

University of Arkansas – Fort Smith

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General Syllabus

ENGL 31073 History and Development of the English Language

Credit Hours: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Laboratory Hours: 0

Prerequisite: ENGL 10203 Composition II or ENGL 14343 Honors Composition

Effective Catalog: 2019-2020

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

The historical development of the English language from its Indo-European roots to the present day, with an emphasis on the developing nature of the language.

B. Additional Information

None.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Articulate major cultural events and trends since A.D. 597 to the development of historical and modern varieties of written and spoken English.
2. Differentiate Old, Middle, and Early Modern English and characterize their major structures as they compare with present-day Standard Edited American English (SEAE).
3. Address standard and non-standard varieties of present-day English from a historically informed perspective.
4. Give an account of the effects of social contexts and mechanisms on language change.
5. Frame observations about English language structures in linguistic terms.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking Skills

Students will analyze a variety of texts for their rhetorical and/or literary features, as well as analyze the rhetorical situation to which the texts they produce respond.

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will practice communication skills through discussions, presentations, and a variety of required written assignments.

Ethical Decision Making

Students will practice critical response to the writing of others, responsible use of research materials and intellectual property, and the ethical use of persuasion.

Global & Cultural Perspectives

Students will analyze the rhetorical situation, produce texts for a variety of audiences, and avoid the use of biased language.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. Structures of Language: phonetics, phonology, morphology, lexis, semantics, and syntax
- B. Indo-European languages and the Germanic Language Family
- C. Anglo-Saxon society and the sounds and structure of Old English
- D. The Norman Invasion and the sounds and structure of Middle English
- E. The sounds and structure of Early Modern English
- F. The influence of Latin, French, and other languages on English
- G. Normative influences on English, such as printing, dictionaries, grammatical pedagogy, and social pressure, and their effects
- H. Language as a social practice which changes in response to social pressures
- I. Synchronic language variation: register, dialect, contact varieties
- J. Diachronic language variation: structural and phonological differences between past and present forms of English
- K. The origin and distribution of modern varieties of English, including African-American Vernacular English