

# History of the English Language

Ian Cornelius

Spring 2023

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# 1 Basic information

## 1.1 Course details

- Course number: ENGL 300-01W (4913)
- Meeting time: MWF 1:40pm–2:30pm
- Location: Mundelein Center - Room 407

## 1.2 How to contact me

- Name: Ian Cornelius
- Pronouns: he | they
- Office location: Crown Center 411
- Office hours: M 11:00am–12:00pm, W 10:00am–12:00pm, by appointment
- E-mail: [icornelius@luc.edu](mailto:icornelius@luc.edu)

# 2 Course description and objectives

The English language originated in migration and settlement. The area of settlement was subsequently named “England,” a region with a complex linguistic ecology where English developed into a kaleidoscope of local dialects. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the language began to spread beyond the British isles; during the same period the language contracted into a standard written form. Today, after a long period of standardization, English is diversifying again, on account of its worldwide use by some 2 billion people, most of whom are multilingual.

In this seminar we study the development of the English language from Indo-European to the internet and Loyola’s own Literacy Center. Topics include speech sounds and writing systems; words as units of meaning and structure; concepts of variation, standardization, dialect, and register; diachrony and synchrony; language contact and multilingualism; socio-linguistic status and domains of use; technologies of communication (writing, print, audio broadcast, messaging apps); and tools for language study (the International Phonetic Alphabet, the Oxford English Dictionary, the Historical Thesaurus of English, linguistic corpora). Assessment is by regular short written assignments, midterm and final essays, and a class presentation.

# 3 Schedule

The course schedule complies with the [Loyola University academic calendar](#). Assignments are due on the day listed. If there is need to revise the course schedule, I will announce the change in class and on Sakai and publish an updated version of this syllabus. See [Version Information](#). Students must take the final exam on the date set by the university.

## Course introduction: essential concepts (weeks 1–3)

### Language and history

**01-18** Concepts: structure, variation, communication;

- Read the syllabus
- Complete the [questionnaire](#)

**01-20** Concepts: prescription, description; synchronic, diachronic; internal, external

- Smith and Kim, *This Language, a River*, chap. 1 (“Introduction”) [\[1\]](#)
- Wikipedia, “History of English” [\[2\]](#)
- “A Timeline for HEL” (pp. xxix–xxxiii in [\[3\]](#))
- **Assignment:** extend the timeline by adding events for the twenty-first century

### Speech and writing

**01-23**

- Smith and Kim, chap. 4 (“Introduction to Phonetics and the International Phonetic Alphabet”)
- Web resources on English phonology and IPA [\[4\]](#)–[\[7\]](#)

**01-25**

- Jespersen, “The Child: Sounds” [\[8\]](#)
- Martin Duffell (1937– ), “[Syllable structure and phoneme repetition]” [\[9\]](#)
- Blockley, “Essential Linguistics” (chap. 3 in [\[3\]](#)), entries on palatalization, allophones, stress shift, phonemic length, diphthongization, raising and fronting
- *Dictionary of American Regional English*, Audio Samples [\[10\]](#). Listen to the montage of readings of “Arthur the Rat”

**01-27**

- O’Neil, “English Orthography” [\[11\]](#)
- **Assignment:** respond to a prompt on Sakai forums

### Grammar and vocabulary

**01-30** Word-types, word-parts, and words in combination

- Smith and Kim, chap. 1 (“Grammar Fundamentals”)
- Blockley, “Essential Linguistics” (chap. 3 in [\[3\]](#)), entries on regularized DO, grammaticalization, complementation, and *you was*

**02-01** An introduction to the *Oxford English Dictionary*

- “OED Terminology” [\[12\]](#). Also browse the other pages at Home > How to use the OED
- Bybee on semantic change (pp. 195–207 in [\[13\]](#))
- **Assignment:** word study

## 02-03

- Review
- Research report 1 due

## Contemporary and Late Modern English (weeks 4–7)

### Digital English

#### 02-06 The internet and artificial intelligence

- Crystal on “The long-term consequences of the internet” (pp. 497–507 in [14])
- Thompson on ChatGPT [15]
- **Assignment** ask ChatGPT some questions.

#### 02-08 The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

- **Assignment:** create an account for the [Corpus of Contemporary American English](#). Read the documentation and perform a variety of queries. Take notes on your queries and their results.

