

Department of English & Writing Studies

[DRAFT SYLLABUS: THIS MAY CHANGE, BUT NOT IN ANY BIG WAY]**English 3300 (001)**
History of English Language
Fall/Winter 2025-26**Instructor:** Richard J. Moll
rmoll@uwo.ca
UC 4410
519-661-2111 x85803**Office Hours:** Tues. 12:30-2:30
Drop by during office hours, but really I'm
around most afternoons (Mon/Wed. after class)
and I don't mind people just showing up.**Prerequisites:** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Texts

Brinton, Laurel J. and Leslie K. Arnovick. *The English Language: A Linguistic History*. 3rd ed. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2017. (\$150)

Lerer, Seth. *Inventing English: A Portable History of the Language*. Rev. & Exp. Edition. New York: Columbia UP, 2015. (\$25)

Various texts in OWL Brightspace

Recommended: A writer's handbook. Any will do, but you will find a handbook useful as you read Brinton & Arnovick.

Learning Outcomes

The student who successfully completes the course will:

- understand the relationship between the basic components of English (i.e. phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon)
- be able to discuss those components as they relate to the major changes in the language over time and place
- understand the changing social position of English across time and place
- be able to situate a piece of English writing within its immediate linguistic context
- have access to a vocabulary which allows them to discuss literature within a linguistic context.

Methods of Evaluation

Paper	15%
Translation	10%
Tests (7.5% each, best 4 of 5)	30%
Etymology assignment	10%
Final exam	35%

Essay

The essays must be presented in MLA style. A non-traditional paper option will be available, but it's not easy. Come see me if interested. It is due in class (and electronically) on the date assigned. Students will be given a two-day grace period for both the essay and the etymology assignment, after which a late assignment will lose 3% per day (including weekends). The essay must be submitted to Turnitin (through OWL) on or before the due date. It may be submitted late to the drop box outside the English Dept. (UC 2401). Papers stamped "received after 4:00pm" (3:30 on Fridays) will be considered submitted on the following day (so get them in before the collection times).

Tests

In-class tests will take 45 minutes at the end of class. Only four of the five tests will be counted. The lowest COMPLETED test grade will be discarded. In other words, you can screw up once, but if you miss a test it WILL count towards your final grade as zero. BUT, I will allow anyone to rewrite ONE of tests 1-3 for a maximum grade of 70%. A missed test may be rewritten under the same conditions (i.e. you only get one rewrite due to either missing or screwing up on a test). Any make-up test must be written within one week of the test being returned **to the class**. Tests will usually be returned the week after they are written.

Statements

Academic Consideration

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of the student's Faculty of Registration.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant.

You may have heard that requests without supporting documentation are **limited to one per term per course**. However, assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade (i.e. assignments where the best 5 out of 6 assignments are counted) are not eligible for consideration without documentation. All assignments in this course fit those criteria, so no **undocumented** requests for consideration will be accepted.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner.

Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term always require formal supporting documentation.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support & Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools/software/apps is not permitted in any context. This course is a mixture of linguistics, philology and literary / social analysis. It is about combining these disciplines to understand how the English language has been spoken and understood throughout its history. In its current state, AI helps users bypass learning the methods of research and communication that are at the heart of advanced philological

scholarship. Rather than producing original scholarship, AI artlessly reproduces the mean of the texts upon which it was trained. Don't settle for that.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

The Brinton/Arnovick text is highly technical and we will go over the key material in class, but do not rely on lectures alone. Read the assigned chapters before class, look for the important themes and issues which are summarized at the beginning of each chapter, and pay attention to the list of "Terms You Should Know" in OWL. Online material is just as important as the textbook. **There are links to or copies of online material in Brightspace.**

Mon. Sept. 8 First day of classes/ The basics

Wed. Sept. 10 Basic Concepts

Read: *English* ch. 1 (to page 26)

