

Introduction to English Studies FALL 2009

Instructor: Al Lehner, Ph.D.
Style of Class: workshop with lecture
Number of Credits: 3

This course offers an introduction to the formal study of the English language. As such, the course will focus on several key factors in coming to know English: its history, its current usage, and its spread in a variety of ways across the globe. In particular, as English becomes more globalized, or internationalized, various world Englishes have become reality; this course explores some of those Englishes and the reasons for their proliferation. Students will read materials written for native speakers in the U.S. and the UK. The issues mentioned above lead to a natural discussion of what is “standard” English today and what is a “native speaker.” For a student who is seriously considering a career as an English teacher, it is essential to take into account sociocultural and political factors that have led English to the main stage in today’s linguistic world. The idea of English as the primary *lingua franca* will be analyzed. One benefit of this course is that students will be expected to assess their own understanding and “level” of English on several levels—grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.—and discuss ways in which they can develop greater English fluency and proficiency. This course offers a “hands on” approach to learning what English is all about.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students will...

- (1) learn some of the basic main occurrences in the history of the English language
- (2) understand how English has evolved and is still evolving
- (3) consider a number of world Englishes and account for their appearances
- (4) analyze the meaning of “standard” in language usage
- (5) analyze the meaning of “native speaker” in a world of various Englishes
- (6) understand the sociocultural and political aspects of English
- (7) consider classroom teaching applications of all of the above
- (8) focus on their own English language proficiency and development
- (9) read two works of literature

Prerequisite: ENG 100

Class Materials:

(1) Crystal, D. (2004). *The English language: A guided tour of the language, 2nd revised edition*. London, UK: Penguin.

(2) Carroll, L. *Alice’s adventures in wonderland and Through the looking glass*. Modern Library.

one of the following:

(3) Grahame, K. & Avery, G. *The wind in the willows*. London, UK: Penguin.

(3) Bradbury, R. *Fahrenheit 451*. NY: Simon & Schuster.

(4) Steinbeck, J. *Travels with Charley in Search of America*. UK: Penguin.

NOTE: Additional readings will be distributed by the instructor.

COURSE METHOD

The teaching method employed in this course will follow a workshop style, yet the instructor will also offer lectures regularly on the topics in the assigned readings. As well, each student should come to class prepared to actively discuss and question the assigned texts. This introductory course about the study of the English language requires students to learn a body of knowledge.

EVALUATION / ASSESSMENT

Throughout the course, regular reading quizzes will be given for the assigned texts. Students should come to class prepared for these quizzes, having read the assigned texts in advance.

Students will be asked to write 2 brief thought papers (TP) about specific topics presented in the class. It is possible for a TP to be based upon observation of some aspect of English language usage. Each TP should be 4-5 pages long.

Students will have three exams that test the course material.

Final Course Grade

15% in-class discussions
15% reading quizzes
20% brief papers (BP)
50% 3 exams

A 100-90
B 80-89
C 70-79
D 60-69
F below 60

COURSE SCHEDULE: (This is very tentative.)

Week 1

Introduction to course

Reading (Discuss):

Crystal (DC), "The English language today"
"Pidgeons and creoles"

Quiz #1

Week 2

Reading (Discuss):

DC, "Part I: The structure of English"
"Grammar"
"Grammar and you"
"Vocabulary"
"How large is your vocabulary?"

Quiz #2

Week 3

Reading (Discuss):

- DC, “Pronunciation”
- “Received pronunciation”
- “Spelling”
- “Spelling reform”

Quiz #3

Writing:

TP #1: “The Structure of English” (directions given in class)

Week 4

Reading (Discuss):

- DC, “Part II: The uses of English”
- “Language variety”
- “Trucker Talk”
- “English at play”
- “Sound symbolism”

Quiz #4

Week 5

Reading (Discuss):

- DC, “The effect of technology”
- “Texting”
- “Personal English”
- “Statistical laws?”

EXAM #1

Week 6

Reading (Discuss):

- DC, “Part III: The history of English”
- “Old English”
- “Casting the runes”
- “Middle English”
- “The origins of modern standard English”

Quiz #5

Week 7

Reading (Discuss):

- DC, “Early modern English”
- “Words then and now”
- “English around the world”
- “British and American English”

Quiz #6

Week 8

Reading (Discuss):

DC, “English today”
“Plain English”
“English tomorrow”

EXAM #2

Week 9

Reading (Discuss):

Novel of choice (begin)

Quiz #7

Week 10

Reading (Discuss):

Novel of choice (complete)

Writing:

TP #2: “English in History or Literature” (directions given in class)

Week 11

Reading (Discuss):

Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (begin)

Quiz #8

Week 12

Reading (Discuss):

Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (complete)

Quiz #9

Week 13

Reading (Discuss):

Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* (begin)

Quiz #10

Week 14

Reading (Discuss):

Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* (complete)

EXAM #3

Week 15

Discuss:

Review of course

Course / Instructor Evaluation