#### 02-10

- Writing instruction: note-taking and references

### Migration, colonialism and World Englishes

#### 02-13

- Smith and Kim, chap. 10 (“The Modern Period and Global Englishes”), pp. 257–287 (through the section “African American English”)

#### 02-15 Visit the Loyola Literacy Center

- Bailey, “English Among the Languages” (chap. 12 in [14])

#### 02-17

- Review
- Research report 2 due

## Confronting variation in England and America, C18–20

#### 02-20

- Bailey, *Speaking American*, chap. 8 [16]

#### 02-22 Meet in [University Archives & Special Collections](#), located in Cudahy Library, room 217

- Noah Webster, *Dissertations on the English Language*, pp. 17–40, 288–290 as numbered in the printed artifact (#21–44, 292–294 as imaged by HathiTrust) [17]
- Baugh and Cable on Noah Webster and American English [18]

**02-24**

- “From the Preface to Johnson’s *Dictionary*” (item 39 in [19])
- Tieken-Boon von Ostade, “English at the Onset of the Normative Tradition” (chap. 9 in [14]). Read pp. 316–end (beginning at the section “Language”)

## **Review and workshop**

**02-27**

- Workshop

**03-01**

- Workshop

**03-03**

- Note-taking demonstration
- Midterm essay due

**Spring break: class does not meet the week of 03-06**

## **Early Modern English (weeks 8–9)**

**03-13** Words, words, words

- Blank, “The Babel of Renaissance English” (chap. 8 in [14])

**03-15** Grammatical change, variation, and the uses of aggregation

- Nevalainen, “Mapping change in Tudor English” (chap. 7 in [14])

**03-17** Meet in [University Archives & Special Collections](#), located in Cudahy Library, room 217

- Werner, *Studying Early Printed Books*, chap. 1 [20]

**03-20** A case study: Shakespeare’s English

- McKeown, “Shakespeare’s Literary Language” (chap. 44 in [3])
- Shakespeare, *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, 5.1 (item 31 in [19])
- Assignment: select a word from the sample passage; look it up in the *Oxford Dictionary of Original Shakespearean Pronunciation* [21]

**03-22** The Great Vowel Shift and the uses of abstraction

- McMahon, “Restructuring Renaissance English” (chap. 6 in [14]) Read from the beginning through “... setting a chain shift in motion” (p. 201), then skip to the beginning of the section titled “The structural coherence problem” (p. 208) and read to the end. Return to the omitted sections if time permits and the topic draws you in

**03-24** Elaboration and consequences; England’s first printer worries about his language

- Smith, “From Middle to Early Modern English” (chap. 5 in [14])
- William Caxton’s preface to the *Eneydos* (c.1490) [22]

## Middle English (weeks 10–11)

**03-27** A case study: fifteenth-century private correspondence

- A Paston Letter (item 22 in [19])
- Note-collection 1 due

**03-29** What did Middle English look like?

- Horobin and Smith, *An Introduction to Middle English*, chap. 2 [23]

**03-31** Middle English in use

- Horobin and Smith, *An Introduction to Middle English*, chap. 3 [23]

**04-03** A multilingual society

- Townend, “Contacts and Conflicts: Latin, Norse, and French” (chap. 3 in [14]). Read from the beginning through “... ‘grammar-words’ such as conjunctions and pronouns” (p. 92), then read from “As has been seen ...” (p. 101) to the end.
- “A Proclamation of Henry III (1258)” (item 13 in [19]; pp. 160–63 in [23])

**04-05**

- Review

**Class does not meet on 04-08 or 04-10 (Easter holiday)**

## Old English (weeks 12–13)

**04-12**

- Baugh and Cable, “Old English” [18]

**04-14**

- Baker, “Psalm 1 with Extreme Annotation” [24]

**04-17**

- Alfred’s Preface to the *Pastoral Care* [24] and item 2 in [19]

**04-19**

- Cædmon’s *Hymn* [24] and item 3 in [19]

**04-21**

- Review
- Note-collection 2 due

## Before English (week 14)

04-24

- Robinson, “The Germanic Language Family” [25]

04-26

- Hoad, “Before English” [14]

## Course conclusion

04-28

- Review

05-04 3pm.

- Final essay due

## 4 Assessment

### 4.1 Summary of grade components

The following table summarizes course components and points assigned to them.

course component	points
participation	40
class presentation	10
reports (2)	20
note-collections (2)	20
mid-term essay	30
final project	30
TOTAL	150

### 4.2 Description of components

#### 4.2.1 Participation

See **attendance**. Informal assignments also count towards this component.

#### 4.2.2 Writing

This course has the following formal writing assignments:

- Two research reports (3 pages each) on topics covered in weeks 2–6
- One mid-term essay (6 pages)



- Two collections of notes on topics covered in weeks 8–13, accompanied by rationale and reflection
- One final essay (6 pages)

Due dates are listed on the course [schedule](#). Instructions will be distributed one week in advance of due dates. The formal assignments are preceded by ungraded assignments, including blog-posting. Instructions for these informal assignments will be given in class sessions. Students are invited to talk with me in office hours about any stage of the writing process and encouraged to discuss their writing with peer tutors at the [writing center](#).