Mon. Sept. 15 Basic concepts

Read: *English*, ch. 2

Wed. Sept. 17 Read: *English*, ch. 3 (to page 74)

Inventing, vii-11

Mon. Sept. 22 Indo-European and Grimm's Law

Read: *English*, ch. 4

Wed. Sept. 24 Read: *English*, ch. 5 (to page 152)

Mon. Sept. 29 Old English (technical)

Read: *English*, ch. 6

English, ch. 5 (finish, pages 152-61)

- Wed. Oct. 1 Read: *English*, ch. 7 (to page 217)
Test 1 (basic concepts, IPA, Grimm's Law)
- Mon. Oct. 6 Read: *English*, ch. 3 (finish, pages 75-95): This chapter introduces many important concepts that we will use throughout the year. We will talk about them in more detail at relevant points in the year.
Inventing, ch. 1 (12-24)
- Wed. Oct. 8 Old English (technical and cultural)
Read: *English*, ch. 7 (finish, pages 218-39)
Inventing, ch. 2
- Mon. Oct. 13 Thanksgiving
- Wed. Oct. 15 Old English (technical review and cultural)
Read: "Dream of the Rood." Use Roy Liuzza's translation:
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/159129/dream-of-the-rood-translation>
- Mon. Oct. 20 Middle English (which is to say, something you can read)
Read: *Inventing*, ch. 3
- Wed. Oct. 22 Read: *English*, ch. 8 (pp. 240-80)
Test 2 (Old English phonology, morphology & grammar)
- Mon. Oct. 27 Middle English
Read: *Inventing*, ch. 4 (pp. 54-69)
- Wed. Oct. 29 Read: *English*, ch. 9 (pp. 281-320)
- Mon. Nov. 3 Reading Week
- Wed. Nov. 5 Reading Week
- Mon. Nov. 10 Middle English, national identity
Read: *Inventing*, ch. 6
Mannyng, Robert. "Prol. to *The Chronicle*" (OWL, lines 1-135)
Note: There are two versions of this text in OWL. The first text (excerpts only) has some background material on Mannyng and his text and it is fully glossed. Read it first to help you get into the language. Then read the second version which is edited for academics rather than undergraduates. We'll discuss the text, and the editorial method of the two versions.
- Wed. Nov. 12 Read: *English*, ch 10 (just pp. 328-335). This is out of order, but understanding the Great Vowel Shift will make Middle English pronunciation much easier.
Inventing, ch. 7 (pp. 101-114)
- Mon. Nov. 17 Middle English / Identity
Read: Turville-Petre, Thorlac. "Politics and Poetry in the Early Fourteenth Century: The Case of Robert Manning's Chronicle." *The Review of English Studies* ns. 39 (1988): 1-28. (available online through the library)
Robert Mannyng, *Chronicle* (The rest of version 2 in OWL, finish this)
(Turville-Petre talks about this text, so read him first.)

Translation Exercise due: NO EXTENSIONS WITHOUT DOCUMENTATION.

