

ENG 399R Introduction to Language Change

Spring 2011

Instructor: Elizabeth Bell Canon

Textbook: *Why Languages Change*, by R.L. Trask.
 Various readings provided by the instructor

Course Content:

The primary purpose of this course is to teach the basic principles of language change from a historical perspective to students with little or no experience in Linguistics. We will begin by assembling a "linguistic toolbox" so that we can more fully understand the nature of language itself. For instance, students will become familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet, and typological categories of language. During the course of the semester, we will answer the question, "How does language change?" by looking at sound change, grammatical analogy, semantic shift, borrowing, and socio-linguistic factors related to change.

Course Format:

This course will cover material from the textbook and related articles in a seminar format with open discussion required. The readings are of critical importance to the discussions and must be completed on time. This is a reading-intensive course.

Assignments:

- 3 short papers, 20% each
 (These will be individual segments or chapters of the final paper.)
- Final paper, 40%