meaning as a PREDICATION procedure assigning definite values to variables (structure as quasi-algebraic)
  iv) distinguishing structure of rule-based systems from the lexicon, a store of denotative/connotative significations; simulating the systemization of significations in the form of a dictionary (lexicography as opposed to grammar)

• Historical
  i) identifying the origins and impetus of prescriptivism and the perceived needs for an English dictionary/grammar
  ii) ascertaining descriptive methods and the arithmetic (qua logical) perceptions of grammar in a prescriptivist age
  iii) explaining that prescriptions for language behavior must be informed to a certain degree by optimal descriptions
  iv) detecting central language-change processes during and pre-dating prescriptivism and typifying an English idiom
  v) noting critical language-contact processes during and pre-dating prescriptivism and epitomizing English cultures

Materials for LING 465:

Reading material for the course are grouped according to how they are designed to contribute to distinct audiences, students engaged in a program of study leading to an endorsement in English Teaching/Teaching English and others:

• INSTRUCTIONAL
  FOR BOTH AUDIENCES; RESOURCES FOR FOSTERING SCHOLARLY ENDEAVOR AS EACH SEES FIT
  Three required textbooks sketching in rough detail the topics raised by lecture/discussion during class meetings

The next two sets, when used as materials for this course, will be found posted on the Moodle internet supplement:

• PEDAGOGICAL
  PRIMARILY FOR TEACHERS; RESOURCES FOR ENGAGING INTEREST IN A HERITAGE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM
  Chiefly companions tooa 1986 PBS program entitled The Story of English - Episode 2: The Mother Tongue; these texts have been designed to tutor native English-speaking students in the structure and history of English
• SUPPLEMENTAL
PRIMARILY FOR SCHOLARS; OTHER SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCES MAY ALSO BE USED

Passages covering details of both English structure and history for more advanced exploration of the subject


Coursework for LING 465: WEIGHTING

In-class activities (approx. 1-2 every week) = 100 pts.
Out-of-class assignments (approx. 2-3 every two weeks) = 225 pts.
First-quarter exam (take-home, approx. due date, 2/22) = 125 pts.
Midterm exam (take-home/in-class, 3/15) = 250 pts.
Final exam (take-home/in-class, 5/9) = 300 pts.
Total = 1000 pts.

Exams: (tentative, subject to change)
First-Quarter Wednesday, 22 February (take-home only)
Mid-Term Wednesday, 15 March (take-home & in-class portion, during class meeting)
Final Tuesday, 9 May (take-home & in-class portion, from 10:10 to 12:10 in classroom)

Course Grading:
I assess final grades based on points accrued from activities, assignments, and exams. I gauge points earned in several ways: according to percentage (points earned divided by total points), percentile (points earned to be measured on a "curve"), and quartile (points earned as separated into fourths, e.g., top 25%, bottom 25%, etc.). Based on these measures, I make assessments that are represented by traditional letter grade and may also include a distinction made between + / - . THIS COURSE MUST BE TAKEN FOR A TRADITIONAL LETTER GRADE ONLY, NOT CR/NC.
If you are unsure what traditional letter grades represent, then please note these general descriptions:
A means excellent (above 90%) C means competent (roughly 70% to 80%)
B means superior (roughly 80% to 90%) D means below average (below 70%)

Special accommodation:
If you will need special accommodation in this course due to some learning challenge that has been verified by DSS, please see me early in the semester, and we can come up with some appropriate accommodation.

Coursework: LATE POLICY
All activities, assignments or exams given to the instructor after its due-date are not guaranteed to be either graded (and entered into the grade record) or returned (i.e., students must keep track).

Course attendance: POLICY
Perfect attendance is desired but not expected; excessive absences typically intersect adversely with late policy and affect final grades. Students who miss the first two class meetings must drop the course (see URL presented below):
(http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html, under attendance/absence).
Technology:
You may, of course, take class notes on a laptop or iPad or the like. Aside from that, I expect that technology will not intrude during class time. Please turn your phones to “vibrate” or a similar setting that will not disturb the class.

Course Withdrawal: POLICY
To know more information about withdrawing from a course, see the URL below:
(http://www.umt.edu/withdrawal/AlternateOptions.aspx)

Academic Honesty:
All students must observe academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to academic penalty by the instructor of the course and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. As a student in this course and at this university, you must be familiar with the Student Conduct Code (see URL presented below):
(http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php)

Coursework: THE GRADUATE INCREMENT
LING 465 is a UG course, enrolling undergraduate and graduate students who participate together; UG courses include graduate increments reviewed by UM’s Graduate Council (the body overseeing UM graduate curricula). Graduate students in this course must therefore exhibit a more advanced competency in the coursework than the undergraduate students exhibit. This level of enhanced competence is principally gauged by the ensuing valuation procedure: Graduates students’ point totals are calculated statistically (i.e., rated on a bell curve) with those of undergraduate students in gauging graduates’ final grades (point totals for undergraduates only are similarly curved for +/- ratings); that is, total scored by specific graduate students must be of equal/greater amount of undergraduates to be considered for the same/similar grade. In addition, some graduate-students MAY lead a discussion on material chosen by the instructor covering content associated with description and/or standardization of English at a point after the fourth week of classes (when the first-quarter exam is posted) but before the midterm take-home portion is posted (mid-March). Discussion leading may also be substituted by another appropriate project on another topic.

Course introduction ENGLISH STRUCTURE AND HISTORY IN QUOTATIONS
§ As English came to be used increasingly to translate the classics and as the primary language for scientific and philosophical writings, many Englishmen [sic] became uneasy over the fact that they had nothing like a grammar of Latin to settle questions of usage, no rules to guide those not entirely at ease in the language.
Joseph M. Williams, Origins of the English Language (1975, p. 94)

§ The spontaneous creativeness of Shakespeare, verbing [sic] it with nouns and adjectives, so to speak, sublimely indifferent to rules, untrodden by any considerations in language save those springing from a sure instinct, had given place to hesitation and uncertainty, so that a man like Dryden confessed that at times he had to translate an idea into Latin in order to decide on the correct way to express it in English.

§ Who climbs the grammar tree, distinctly knows / Where noun, and verb, and participle grows.
Line 583 from Sixth Satire of Juvenal (1693), translation by John Dryden

§ We have yet no prosodia [authority in pronunciation], not so much a tolerable dictionary, or a grammar, so that our language is in a manner barbarous.
from Discourse concerning Satire (1693), by John Dryden

§ I do here, in the Name of all the Learned and Polite Persons of the Nation, complain that our Language is extremely imperfect; that its daily Improvements are by no means in proportion to its daily Corruptions; and the Pretenders to polish and refine it, have chiefly multiplied Abuses and Absurdities; and, that in many Instances, it offends against every Part of Grammar.
from A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue (1712), by Jonathan Swift

§ I have laboured [sic] to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations.
Samuel Johnson, The Rambler (1752)