

# English 221 Z: The English Language

(Guidelines subject to change)

**Blackboard enrollment code for course: ENGL221ZFA10**

Fall 2010

Instructor: John Black

Classroom: PPHAC 117

Class schedule: W 6:30-9:30

Email: [jblack@moravian.edu](mailto:jblack@moravian.edu)

Office: Zinzendorf 303

Office Hours: T 2:30-3:30, W 5:15-6:15,

and by appointment

English Dept. Phone: 861-1390

**Required text:** Millward, C. M., *A Biography of the English Language*. 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.)

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

"Constant Change: The Diversification and Spread of Language." *Speaking in Tongues: The History of Language*, Vol. 2. Dir. by Christine Brown. Princeton: Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2007. (Videorecording on streaming video.)

"Let There Be Words: The Origin of Human Language." *Speaking in Tongues: The History of Language*, Vol. 1. Dir. by Christine Brown. Princeton: Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2007. (Videorecording on streaming video.)

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

## 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 readings, 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 two essay exams based on our chronological study of the development of the language and one essay exam narrating the 'life' of a word. 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, some of which will be collected into an end-of-semester portfolio. For each class, you will complete terms and questions to be handed in. 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. In December, Moravian will host the Undergraduate Conference in Medieval and Early Modern Studies; a student who submits a paper for the conference, assists with the conference, or attends the conference will earn one point. Or, for instance, 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 notifying 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 expect and appreciate most in students is **personal integrity**. Students who exhibit this quality are ethical and honest, are engaged in class, turn in thoughtful assignments, are responsive to the world beyond themselves, meet deadlines, and keep me informed of any difficulties or successes they have while in my class. +Please arrange to go to the restroom before or after class or during break. We will have a break midway through each class. **+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](mailto:jblack@moravian.edu).

## Other Resources:

- Writing Center (2<sup>nd</sup> fl, Zinzendorf) <http://home.moravian.edu/public/eng/writingCenter/appointments.htm>  
The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you have mobility impairments and need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.
- 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 Center (1307 Main St., 861-1510) <http://home.moravian.edu/public/stusvc/counseling/>
- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510).  
Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

## 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* <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/academic/academic2.html> **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 and Middle English .....	25%
Exam on Early Modern and Present-Day English.....	25%
"Life" of a Word Essay.....	20%
Group Presentation.....	10%
Terms and Questions, portfolio 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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Sept.	1	W	Introduction to course; policies; syllabus; informal writing/discussion on language; view/discuss <i>American Tongues</i> video
	8	W	Introduction, Phonology, and Writing: <i>BEL</i> Chapters 1, 2 & 3; exercises Guest lecture on language and memory (Dr. Sarah Johnson) "Let There Be Words: The Origin of Human Language" (video)
	15	W	Language Families and Indo-European: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 4; "Constant Change: The Diversification and Spread of Language" (video) – <b>Group #1 presentation</b>
	22	W	Old English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 5, part I (pp. 75-106); <i>AOE</i> 1 – "Birth of a Language" (video) – <b>Group #2 presentation</b>
	29	W	Old English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 5, part II (pp. 107-139); Old English exercises; video on medieval England – no group presentation
Oct.	6	W	Middle English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 6, part I (pp. 141-180); <i>AOE</i> 2 – "English Goes Underground" (video) – <b>Group #3 presentation</b>
	13	W	Middle English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 6, part II (pp. 181-222); Middle English exercises; <i>AOE</i> 3 – "Battle for the Language of the Bible" (video) – <b>Group #4 presentation</b>
	20	W	<b>Exam due – Old and Middle English;</b> resources for the study of the English language; exercises
	27	W	Early Modern English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 7, part I (pp. 223-260); <i>AOE</i> 4 – "This Earth, This Realm, This England" (video) – <b>Group #5 presentation</b>
Nov.	3	W	Early Modern English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 7, part II (pp. 260-299); <i>AOE</i> 5 – "English in America" (video) – <b>Group #6 presentation</b>
	10	W	Present Day English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 8; <i>AOE</i> 6 – "Speaking Proper" (video) – <b>Group #7 presentation</b>
	17	W	English Around the World: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 9, part I (pp. 343-378); <i>AOE</i> 7 – "The Language of Empire" (video) – <b>Group #8 presentation</b>
	24	W	<b>No class</b> – Thanksgiving break
Dec.	1	W	English Around the World: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 9, part II (pp. 379-406); <i>AOE</i> 8 – "Many Tongues Called English – One World Language" (video) – <b>Group #9 presentation</b>
	8	W	<b>Exam due – Early Modern and Present Day English; portfolio due;</b> review; course evaluation

**Final Exam due ("Life" of a Word Essay): Wed. Dec. 15, 6:30 pm. Plan accordingly.**