

ENGL 4100: History of the English Language

MWF Noon–1:00, Gunderson Hall 000

Cynthia A. Rogers • Adorjan Hall 233, T 1-3; W 2-4; F 10-11

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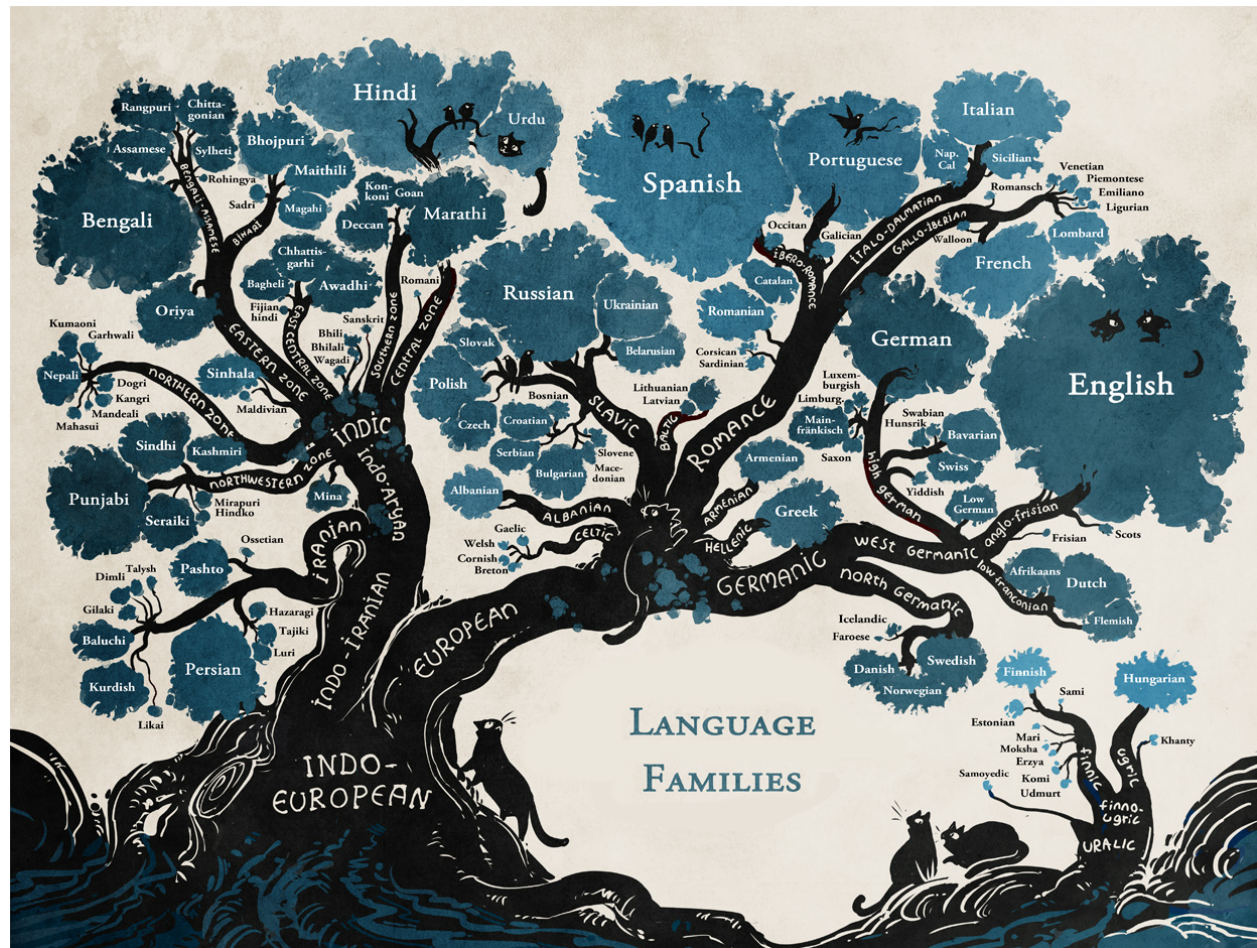


Illustration from Minna Sundberg's web comic *Stand Still. Stay Silent*. Issue 196.

Knowing the roots of our mother tongue provides teachers and crafters of literature—poets, singers, teachers, readers, writers, scholars, and linguists—the ground-work for their chosen fields. By tracing the lineage of English we can understand how spoken and written words form our language, how meter and sound work in our poetry, how our mouths form the sounds of English, how the words in earlier literatures changed their sounds and meanings as our language shifted over time, and how Modern English's seemingly irregular spellings can be explained through those shifts. By sampling tastes of English as it moves through time, we are both, better prepared to work with the English-es of the past, and also more ready to wield our own version of the language in the present.

Required Books

Thomas Pyles and John Algeo. *The Origins and Development of the English Language*. Sixth Edition. Wadsworth. 2009. *[Be sure to buy the Sixth edition, which is available as a used book for \$45-48. (The newer Seventh edition is \$240, but only has few changes from the Sixth.) Also be sure to buy the "print" version, not the "ebook."]*

Algeo, John. *Problems in The Origins and Development of the English Language*. Seventh Edition. Wadsworth. 2014. *[This is a workbook, so you will need to buy a clean copy in order to do your homework in it. It is available new for \$80-97.]*

Course Description

English is a living language that has evolved from being the spoken language of a few Germanic tribes to the most widespread language in our world. In this course we will look at the genealogy of English, beginning with its earliest roots and tracing it to its present forms. Because this course assumes no previous knowledge of the subject, we will begin with an introduction of how sounds fit together to make language (phonology), and the symbols that represent those sounds (the phonetic alphabet). We will then work our way through our language's Indo-European roots in the ancient past, its Germanic context and first written records, and then look at each of the major stages of the language: Old English, Middle English, Early Modern, and Late Modern English. We end the course by exploring how the various English-es (British, American, Indian, etc.) relate to one another, and how our own versions differ throughout the different regions and cultures of America.