Research reports and essays should be submitted in two forms, paper and electronic. Paper copies are due at the beginning of class. An identical electronic copy should be uploaded to Sakai (the Assignments tab) in docx, odt, or pdf format.

We give particular attention to note-taking and citation. In the first half, we discuss tools and techniques for note-taking. In the second half, students will present collections of notes to the class and reflect on their note-taking strategies. In preparation for these activities, review [note-taking apps](#) and reflect on the [Zettelkasten method](#).

Sources should be cited in a Chicago style, either note or author-date. For guidance see the [Chicago Manual of Style](#), but use reference management software to help you write citations. My preferred application is [Zotero](#). It is free and open-source. There are [alternatives](#).

Bibliographical references for course readings can be downloaded from my [Zotero library](#) in machine-readable formats. Select all items in the folder “ENGL 300,” then select “Export” (the left-most option at the top of the central pane). Alternatively, copy the relevant bibliography file from [GitHub](#). Bibliographical details in the course collection have been checked for accuracy, but errors are always possible. If you find errors, I will be glad to know of them.

### 4.2.3 Class presentation

After spring break students will make presentations on class readings. For this assignment students will work in pairs; each pair will be responsible for discussing their approach to note-taking on one course reading. The presentation should be about ten minutes in length and supported by slides. Usually a presentation will be followed by class discussion; the best presentations invite thoughtful response from your peers. Further instructions will be given in the week before spring break.

### 4.2.4 Exams

There are no exams in this course.

## 4.3 Grade schema

This course employs the ‘quintile system’, as follows:

letter grade	minimum percentage
A	86.6
A-	80
B+	73.3
B	66.6
B-	60
C+	53.3
C	46.6
C-	40
D+	33.3
D	20
F	0

## 5 Policies

### 5.1 Attendance

To meet course objectives, you must attend class and be prepared to engage in discussion. Arrange your schedule to be present for the entire session. If you must miss a class for any reason, or if you must arrive late or leave early, inform me in advance by email. Unexcused absences will reduce your participation grade.

This course makes special provision for absences due to illness: see [Public Health](#).

### 5.2 Texts

Readings are drawn from three kinds of sources:

1. Books that you are responsible for acquiring
2. Digital resources linked within this syllabus
3. PDF documents posted to Sakai

To locate a reading, click on the bracketed number(s) following each reading in the course [schedule](#). These bracketed numbers link to the relevant entries in the course [bibliography](#). If the bibliographical entry has a url, the reading will be found at that address. If there is no url, the reading is either (1) from one of the books that you are responsible for acquiring or (2) posted to the Resources page on Sakai.

#### 5.2.1 Books you must acquire

The following books are required for this course. A single copy of each is available from Cudahy Library [Course Reserves](#). Copies are available for rental or purchase at the Loyola University Chicago [Lakeshore Campus Bookstore](#).

- Burnley, David. *The History of the English Language: A Source Book*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2000. ISBN 978-1-317-88339-5

- Smith, K. Aaron, and Susan M. Kim. *This Language, a River: A History of English*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2017. ISBN 978-1-55481-362-9

Students must acquire copies of these books and bring them to class on the days in which we use them. (See the [schedule](#)). If you purchase books from a source other than the campus bookstore, plan ahead and allow for delivery times. Copies of Burnley's *Source Book* are available on [bookfinder.com](http://bookfinder.com) for under ten dollars.

At the bookstore you can also purchase the following book, which is recommended for this course, not required:

- Mugglestone, Lynda, ed. *The Oxford History of English*. Updated ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-19-966016-2

The e-book is available from the university libraries. We make heavy use of it.

### 5.2.2 Readings supplied as links or PDFs

Other course readings will be distributed on Sakai or as links within this syllabus. Readings distributed as PDF documents should be printed. Students are reminded that course readings are protected by copyright and should not be shared outside this course without the instructor's written permission.

### 5.2.3 On-line reference works

We use many on-line reference works. Here are some of the most important:

- [The Chicago Manual of Style](#)
- [Dictionary of American Regional English](#)
- [Dictionary of Old English](#)
- [Early English Books Online](#)
- [English-Corpora.org](#)
- [The Historical Thesaurus of English](#)
- [The Middle English Dictionary](#)
- [The Oxford English Dictionary](#)
- [Seeing Speech: An Articulatory Web Resource for the Study of Phonetics](#)

These are available at no additional cost to you. Some have been purchased by Loyola University Libraries for your use (for these you will be prompted to authenticate with your UVID); others are served out on the open web by their creators.

## 5.3 Communication

Students are invited to speak with me during regular [office hours](#). No appointment is required. If a schedule conflict prevents you from visiting regular office hours, email me to request an alternative time.

