

English 221 Z: The English Language

(Guidelines subject to change)

Fall 2008

Instructor: John Black

Classroom: Memorial 302

Class schedule: W 6:30-9:30

Office: Zinzendorf 303

Office Hours: T 2:15-3:15, W 5:15-6:15,

and by appointment

English Dept. Phone: 861-1390

Email: jrblack@moravian.edu

Required text:

Millward, C. M., *A Biography of the English Language*. 2nd ed. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 1996. (On syllabus as "BEL.")

Other course materials: (Various locations, as noted.)

The Adventure of English: 500 A.D. to 2000 A.D. 8 parts. Narrated by Melvyn Bragg. Princeton, N.J.: Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2004. (DVD videorecordings on streaming video; "AOE" on syllabus.)

Berg, Donna Lee. *A Guide to the Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993. (Reeves Reference.)

The Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989-. (20 vols. in Reference; referred to as "OED.")

In Search of the First Language. Boston: NOVA/WGBH Educational Foundation, 1994. (Videorecording on streaming video.)

American Tongues. Dir. by Louis Alvarez and Andrew Kolker. New York: Center for New American Media, 1986. (Videorecording on streaming video.)

Course Description, Objectives, and Format:

Welcome to English 221! Language seems a fairly basic aspect of our experience, and one that we often take for granted, but its development and use nonetheless raise many questions: how/why does language change? what are some of the controversies about the history and current usage of the English language? why is language sometimes controversial? To begin to address these and other questions, this class engages students in tracing the evolution of the English language from its origins in the fifth century to the present day. After briefly considering the origins and expression of language in general, we will examine the development of English from the Old English period, through the Middle English and Early Modern English periods, up to Present-Day English or 'Englishes'. In our journey through the chronology and biography of English, we will examine both the 'outer' and 'inner' histories of the language, looking at how social, historical, political, and intellectual contexts have influenced the development of the language in its phonology, graphics, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and semantics. The examination of changes and forces involved in the development of the language will help us not only to understand and appreciate more fully the richness and vigor of English in its many forms and uses, but also to gain insights into contemporary issues regarding the language. For our study of the history of the language, we'll rely on a mix of short lectures, audio-visual aids, presentations, and, most importantly, discussion: *preparation and participation are, therefore, essential to the success of the class and to your success in it.*

Assignments:

You will have three exams based on our chronological study of the development of the language. Each exam will consist of short answer and essay questions. None of the exams is cumulative. As part of a group, you will make a presentation, based on one of the videos we view and discuss for the class. In addition, you will complete several other shorter exercises and projects. Specific requirements for the assignments will be discussed in advance of each assignment. Assignments are due in class on the due dates noted on the syllabus. **I do not accept or read late assignments, except under very unusual circumstances.**

Extra Credit:

Students may earn up to a total of three points of extra credit to be added at the end of the semester to their lowest assignment grade. Extra credit is earned through confirmed participation in various activities related to language, literature, and writing. For example, a student whose attendance is verified at a MCTC production or a MC poetry or fiction reading will earn one point for each activity. Attendance at performances and readings at other Lehigh Valley institutions may also be eligible for extra credit. Similarly, any student for whom submission of creative work to *Manuscript* or other literary journal is verified will earn one point. Also, any student for whom a session with the Writing Center is verified will earn one point. Total extra credit may not exceed three points. One hundred points is the maximum total for the course.

Attendance and Participation:

Be here: I will take roll regularly. You are expected to attend each day. **Be prompt:** Class begins at 6:30 pm sharp. **Be prepared:** Your first responsibility is to read carefully and be prepared to discuss, both orally and in writing all assignments. You should expect to devote several hours to preparing for each class. (A general rule of thumb for college courses is 2-3 hours outside of class for every hour spent in class.) **Participate:** You are expected to make comments or ask questions on the readings and topics each day, as well as participating in groupwork and discussions. I will not hesitate to call on you if you are not contributing. Class time allotted for groupwork, group discussion, review, etc. is instructional time; you are expected to remain focused on the assigned activity for all of the allotted time.

If you know you will be absent from class, please talk to me beforehand. If you are sick, please notify me as soon as possible. *Your absence from more than two classes may affect your final grade. Every two times you come to class late or leave early without talking to me first will also count as an unexcused absence. Missing more than three classes may result in your failing the course. If you are absent, it is wholly your responsibility to determine what was covered in class and what revisions, if any, were made to the syllabus in your absence.*

Other notes: One of the qualities I appreciate most in students is **professionalism**. Students who exhibit this quality are alert, responsive, and tactful in class, turn in thoughtful assignments, meet deadlines, and keep me informed of any difficulties or successes they have while in my class. Please refrain from eating during classtime, and please arrange to go to the restroom before or after class or during break. We will have a break midway through each period. Also, please silence and put away all cell phones, pagers, etc. before coming into the classroom.

