

COURSE SYLLABUS
THE STORY OF LANGUAGE: EMPIRES,
LANGUAGES AND GLOBAL ENGLISH
HSS 258/558



Spring 2017

Monday 11:30 am – 2:15 pm

Prof. Eva Eckert, Ph.D. eva.eckert@aauni.edu

Office hours: MW 2:30-3:30 pm

Office: Letenska 1, 2nd fl.

Semester Credits	3	Language of instruction	English
ECTS	6	Level	Intermediate
Length	15 weeks	Pre-requisites	None
Contact hours	42 hours	Course type	HSC, HUM Required/ Optional, PS, JC Elective

1. Course description

The Story of Language offers an alternative view of the world history from the perspective of languages, living and dying, dominant and powerless, major and minor. English as the current global language represents its focal point. English documents a tantalizing and unpredictable journey of speakers converging onto particular centers of political and economic power that use English as their defining marker and affluence. As today’s global language, English has surpassed all its precedents in terms of speaker numbers and geographical expanse. It keeps changing and splitting up as it spreads geographically and socially. The course dwells also in the history of global languages such as Latin, Greek, Egyptian, Sanskrit and others that once dominated particular geo-political regions.

2. Student learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of HSS 258/558 the student will have

- become familiar with fundamental breaks in the history of English, other languages and their genetic families;
- viewed the geographical landscape as shaped by languages;
- explored issues of interaction of language, history and geography, and the concepts of global language and language change;
- applied what learned in class to the problems and posed questions to be answered;
- framed a researched project by a relevant theory and collected primary data to document it;
- presented the project in class and a paper;
- and wrote up a research paper, following a relevant thesis, research questions and a strategy.

3. Reading materials: online in NEO Resources

Barber C., Beal J.C.& P.A. Shaw 1993, *The English Language: A Historical Introduction*, Cambridge

Crowley, Terry 1997, *Introduction to Historical Linguistics*, Oxford U Press

McWhorter, John 2001, *The Power of Babel*, HarperCollins Publishers

Ostler, Nicholas 2005, *Empires of the Word*, HarperCollins Publishers

The Atlas of Languages: The Origin and Development of Languages Throughout the World, by B. Comrie, S.

Matthews, M. Polinsky, J. Aitchison, ABC Books, 2003

et al.

Recommended materials (TED talks and documentaries): online in NEO Lessons

4. Teaching methodology

The Story of Language is taught as a seminar that introduces a topic through a lecture interspersed with discussion and video, poses probing questions, proposes diverse ways of examining and analyzing study materials, and draws students into active participation.