Assignments and Grading Distribution

The course will have daily workbook assignments that we will go over in class. Although the textbook can answer some of your questions, questions about how a language “sounds” will be better understood through faithful class attendance. The two exams cover only the portion of the semester's work preceding each exam. However, though the final exam is not cumulative, you will still need the knowledge of phonology and the phonetic alphabet, which were covered at the beginning of the semester. The key to success in this class is to stay current on the daily work.

Daily Workbook Assignments	25%
Mid Term	35%
Final	<u>40%</u>
	100%

Ground Rules for This Class

- **Come see me!** I am always happy to meet and talk with students. Please feel free to drop in during my office hours, or to ask for a meeting at other times (contact me via email). You can email me at any time. I'll get back to you as soon as I can, although it might not always be immediately.
- **No electronics.** The most current research shows that you retain more information if you read from hardcopy and take notes by hand. Hence, we will only be using electronics in class on particular (prior announced) days. For everyday classes, you will need to purchase the textbook and workbook in hardcopy and bring a paper notebook to class to take notes. (If you need an accommodation, please read “Disability Services and Academic Accommodations” below.)
- **Absences:** Three absences will go unremarked, but each additional unexcused absence will result in a 10% reduction of the final course grade. If you will be absent, send me an email prior to class and let me know. You are responsible for asking a classmate for the notes when you miss class and for keeping up with the reading.
- **Late to class:** If you arrive after I have taken roll, you can “buy back” that absence by emailing me a one-page written summary of the class before the end of the day. (That lets me know you were there taking good notes, and also makes you try a little harder to be on time.)

[University-specific statements on academic integrity, disability accommodation, Title IX, etc. will be placed here.]

Reading and Homework Sequence

The sequence below is broken into numbered topics. Because, the information in this course builds on itself, we will take varying amounts of time to cover each topic to ensure the class understands the material. There are no dates listed below, so if you miss a class, you will need to find out from another student, what we covered on the day you missed and what will be due for the following class.

	<i>The Origins and Development -Textbook</i>	<i>Problems in the Origins and Development -Workbook</i>
1. “Language and the English Language”	Chapter One	1.1 (review for exam)
2. Speech vs. Writing		1.3 (be prepared to speak these in class); 1.4 (in class only); 1.11
3. Differences Between Languages		1.12 (odd numbered only); 1.13 (in class only); 1.14
4. Meet the OED		1.17 (read only); 1.18 (first ten even numbers)
5. “The Sounds of Current English”	Chapter Two	2.1 (review for exam)
6. Transcription and Reading IPA		2.2 (read only); 2.3; Fill in example words for IPA class handout
7. Transcribing into IPA		2.9–2.11; 2.14–2.20
8. Classifying sounds/speech organs		2.6–2.8; 2.12–2.13; 2.25 (in class only)
9. “Letters and Sounds”	Chapter Three	3.1 (review for exam)
10. Early alphabets (runes, OE, ME)		3.11; 3.12; 3.13
11. Learning affects spelling, and spelling affects pronunciation		3.17 (first column); 3.18 (pick five you pronounce as they are spelled)
12. “The Backgrounds of English”	Chapter Four	4.1 (review for exam)
13. Language types and locations		4.2 (pg 68-71 only); 4.3
14. Indo-European		4.5; 4.6; 4.10.1-2
15. Sound Changes (IE to Germanic, Grimm’s Law, Verner’s Law.)		4.13; 4.14
16. “The Old English Period”	Chapter Five	5.1 (review for exam)
17. IPA for Old English		5.2 (read only); 5.4
18. Pronouncing & transcribing OE		5.5; 5.6; 5.7; 5.8
19. Gender & word order		5.11; 5.20
20. Strong & weak verbs / Inflected Nouns		5.17 (in class); 5.12 (in class)
21. Survivals/Changes in OE and ModE		5.14; 5.20
22. Translating OE		5.21 “The Good Samaritan” (list five examples from the text of distinctive features of Old English spelling, inflections, syntax, and vocabulary); “Caedmon’s Hymn” (choose five nouns and give their case and declension—refer back to 5.12); “The Fall of Man” (translate into Modern English)

23. “The Middle English Period”	Chapter Six	6.1 (review for exam)
24. Middle English dialects		6.2; 6.3
25. Consonant pronunciation & changes		6.3; 6.4; 6.5
26. Vowel pronunciation		6.6; 6.7 (first two columns)
27. Reading ME aloud		6.9.1 (be prepared to read “General Prologue aloud)
28. Changes in nouns and pronouns		6.10; 6.12 (in class); 6.14 (in class)
29. Translating ME		6.18 (compare “The Peterborough Chronicle” and “John Trevisa’s Polychronicon” and list five features in each that mark it as either early or late Middle English.
30. “The Early Modern English Period”	Chapter Seven	7.1 (review for exam)
31. The Great Vowel Shift		7.2; 7.3.1; 7.4.1–6
32. Differences revealed in poetry		7.6; 7.9; 8.7
33. Translating Early Modern English		8.4 Rewrite the lines from <i>Hamlet</i> I.ii (pg 180) into Modern English. Find five features to comment on that are distinctive of Early Modern English. Find an additional five that are shared between Early Modern and either Middle English or Old English.
33. “Late Modern English”	Chapter Nine	9.1 (review for exam)
34. British vs. American		9.3; 9.4; 9.6; 9.7.1
35. American regional dialects		9.8