

LING/ENGL322 – Structure and Meaning of English Words

Class Time/Loc: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-4:45, ILC 119
Instructor: Dr. Heidi Harley
Office Hours: Comm 114b; Tuesdays 10-11 am or by appt.
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Required Texts: *English Words: A Linguistic Introduction*, Heidi Harley, Blackwell.
A good English dictionary, with at least 100,000 entries, and etymological detail. The OED, accessible online through the UA's library's website, is sufficient.
Materials on D2L site

All course documents are subject to change as needed with appropriate advanced notice. Students are responsible for any information announced in class, posted to the course web pages, or announced in the blog. *This is true regardless of whether or not you are attending class.*

Course Description: In this course, you will become familiar with the formal properties (phonology and morphology), meaning (lexical semantics) and history (etymology) of English words, as well as how words are learned (acquisition). These areas will be addressed from a linguistic perspective. It should be of interest to any word hound, poet, linguist, lexicographer or future teacher of English.

Course Objectives: Successful students will by the end of the semester be able to:

- Use and correctly explain the International Phonetic Alphabet as it relates to English.
- Understand some of the basic phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic properties of English words.
- Explain some of the ways in which English words are structurally different from words in other, unrelated languages.
- Know the basics of the history of English, especially as it relates to the discrepancies between spelling and pronunciation of words, their morphological structures, and the kinds of shifts in meaning they have undergone through the years.
- Impress your family and friends with your erudition about words, and English, and English words.
- Write a nonsense poem, create puns, come up with 'Tom Swifties' and other kinds of word-play that every competent speaker of English should be able to use on a regular basis!

Grading: Grades are earned by a simple accumulation of points. Points can be earned by successfully completing assignments, taking exams, and participating in class activities, as follows.

Requirements

Participation in in-class activities = 100 points
Biweekly homeworks = 600 points
Squib = 300 points

Grading Scale
900 – 1000 points = A
800 – 899 points = B
700 – 799 points = C
600 – 699 points = D
599 or fewer points = E

Requirements: Successful students will attend class regularly, and will complete all assignments and submit them on time, in the proper format, following all assignment instruction sheets. Students who wish to earn an ‘A’ must demonstrate superior mastery of course concepts throughout their work this semester. Students who do not demonstrate comprehensive understanding of course concepts should not expect to earn a passing grade. Students who violate our code of conduct, or the code of academic integrity, or any other course policies will not earn a passing grade in this course.

- Participation (100 points)
During the semester, we will conduct a number of in-class activities. Students who are present and participate in activities will receive credit, those who do not will not. Activities will never be announced in advance, and cannot be made up if missed. Activity credit will be generally be awarded at the end of the class period in which the activity takes place; students leaving early will forfeit this credit. See the course policy on late work to learn what to do if you miss a participation activity, in 'policies' handout.
- Biweekly Homeworks (600 points)
You will be assigned 6 (nearly) biweekly homework assignments this semester, each worth 120 points. Each of the homeworks will included a d2l quiz component worth 60 points, and a hard copy component worth 60 points. The d2l quiz component of each homework will cover required readings and lecture, while the hard copy component will involve analysis of some kind of creative language use or wordplay. The homework with the lowest score at the end of the term will be dropped from final grade calculations.
- Squib (300 points)
You will write a short paper (4-5 pages), based on what you found in one of your first six homeworks. You will expand that homework into a discussion of the relevant course concepts and you bring scholarly research to bear on the topic. You will hand in a draft of your squib (worth 100 points) on Thursday, March 25, and a revised final version, worth 200 points, on Tuesday, May 4. You may use any recognized referencing and citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc), as long as you use it correctly and consistently.

Testing out of the Phonetics Lectures: Students who have already mastered the International Phonetic Alphabet, and who understand the basics of articulatory phonetics (perhaps because they have taken LING201, 314 or similar courses) may test out of the lectures on January 21, 26 and 28. A phonetics pretest will be posted on D2L, and those scoring 80% or better on the pretest will be excused from attending class on those days. Students excused from phonetics classes will complete a short phonetics enrichment assignment in order to make up for participation points lost due to their excused absences.

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Honors Section Requirements: Honors students must complete all of the requirements listed on the main syllabus for LING322. However, honors students are expected to take a more active role in their own learning, and to have the skills necessary to complete an independent project. Therefore, you will participate in an advanced project this semester.

Honors Project (50 points): The Antedating Project

The goal of the antedating project is to find and document a written instance of some word (in any spelling variant) that was published prior to the earliest date/quote for it given in the OED.

In undertaking this project, corpus searches might be handy; a librarian can give you hints about how to do that. Or you could just find some old but obscure source, possibly not published in England, (e.g. microfiche of an early American or Australian newspaper from a non-major city), and read through it, checking all the likely-looking words against their OED entries. Look at the ADS-L archive for some examples of antedating.

You will work with Dr. Harley on your antedating project. Your final submission is due any time before the start of class on APRIL 20th. Your submission must include:

- the word, its phonetic transcription and definition, and the earliest date it's recorded in the OED, with the OED's quote and citation for its source
- a full citation of the source you have found it in, including page # etc.
- the complete sentence in which it occurs
- (If possible) photocopies or printouts of both the page on which you found the word and the title page of the source in which you found it.

Once you've submitted your work for a grade, you will post your discovery to the discussion area of d2l, to share with the other students in the class. That post must be available for students to read no later than the start of class on April 28th. Your discovery may be included in class discussions about the history of English.

Honors Grading: Honors students have access to 1050 points, rather than only the 1000 points available in the non-honors section. The grade scale for honors students, therefore, is based on a total available points of 1050, and the rule that you must earn 90% of the possible points to receive an 'A', 80% for a 'B', etc. The math works out as follows:

Requirements

Attendance and participation = 100 points
Weekly homeworks = 600 points
Squib = 300 points
Honors Project = 50 points

Grading Scale

945 – 1050 points = A
840 – 944 points = B
735 – 839 points = C
630 – 734 points = D
629 or fewer points = E