

# English 221Z/PM: The English Language

(Guidelines subject to change)

Blackboard (Bb) url: <http://blackboard.moravian.edu> Bb enrollment code for course: ENGL221ZSP14

Spring 2014

Instructor: John Black

Classroom: PPHAC 330

Class schedule: W 6:30-9:30

Office: Zinzendorf 303

Office Hours: T 4:00-5:00, W 5:30-6:30,

and by appointment

Office Phone: 861-1390

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

**Required text:** Millward, C. M. and Mary Hayes, *A Biography of the English Language*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2012. Print. (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. (Streaming video on Bb; "AOE" on syllabus.)

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

"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. DVD. (Streaming video on Bb.)

"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. DVD. (Streaming video on Bb.)

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

*The Oxford English Dictionary Online*. December 2013. Oxford: Oxford UP. Web. (<http://www.oed.com/>)

## 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.* Our class Blackboard (Bb) site (see information at top of this page) is an important component of the course. The Bb site not only highlights important announcements for the class (e.g., weather-related cancellations), but also serves as a repository for course documents (e.g., this description and syllabus), assignments, and streaming videos used in the course. Visit it often! Be sure that you're kept up to date by providing current contact information via the 'Personal Information' link (in the drop-down box under your name in the upper right corner of the Bb page).

***\*\*\*For English majors: In preparation for creating an English Major Portfolio in your senior capstone seminar, please save both digital and hard copies of your work for this class, including drafts with peer and instructor comments.***

### **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 two presentations, based on 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 most every class, you will complete terms and questions (posted to Bb) for the assigned readings. Keep a copy for your use in class and in reviewing for assignments and make a photocopy to hand in to me at the beginning of class. (Alternatively, you may email me a copy of your responses *before class*. Be sure to *type your name on the document you email to me.*) 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:** Learning takes place both in and outside the classroom. To encourage you to learn more about the richness of the College and local community, students may earn extra credit through confirmed participation (usually in the form of a brief write-up) in various activities related to language, literature, and writing. Up to a total of three points of extra credit can be added at the end of the semester to a student's lowest assignment grade. One hundred points is the maximum total for the course. Some examples of eligible activities are: attending a College theater production or poetry/fiction reading, submission of creative work to *The Manuscript*, or a meeting with a Writing Center tutor. Other, similar activities may also be eligible; please confer with me.

### **Attendance and Participation:**

**Attendance, preparation and participation are crucial, given the compactness of the evening schedule. 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, not break 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 tardy or 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, etc. before coming into the classroom.**

**Class cancellations:** In the event of inclement weather, decisions about cancellations for this course (as an evening course) will accord with the Comenius Center guidelines and notifications. For any cancellations or changes in start time, I will also plan to post an announcement on our class Bb site. Make-up plans for cancelled classes will be arranged with the class.

### **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: [blackj@moravian.edu](mailto:blackj@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>
- Academic Support (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 Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support, at 1307 Main Street, or by calling 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center. Comenius Center students should contact the Comenius Center.

**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>

Related to academic honesty is the issue of copyright; please protect yourself by being familiar with and following copyright laws.

**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.)

Essay exam on Old English and Middle English .....	25%
Essay exam on Early Modern and Present-Day English.....	25%
"Life" of a Word Essay.....	10%
Group Presentations (10pts each).....	20%
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.**

# English 221Z/PM

Spring 2014

(Syllabus subject to change)

Jan.	15	W	Introduction to course; policies; syllabus; informal writing/discussion on language
	22	W	Introduction, Phonology, and Writing: <i>BEL</i> Chapters 1, 2 & 3; exercises; view/discuss <i>American Tongues</i> video
	29	W	Language Families and Indo-European: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 4; "Let There Be Words: The Origin of Human Language" (video); <b>Group presentation #1</b>
Feb.	5	W	Review <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 4; "Constant Change: The Diversification and Spread of Language" (video) – <b>Group presentation #2</b> ; Old English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 5, part I (pp. 79-111)
	12	W	AOE 1 – "Birth of a Language" (video) – <b>Group presentation #3</b> ; Old English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 5, part II (pp. 112-142); Old English exercises
	19	W	Middle English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 6, part I (pp. 143-180); discuss writing assignments for course; AOE 2 – "English Goes Underground" (video) – <b>Group presentation #4</b>
	26	W	Middle English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 6, part II (pp. 180-218); Middle English exercises; AOE 3 – "Battle for the Language of the Bible" (video) – <b>Group presentation #5</b>
Mar.	5	W	<b>No class</b> – Spring Break
	12	W	<b>Exam due – Old and Middle English</b> ; resources for the study of the English language; exercises
	19	W	Early Modern English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 7, part I (pp. 219-258); AOE 4 – "This Earth, This Realm, This England" (video) – <b>Group presentation #6</b>
	26	W	Early Modern English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 7, part II (pp. 258-293); AOE 5 – "English in America" (video) – <b>Group presentation #7</b>
Apr.	2	W	Present Day English: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 8; AOE 6 – "Speaking Proper" (video) – <b>Group presentation #8</b>
	9	W	English Around the World: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 9, part I (pp. 341-376); AOE 7 – "The Language of Empire" (video) – <b>Group presentation #9</b>
	16	W	English Around the World: <i>BEL</i> Chpt. 9, part II (pp. 376-407); AOE 8 – "Many Tongues Called English – One World Language" (video) – <b>Group presentation #10</b>
	23	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. Apr. 30, 6:30 pm. Plan accordingly.**