5. Course schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Feb. 13 CLASS 1	<p>Topic: Origins of language and humanity Description: How the language started and why languages change? Characteristics of human language</p>
Feb. 20 CLASS 2	<p>Topic: Language diversity and migration: Today and then Description: What are the beginnings of language diversity and change? Reconstructing ancient languages Readings: 1. Deutscher, Guy 2005, <i>The Unfolding of Language, Introduction</i>, pp. 1-20 2. Crowley, Terry 1997, <i>Introduction to Historical Linguistics</i>, Oxford U Press, pp. 19-35 Assignments: Complete the exercises in Crowley and bring them to class Post 2 questions or comments in FORUM, NEO</p>
Feb. 27 CLASS 3	<p>Topic: What it takes to be a world language Description: Conquest and farming English around the world today Readings: 1. Ostler, Nicholas 2005, <i>Empires of the Word</i>, pp. 1-25 2. Trask, R.L. 2003, <i>Language Change</i>, ch. 9 3. <i>Oxford Guide to English</i> Assignment: Posting questions</p>
March 6 CLASS 4	<p>Topic: Writing the language down: Innovation in the Middle East Description: Deciphering Indic writing, TED lecture Sumerian writing and global languages of the Near East Readings: Ostler, <i>The Desert Blooms</i>, in <i>Empires of the Word</i>, pp. 30-93 Recommended: Diamond, J. 2002, <i>Evolution, consequences & future of...</i>, in <i>Nature</i> 418, 700-707 Assignment: Posting questions</p>
March 13 CLASS 5	<p>Topic: Where Europeans lived before spreading to Europe and why did they? Description: Indo-European homeland and language Readings: 1. Trask R.L. 2003, <i>Language Changes</i>, ch. 10 and 11 2. Barber, Charles 1993, <i>The Indo-European languages</i>, ch. 2 and 3, in <i>The English Language</i> (in ch. 2, from <i>Language Families</i> to end) 3. Mallory and Mair 2000, <i>The Tarim Mummies</i>, review article Assignment: Posting questions</p>
March 20 CLASS 6	<p>Topic: Legacy of ancient global languages: Sanskrit and Greek Description: The story of William Jones: Languages are related Readings: Ostler, Sanskrit, pp. 174-94 and Greek (227-57), in <i>Empires of the Word</i> Assignments: FILL IN and HAND IN the PROPOSAL for your semester RESEARCH PROJECT Posting questions</p>
March 27 CLASS 7	<p>Topic: MIDTERM Description: Discussion and analysis of the students' research proposals Strategies to tackle and plan your research project How to write a research paper</p>
April 3 CLASS 8	<p>Topic: Beginnings of English Description: Old English and its contacts Readings: 1. Barber 1993, <i>The flux of language and its mechanisms</i>, in <i>The English Language</i>, pp. 32-50 2. Barber, ch. 5, <i>Old English</i> 3. Trask 2003, <i>English in the past</i>, in <i>Language Change</i>, ch. 2, 6-8 Assignment: Posting questions</p>

April 10 CLASS 9	Topic: Colonial American English and Native American languages Description: Regional variation in American English W. Labov, PBS video series <i>Do You Speak American?</i> Readings: Tamasi, S.&A. Lamont 2015, ch. 4, 5 and 12, in <i>Language and Linguistic Diversity in the U.S.</i> Assignment: Posting questions
April 17 NO CLASS	SPRING BREAK, finally!
April 24 CLASS 10	Topic: English around the world Description: The legacy of colonialism, The English debate today, Standards across Anglophone space, Legitimate and illegitimate offspring of English, Characteristics of pidgin and creole languages Readings: 1. Barber, English in the Scientific World, ch.9 2. Jenkins 2015, <i>Global Englishes. A Resource Book for Students</i> , Section B, pp. 2-44 Assignment: Posting questions
May 15 CLASS 11	Topic: Global English as the language of humanity? Description: Global English, language contacts and superdiversity Readings: 1. Mufwene, Saliko 2002, <i>Colonisation, globalisation ... in the 21st c.</i> , in IJMS 4/2 2. Trask, ch. 12-14 3. Wierzbicka, Anna 1997, <i>Understanding Cultures Through Their Keywords</i> , ch. 1 Assignment: Posting questions
May 22 CLASS12	Topic: Student presentations Assignment: Posting a question or comment on the content of each student presentation
May 24	FINAL exam
May 26	Research paper due

5. Course Requirements and Assessment (with an estimated workload)

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in the final grade	Course learning outcomes evaluated	Evaluation of AAU learning outcomes*
Class preparation, readings, attendance	30	15%	Independent progress through key topics, issues, assignments and questions; analyzed and questioned topics and readings	1, 2
Posting questions/ comments	20	15%	“Critical thinking”, evaluation and response	1, 2, 3
Midterm and Final	60	15&15%	Reviewed and analyzed materials	1, 2
Presentation	20	15%	Collected primary data, posed relevant questions, designed an investigation strategy, presented analysis and outcomes	1, 2
Research paper	20	20%	Presented a hypothesis, organized data, described research goals in an appropriate formal style	1, 2
Project proposal & progress report	5	5%	Presented a plan for a project following a specific format	1, 2
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of course assignments

Assignment 1: Readings, preparation for class and participation

Assessed area	Percentage
Reading, analyzing, and recording notes, ideas and problems	30%
Coming to class equipped with knowledge and questions	30%
Mindful presence and thoughtful involvement in class, demonstrating old and new knowledge	40%

