

English 432: History of the English Language
Rhode Island College
Dr. McMunn
Office: Craig-Lee 366

Texts: A. C. Baugh and T. Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 5th ed. [B/C]
MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Edition.

Optional text: W. Nelson Francis. *A History of the English Language*.

Jan.	25	Introduction: Human Language	
	27	History of Language Study	
Feb.	1	History of Writing	B/C 1
	3	Language Study Tools: International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.)	
	8	Pre-history of English	B/C 2
	10	Old English	B/C 3
	15	Old English	B/C 4
	17	Middle English	B/C 5-6
	22	Middle English, I.P.A. Quiz	B/C 7
	24	Middle English	
Mar.	1	Early Modern English	B/C 8
	3	Dictionaries, 16 th -21 th centuries	B/C 9
	8	18 th -20 th Century English and Review	B/C 10
	10	Exam	
	15-17	Spring Break (no classes)	
	22	Dialects and Dialect Study	
	24	Individual Conferences on analysis papers	
	29	Modern British Dialects	B/C 11
	31	American Regional Dialects	
April	5	American Social Dialects	
	7	New England Dialects	
	12	Rhode Island Dialects	
	14	Rhode Island Dialects	
	19	Workshop on Sociolinguistic research	
	21	Linguistics in the Classroom	
	26	Linguistic Issues in Contemporary Society	
	28	Literary analysis paper due and class presentations on papers	
May	3	Class presentations on papers	
	5	Dialect Scavenger Hunt Due; class presentations of dialect survey results	

Course Description:

Language is unique to our species, our culture(s), and to us as individuals. In this course we will study the material from which English literature is created – the English language. We will investigate the historical development of English from its earliest stages in the British Isles to current American dialects. We also will consider the social and political factors that have influenced its development and its cultural contexts, and how these factors affect our lives.

Course Goals:

To help you understand how the English language has developed over the course of its almost 1,500 years of existence.

To help you investigate how language intersects with history, literature, and culture.

Course Requirements: I. P. A. quiz, exam and Dialect Scavenger Hunt (55%); literary analysis paper and presentations (30%), class participation (15%).

Time Line: I strongly recommend that you create and keep a **TIMELINE** of the history of English, including prehistory. Begin with the earliest possible date for the split-up of the Indo-European languages and proceed to today. Use each entry on your time line to cue you to some important details about the date or period. Coordinate your class notes and review notes with the time line. You might wish to look at BBC History Ages of English timeline for a shorter version.

Attendance

Regular attendance and classroom participation are essential. Missing **four** classes for any reason may result in withdrawal from the course.

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time and I am always pleased to meet with you during my office hours or at mutually convenient times arranged in advance. E-mail is an excellent method of communication and you are encouraged to use it to ask questions or make comments about your reading and writing assignments as well as the course. **Please check your own RIC e-mail regularly (at least twice a week) during the term.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious breach of academic behavior. Plagiarism is expressly prohibited as outlined in the Student Handbook; in such cases there are severe penalties which may include failing the assignment without make-up or failing the course. Evidence of plagiarism will be kept on file in the English Department and the office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs for the rest of the student's academic career at Rhode Island College. Severe infringements will be submitted to the Board of College Discipline for further action.

Please note that the English department citation format is that of the *MLA Handbook of Style* (7th ed.). All work submitted in this course will be expected to conform to this citation format.

A Few Useful Web Sites: History of the English Language Home Page, Omniglot, Harvard World-Wide English Dialects, International Dialects of English Archive, The Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE), Center for Applied Linguistics African-American Vernacular English Information Page, Baragona's History of the English Language and General Linguistics Home Page Ask a Linguist (a service of the LINGUIST List).