

English 221

Kirk Hazen, ENGL 221, Fall 2001, The English Language The English Language

Instructor: Dr. Kirk Hazen
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Purpose: The purpose of this course is to direct you in rigorously studying language in general and the English language in particular.

Goals:

Course Objectives:

- * To confront the assumptions of traditional prescriptivism.
- * To develop respect for human language.
- * To develop a non-patronizing respect for diachronic and synchronic language variation.
- * To explore the modern concepts of the mental grammar.
- * To follow the process of scientific inquiry with respect to language.
- * To demonstrate the nature of linguistic argumentation.
- * To acquire skills in phonetic transcription.
- * To acquire analytical skill in morphology, phonology, syntax, historical linguistics, and sociolinguistics.

Learning Outcomes:

- * Students will account for the complex history of language development in dialects of English.
- * Students will examine and explain the intensive social pressures associated with vernacular varieties in the United States.
- * Students will demonstrate their knowledge of current theories about language variation and change.
- * Students will evaluate the complex debate about the role of language in primary education.
- * Students will be able to debate the role of correct English in the socio-educational context of modern America.
- * Students will be able to analyze natural language and make descriptive accounts of its structure.

Sources: Language Files. 2001. 8th Edition. Columbus, Ohio: OSU Press. (LF)
Pinker, Steven. 1994. The Language Instinct. New York: HarperPerennial. (P)

Attendance: There is no attendance policy for this course. I believe that the course, the exams, and the material will be interesting and difficult enough to keep you in class in order to learn and pass. If you are not in class on a regular basis, passing will become nearly impossible. If you miss class, it is fully your responsibility to find out what was missed and complete any assignments by their due date.

Advice: If you feel lost or even the slightest bit confused, contact me or the teaching assistants. Email us or come by during office hours. If you cannot make office hours, we can set up a time to talk. The quicker you get your questions straightened out, the better off you will be.

Tutoring: If you need help, this course has two undergraduate Teaching Assistants. Both of these TAs have successfully passed this class and understand the sometimes overwhelming feeling of formally studying language. Ellen Fluharty <dialect@wvu.edu> and Michael Birchenough <mbirchen@wvu.edu> will both have office hours in the WVDP lab (331 Stansbury). As we have computers in the lab, if you would like to come in and do your homework there (while asking the TAs questions), please feel free to schedule some time.

Grades:

Homework: Homework will come in the form of TELO quizzes. Often, you will work on language data and then answer the question in the quiz. Each quiz will be open in TELO for at least a week and will close at 5:00 PM Friday the day it is due. After it is closed, you will no longer be able to turn in that quiz for your homework grade (unless you have a legitimate excuse). We have designed the homework to help you better study the material and to prepare you for the tests.

Exams: There will be four exams in this class. The first three will be during the semester and will not be cumulative. The final exam will be cumulative. Each one will probably consist of identifications (i.e., define and give an example), problems to solve, and word problems. The testing will take place through multiple choice questions. As the class progresses, more of the exams will consist of multiple choice questions. As this is a class in transition, any suggestions you have for better testing techniques will be greatly appreciated.

The Numbers:

Homework (cumulative) 25%

Discussion: 10%

First Exam 13.4%

Second Exam 13.4%

Third Exam 13.4%

Final Exam 25%

In this class I assign pluses and minuses. The official percentages are 100-97 = A+; 96-93 = A; 92-90 = A-; 89-87 = B+; 86-83 = B; 82-80 = B-; 79-77 = C+; 76-73 = C; 72-70 = C-; 69-67 = D+. I only round up once: If you get a 69.5, it is a C-; if you get a 69.49, it is a D+.

Workload: I expect everyone to have the reading done before each class period in order to discuss the material and ask question about the material you do not understand. I also expect you to complete the assigned homework. The workload may appear unwieldy at times, but the time involved will greatly benefit your education in this class.

Plagiarism: As noted in the Undergraduate Catalog, "West Virginia University expects that every member of its academic community shares the historic and traditional commitment to honesty, integrity, and the search for truth" (p. 49). As a professional academic and as a member of this university I concur with this statement, and accordingly, plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Please note the University definition of plagiarism, as explained in the Undergraduate Catalog: "To take or pass off as one's own the ideas, writings, artistic products, etc. of someone else; for example, submitting, without appropriate acknowledgment, a report, notebook, speech, outline theme, thesis, dissertation, or other written, visual, or oral material that has been knowingly obtained or copied in whole or in part, from the work of others, whether such source is published, including (but not limited to) another individual's academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper" (p. 49). If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, collaborative projects, documentation of your sources, or related issues, please feel free to ask.

Social Justice Policy: West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our university does not discriminate on the basis of

race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or National origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700).

<http://www.wvu.edu/~cocenter/index.htm>