Assignment 2: Posting questions and comments on readings and student presentations

Assessed area	Percentage
Independent critical analysis	50%
Summarizing and responding by posting questions and comments in FORUM, NEO by 9 am of the class day; sharing them in class and contributing to discussion	50%

Assignment 3: Midterm and Final

Assessed area	Percentage
Demonstrating knowledge of concepts and issues, and ability to analyze and apply them	40%
Providing relevant arguments and examples	30%
Writing well-documented and original essays demonstrating critical thought	30%

Assignment 4: Project proposal & progress report

Assessed area	Percentage
Presented a plan for a project following a specific format of the proposal, available in NEO that may be approved as such or when modified by the student according to the provided suggestions. The topic cannot be changed, once approved.	100%

Assignment 5: Research presentation

Assessed area	Percentage
Ability to identify& introduce a relevant topic based in original data and framed by questions guiding the search	10%
Ability to explain the topic and research strategy to peers	30%
Ability to analyze the topic in context of theoretical materials covered in class	30%
Ability to isolate and present outcomes and answers	20%
Management of time (15 min. presentation) and questions from students (5 min.)	10%

Assignment 6: Research paper

Assessed area	Percentage
Ability to identify, investigate and write about a specific research problem and data	10%
Ability to write a structured paper, logically argued; 6 pp., single-spaced, double-sided	20%
Ability to analyze and contextualize the topic in reference to the theoretical materials covered in class and based in self-collected data	30%
Ability to cover key points, summarize outcomes and respond to research questions	40%

General Requirements and School Policies

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules available in the Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication. It is strongly recommended that any email communication between students and instructors take place in NEO LMS.

Each e-mail sent to an instructor that is about a new topic (meaning not a reply to an original email) shall have a new and clearly stated subject and shall have the course code in the subject, for example: "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question".

All electronic submissions are carried out through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

Attendance

Attendance is required. The university recommends, as a minimal policy, that students who are absent 35 percent of the course should be failed (or administratively withdrawn from the course if the absences are excused).

Absence excuse and make-up options

Should the student be absent from a class for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), s/he needs to submit an Absence Excuse Form supplemented with documents proving the reasons for absence to the Assistant Dean. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if they submit an Absence Excuse Form along with the finalized add/drop form. The form and documents must be submitted within one week of absence. If possible, it is recommended to inform the instructor about the absence in advance.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean are entitled to make up exams they missed provided that the nature of the exam allows for a make-up. The students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week from the date the absence was excused, and for making arrangements with the instructor about make-up options as necessary.

Students are allowed **two unexcused absences**. Absences above this number may result in failure of the course.

Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

Electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops...) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information...). Any other use will result in being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during the tests.

Eating is not allowed during classes.

Cheating and disruptive behavior: If a student engages in disruptive or other conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment of an institution of learning, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the activity or for the day and shall report the behavior to the Dean. Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating (e.g. whispering or passing notes) will be warned and, in the case of continued misbehavior, expelled from the exam and the exam will be marked as failed.

Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center

Plagiarism is "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)

Turnitin White Paper 'The Plagiarism Spectrum' (available at <http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum>) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another's work, word-for-word, as one's own.
2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.
3. FIND-REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source.
4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one's own previous work without citation; To self plagiarize.
6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.
7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources
9. AGGREGATOR: The "Aggregator" includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text's original wording and/or structure.

As the minimum policy, the types of plagiarism from 1 through 8 result in the failing grade from the assignment and must be reported to the Dean who may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, students are encouraged to consult their papers with the tutors of the AAU Academic **Tutoring Center**. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: <http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

Students with disabilities are asked to contact their instructor as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodation.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95 – 100	Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A–	90 – 94	
B+	87 – 89	Good performance. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83 – 86	
B–	80 – 82	
C+	77 – 79	Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73 – 76	
C–	70 – 72	
D+	65 – 69	Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student’s work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60 – 64	
F	0 – 59	Fail. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by and when: Eva Eckert, January 2017

Approved by and when: School of Humanities and Social Sciences, January 2017