

LINGUISTICS 273
Spring 2012
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Prof. Eva Eckert

Blaustein 329

SYLLABUS

273 STORY OF LANGUAGE, or, why and how languages change?

Introduction to historical linguistics for students who know at least one foreign language (or who took Linguistics 110)

Why take the class?

- To anchor your previous study of foreign languages
- To observe how language moves and lives, and understand why
- To learn about the dynamics of English, today and across its history
- To discover the language genius in daily life of an ordinary language
- To understand the story of yourself as you discover that of language

YOUR GRADE will be determined by:

Attendance and active class participation based on thorough preparation for each class:

Reading guide questions (posted on the web) on the assigned chapters from Aitchison and Barber, and on the videos are intended to facilitate your study; please study them in preparation for the upcoming class and submit selected ones in writing

4 tests (1 hour, composed of essays and problem solving questions; out of class)

Class presentation on a linguistic topic of your choice (20 minutes; based on independent research and analysis of primary data); please submit your topic by March 9 and schedule a consultation with me for the week of March 5 or earlier)

Research paper based on the topic of your presentation (due in the last class, May 8; 10 pages, incl. bibliography)

TEXTBOOKS:

Jean Aitchison, *Language Change*, Cambridge U Press, 3rd ed.

Charles Barber, *The English Language: a Historical Introduction*, Cambridge, 1993

BBC video series, *Story of English* (in Shain library)

video *In Search of the First Language* (in Shain library)

selected chapters from *Language Files, ed. 9*, posted on the web

To consult in the library:

Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture, by Mallory and Adams, 1997

The Atlas of Languages, by Comrie, Matthews and Polinsky

The Encyclopedia of Language, by David Crystal

The Encyclopedia of English Language, by David Crystal