Office Hours:

Students are always welcome in my office. My office hours are times that I have set aside specifically to talk with you – not only about class and assignments, but also about life at Moravian, about something fun and exciting you've done, or whatever. Make use of them. I realize that it may be difficult for you to meet during my posted office hours, so I'm also readily available by appointment: jblack@moravian.edu.

Other Resources:

- Writing Center (2nd fl, Zinzendorf) <http://home.moravian.edu/public/eng/writingCenter/appointments.htm>
- Reeves librarians and the library webpage (<http://home.moravian.edu/public/reeves>)
- Learning Services (1307 Main St., 861-1510) <http://home.moravian.edu/public/stusvc/learning/>
- Counseling Ctr (1307 Main St., 861-1510) <http://home.moravian.edu/public/stusvc/counseling/>
- Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Learning Services Office (1307 Main St., 861-1510) as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism, representing someone else's work as your own, is a serious breach of personal integrity and a violation of the College's Academic Honesty Policy: consult the *Student Handbook* or <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/academic2.htm> **Read this policy in its entirety.** I take the provisions of the Academic Honesty Policy very seriously and am obliged to report any suspected cases of plagiarism, the consequences of which may be failure, suspension, or dismissal from the College. If you plagiarize, you will receive a 'zero' on the plagiarized assignment, which will very likely result in your failure for the course. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism will not be accepted as an excuse. If at any time you have any questions about documenting sources properly (MLA style) or as to whether or not the aid you are receiving is authorized, don't hesitate to ask me. The Reeves Library online research tutorial also addresses the issue: <http://home.moravian.edu/public/reevestutorial/pages/index.htm>

Evaluation:

(The instructor will apply both quantitative and qualitative assessments in determining grades for assignments and for the course. Final grades calculated on 10-pt. scale: 90=A-, 80=B-, etc.)

Exam on Old English	20%
Exam on Middle English	20%
Exam on Early Modern and Present-Day English.....	20%
Group Presentation.....	10%
Terms and Questions.....	10%
Exercises and minor projects.....	10%
Attendance and class participation.....	10%

You must complete all these requirements in order to be eligible to pass the course.

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Aug.	27	W	Introduction to course; policies; syllabus; informal writing/discussion on language
Sept.	3	W	Introduction: <i>BEL</i> Chapter 1; view/discuss <i>American Tongues</i> video
	10	W	Phonology, and Writing: <i>BEL</i> Chapters 2 & 3; resources for the study of the English language; exercises
	17	W	Language Families and Indo-European: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 4; <i>In Search of the First Language</i> (video) – Group #1 presentation
	24	W	Old English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 5, part I (pp. 75-106); <i>AOE 1 – Birth of a Language</i> (video) – Group #2 presentation
Oct.	1	W	Old English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 5, part II (pp. 107-140); Old English exercises
	8	W	No class – “Shakespeare Behind Bars” program; Exam due – Old English
	15	W	Middle English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 6, part I (pp. 141-180); <i>AOE 2 – English Goes Underground</i> (video) – Group #3 presentation
	22	W	Middle English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 6, part II (pp. 181-222); Middle English exercises
	29	W	Exam due – Middle English ; view <i>AOE 3 – Battle for the Language of the Bible</i> (video) – no group presentation
Nov.	5	W	Early Modern English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 7, part I (pp. 223-260); <i>AOE 4 – “This Earth, This Realm, This England”</i> (video) – Group #4 presentation
	12	W	Early Modern English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 7, part II (pp. 260-299); <i>AOE 5 – English in America</i> (video) – Group #5 presentation
	19	W	Present-Day English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 8; <i>AOE 6 – Speaking Proper</i> (video) – Group #6 presentation
	26	W	No class – Thanksgiving break
Dec.	3	W	English Around the World: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 9, part I (pp. 343-378); <i>AOE 7 – The Language of Empire</i> (video) – Group #7 presentation
	10	W	English Around the World: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 9, part II (pp. 379-406); <i>AOE 8 – Many Tongues Called English – One World Language</i> (video) – Group #8 presentation ; review; course evaluation

Final Exam: Wed. Dec. 17, 6:30 pm. Plan accordingly.