- Wed. Nov. 19 Middle English, standardization / print
Read: Fisher, John H. "Chancery and the Emergence of Standard Written English in the Fifteenth Century." *Speculum* 52 (1977): 870-899.
(available online through the library)
- Mon. Nov. 24 Middle English, standardization / print
Read: *Inventing*, ch. 8 (pp. 115-28)
- Wed. Nov. 26 Read: *English*, ch. 9 (pages 313-320 again)
Caxton, William. selections from *Eneydos* (OWL)
- Mon. Dec. 1 Middle English, standardization / print
Read: Texts on standardization (in OWL)
- Wed. Dec. 3 Finish up Middle English: Review / catch up if we're behind.
- Mon. Dec. 8 **Test 3 (Middle English phonology, morphology and grammar)**
- Dec. 11-22 Mid-year exams (no mid-year in this course)**
- Mon. Jan. 5 Early Modern English (technical)
Read: *English*, ch. 10 (pp. 321-46)
- Wed. Jan. 7 Read: *English*, ch. 10 (pp. 347-66)
- Mon. Jan. 12 Early Modern English (technical)
Read: *English*, ch. 11 (pp. 367-81)
- Wed. Jan. 14 Read: *Inventing*, ch. 9 (pp. 129-40)
Bring: Your favourite Renaissance sonnet (Shakespeare or otherwise).
- Mon. Jan. 19 Early Modern English: Thinking about the Language
Read: *English*, ch. 11 (pp. 381-403)
Inventing, ch. 10 (pp. 141-52)
- Wed. Jan. 21 Read: Daniel Defoe, "Of Academies" in *Essays upon several projects...*
(London, **1702**), 227-251 (Available online in *Eighteenth Century Collection Online* (ECCO). Make sure you use the **1702** edition.
Instructions in OWL.)
- Mon. Jan. 26 Early Modern English: Self-conscious Language
Read: *Inventing*, ch. 11 (pp. 153-66)
- Wed. Jan. 28 Read: Jonathan Swift, "A proposal for correcting, improving and ascertaining
the English tongue" (London, **1712**). (Use the **1712** edition. Available
online in ECCO)
- Mon. Feb. 2 Early Modern English: Dictionaries and Reference Works
Read: Lord Chesterfield, "Letter to The World" (OWL)
Samuel Johnson, "Preface to A Dictionary..." (OWL)
- Wed. Feb. 4 Early Modern English: Dictionaries and Reference Works
Read: *Inventing*, ch. 12 (pp. 167-80)
Test 4 (Early Modern phonology, morphology and grammar)
- Mon. Feb. 9 The proscriptivists (continued)

Wed. Feb. 11 Finish up pre-modern English

Mon. Feb. 16 Reading Week (Happy Family Day)

Wed. Feb. 18 Reading Week

Mon. Feb. 23 English in North America

Read: *Inventing*, ch. 13 (pp. 181-91)

Read: Noah Webster, *Spelling Book*. Available at: Don't read the early sections, but do look through them to get a sense of how they work. DO READ pp. 43-6, 49-51 to see how Webster trains students. What is the *function* of this book?

Essay due (Middle English or Early Modern self-consciousness)

Wed. Feb. 25 No additional reading.

Last day to submit Essay without late penalty.

Mon. Mar. 2 English Around the World

Read: *English*, ch. 12 (pp. 404-33)

Wed. Mar. 4 Read: *English*, ch. 13 (pp. 434-48)

Mon. Mar. 9 English Around the World: United Kingdom

Read: *English*, ch. 13 (467-87)

Fisher, John H. "The History of Received Pronunciation" (OWL)

Wed. Mar. 11 Read: Ross, S.C. "U and non-U: An Essay in Sociological Linguistics" (OWL)

Mon. Mar. 16 English Around the World: United States

Read: *English*, ch. 13 (pages 455-67)

Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (OWL)

Test 5: Using descriptions of dialects (AAVE)

Wed. Mar. 18 English Around the World: United States

Read: *Inventing*, ch. 16 (pp. 220-34)

Finish up with Hurston

Mon. Mar. 23 English Around the World: United States

Read: William Labov, "The Logic of Nonstandard English" (course pack)

Etymology assignment due

Wed. Mar. 25 Canadian English (technical)

Read: *English*, ch. 13 (pp. 448-55)

Last day to submit Etymology Assignment without late penalty

Mon. Mar. 30 Canadian English (technical)

TBD

Wed. April 1 Canadian English (social)

Read: Chambers, J.K. "'Lawless and vulgar innovations': Victorian views of Canadian English." In *Focus on Canada*. Ed. Sandra Clarke. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. 1993. 1-26. (OWL)

Mon. April 6 Canadian English

TBD

Wed. April 8 Finish Up / Exam prep

Apr. 12-30 Final exam period (we WILL have a final exam, so check schedule before making travel plans)