Outside of office hours email is the best way to reach me. I aim to respond to email messages within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. I ask that you also respond

promptly to any messages I may send.

## 5.4 Diversity, inclusion, and equity

Loyola University provides equal opportunities in education without regard to, and does not discriminate on the basis of, age, color, disability, family responsibilities, familial status, gender identity or gender expression, marital status, national origin, personal appearance, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, source of income, veteran's status, or any other factor prohibited by law. Practicing respect for others is an important part of education. Each member of our course has a responsibility to create an environment in which all may flourish.

An additional note on names and gender pronouns: using appropriate names and gender pronouns honors and affirms individuals of all gender identities and gender expressions. Misgendering and heteronormative language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. During our first class, as we introduce ourselves, you may choose to share your name and gender pronouns. If you do not wish to be called by the name listed on the roster, please inform us. If you prefer to introduce yourself by name only, without pronouns, that is also fine. The goal is to create an affirming environment for all students.

## 5.5 Academic integrity

Loyola University Chicago takes seriously the issues of plagiarism and academic integrity. This course abides by the relevant policies of the university's [Undergraduate Studies Catalog](#).

Plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the plagiarized exam or assignment and the incident will be reported to your dean. If you are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism, consult the Writing Center's guide on [Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism](#). If you are still uncertain, please ask me.

Plagiarism includes submitting, as you own work, text derived from a generative artificial intelligence application.

## 5.6 Late work

If illness or another event in your life prevents you from completing a written assignment on time, alert me promptly by email. Do not wait for me to contact you. I will usually accommodate late work, provided that you have a legitimate reason for requesting an extension. Unexcused late work will be marked down 20% during the first 24 hours after the due date and a further 20% for each business day thereafter. Work still outstanding one week (five business days) after the due date will receive a zero, unless the student has sought and received an extension, as described above. Unexcused late work cannot be revised for a higher grade.

## 5.7 Extra credit

Students in this course may earn extra credit by attending certain on-campus events and writing an event report on the Sakai blog. Eligible events will be announced periodically during the semester. Event reports should be about 150 words in length. Extra credit from event reports will not exceed 5% of the total possible points in the course.

At the end of the semester, all students will receive additional extra credit points if 80% or more of students complete the evaluation of this course. Extra credit points in this case will be equivalent to 2% of total possible points in the course.

## 5.8 Accommodations and assistance

Loyola University Chicago provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). Professors must be supplied with an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with their professors individually to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or [SAC@luc.edu](mailto:SAC@luc.edu) or visit the [SAC website](#).

Please note that lectures in this class may be recorded to provide equal access to students with disabilities. Such recordings may be made only as directed by SAC. Students approved for this accommodation use recordings for their personal study only and recordings may not be shared with other people or used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students. Recordings must be deleted at the end of the semester.

Additional assistance is available from the following campus offices:

- [Coordinated Assistance & Resource Education \(CARE\)](#) 773.508.8840
- [Wellness Center](#) 773.508.2530

## 5.9 Privacy

The instructor of this class will not record class sessions. Any change to this policy will be announced and properly documented. Students may record class sessions only with formal written approval from the Student Accessibility Center. See the section [Accommodations and Assistance](#).

## 5.10 Public health

Masks are not presently required in this classroom. Students are invited to mask at any time and requested to do so if they have contact with someone who has COVID-19, the flu, or another airborne illness. Your professor will mask if, for instance, their domestic partner contracts a cold. Do not be alarmed by this.

Please get tested regularly. If you contract COVID-19 you should not attend class meetings during the “isolation period” [defined by](#) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC has similar advice for the [flu](#). If you are isolating due to illness, notify me at the earliest opportunity; I will help you get caught up. Absences due to illness are not charged against your participation score.

In response to changes in COVID-19 infection rates and following guidance of national, state, and city authorities, the university may re-institute a universal masking requirement. We will comply with university regulations in this and all other matters of public health.

### 5.11 Statement of intent

By remaining in this course, students agree to accept this syllabus and abide by its policies. Students will be informed of any changes to the syllabus.

## 6 Version information

Version information for this syllabus is available on [GitHub](#).

## 7 Questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire to help me get to know you. Send your answers to me by email.

1. Preferred name and pronouns (if desired)
2. Year in school (e.g., junior)
3. Majors or minors
4. Languages other than English
5. Career goals
6. What do you hope to learn in this course?
7. Anything else you want your professor to know

## Bibliography

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- [3] Momma, Haruko, and Michael Matto, eds. 2008. *A Companion to the History of the English Language*. Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture 54. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.flagship.luc.edu/lib/luc/detail.action?docID=470304>.
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- [18] Baugh, Albert C., and Thomas Cable. 2013. *A History of the English Language*. 6th ed. London; New York: Routledge.
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