

Linguistics 344 - Historical Linguistics

TTh 6:10pm - 7:30pm, Vollum 228

Course Syllabus

Fall 2009

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PREREQUISITES

Linguistics 211, 311, or an equivalent course, or instructor consent, is required for this course.

TEXTBOOKS

The required textbook for this course is *Trask's Historical Linguistics* (2nd edition), revised by Robert McColl Millar, available for purchase in the bookstore. Chapters from this book will be supplemented with readings from other textbooks, as well as journal articles. These are available on reserve and/or e-reserve, or online. See the Course Outline below for details.

CONTENT OF THE COURSE

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the concepts and methodologies of historical and comparative linguistics. *Historical linguistics* proper (also called *diachronic linguistics*) is the study of how and why languages change over time. *Comparative linguistics*, as this term is usually applied, refers to the study of how languages are classified into families, and encompasses methods for reconstructing earlier stages of a language on the basis of available evidence. These two areas are closely entwined, and usually taken to constitute a single field of study.

The course will have both a descriptive and a theoretical component. We will spend a fair amount of time reviewing examples of different types of language change, as well as practicing the comparative method and other techniques for doing linguistic reconstruction. However, we will also address a number of theoretical issues, to give you a sense of the kinds of questions and hypotheses which historical linguists are concerned with. Regular attendance, along with enthusiasm and a willingness to participate in discussion, will be vital to the success of the class.

REQUIREMENTS, POLICIES, AND GRADING

Course grades will be based on a combination of participation and written work. The written work will consist of six problem sets, plus a comprehensive take-home exam. (The latter will be handed out on, or shortly after, the last day of classes, and will be due one week later.) You are welcome to work on the problem sets together, so long as you write up your answers in your own words. The exam must be completed on your own.

Approximate grading basis: Problem sets = 60%, participation = 20%, exam = 20%.

Problem sets will be given out and collected according to the following schedule (these dates are subject to change, based on how quickly we get through the material).

	<i>handed out</i>	<i>due in class</i>
PS 1	Tues, 8 September	Thurs, 17 September
PS 2	Thurs, 17 September	Thurs, 1 October
PS 3	Thurs, 1 October	Thurs, 15 October
PS 4	Thurs, 15 October	Thurs, 5 November
PS 5	Thurs, 5 November	Thurs, 19 November
PS 6	Thurs, 19 November	Tues, 8 December

Written work may be submitted in either hardcopy or electronically. Hardcopy assignments may be submitted in class on the day they are due, or sent to me as email attachments prior to the beginning of class. Electronic files may be in PDF or Microsoft Word (for Mac).

Written work must be turned in on time if you wish to receive full credit and comments. Late assignments will be penalized 10% of total possible points for each day they are late, unless you receive an extension from me in advance, such as for illness or family emergency. Late assignments will not be accepted for credit if turned in after the problem set has been returned to students; moreover, late assignments may receive minimal comments, and will probably not be returned to you in a timely manner.

COURSE OUTLINE

The following outline lists the subjects I intend to cover in this course, the order in which I would like to cover them, and the reading assignments for each topic (the textbook is abbreviated **THL**). Because of the small size of the class, I intend to keep things fairly flexible and set the pace of the course as we go along. Consequently I have not assigned specific due dates for readings. These will be determined as we go along.

The course is divided into four units. Following a brief introduction to the field, we consider language change in relation to the different domains of mental grammar – lexical, phonological, morphological, and syntactic. We then discuss the genetic classification of languages, and review some of the techniques involved in linguistic reconstruction. Finally, we consider some possible mechanisms of the initiation and spread of changes, discuss some sociolinguistic phenomena relevant to language history (contact, creolization, language death), and consider how the results of linguistic reconstruction can be applied to the reconstruction of prehistory.

I. Introduction

Overview of the course – Preliminary observations: language change and diversification – Basic terms and concepts: Cognates, parent and daughter languages, proto-languages and reconstruction, language families and genetic relatedness – Attitudes to language change – Evidence for change: interpreting written records.

- [1] **THL** / chapter 1 ‘The fact of language change’ (pp. 1-17).
- [2] **Lass**, *Historical Linguistics and Language Change* / chapter 2 ‘Written records: Evidence and argument’ (pp. 44-103). < P140.L28 1997 / e-reserve >

II. Diachronic Linguistics: Types of Language Change

Lexical and semantic change : Lexical creation and loss – Borrowing and the morpho-phonological treatment of borrowed words – Types of word-formation processes – Lexical semantic change.

- [3] **THL** / chapter 2 'Lexical and semantic change', sections 2.1-2.3 (pp. 21-35).
- [4] **Campbell**, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (2nd ed.) / chapter 3 'Borrowing' (pp. 62-84). < P140.C36 2004 / e-reserve >
- [5] **THL** / chapter 2 'Lexical and semantic change', sections 2.4-2.5 (pp. 35-59).

Morpho-phonological change : Types of sound change – Conditioned versus unconditioned changes – Regularity of sound change and the Neogrammarian hypothesis – Phonetic change and phonological reorganization – Phonemic splits and mergers – Phonological space and contrasts – Chain shifts – Rule (re)ordering – Morphological reanalysis – Analogical extension and hyper-correction – Analogical leveling and paradigm reformation – Phonetically and phonologically conditioned sound change versus analogy (Sturtevant's paradox).

- [6] **THL** / chapter 3 'Phonological change I: Change in pronunciation' (pp. 65-89)
- [7] **Hock**, *Principles of Historical Linguistics* (2nd ed.) / chapter 3 'Sound change: The regularity hypothesis' (pp. 34-51). < P140.H6 1986 / e-reserve >
- [8] **THL** / chapter 4 'Phonological change II: Change in phonological systems' (pp. 97-123).
- [9] **Joseph and Janda** (eds.), *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics* / chapter 22 'Phonetics and historical phonology' (Ohalo) (pp. 669-686). < P140.H35 2003 / e-reserve >
- [10] **Andersen**, 'Abductive and deductive change', *Language* vol. 49 (1973), number 4 (pp. 765-793). < journal article available online >
- [11] **THL** / chapter 5 'Morphological change' (pp. 131-166).
- [12] **Hock**, *Principles of Historical Linguistics* (2nd ed.) / chapter 9 'Analogy: General discussion and typology' (pp. 167-209); chapter 10 'Analogy: Tendencies of analogical change' (pp. 210-237); chapter 11 'Analogy and generative grammar' (pp. 238-279). < P140.H6 1986 / e-reserve >

Morpho-syntactic change : Grammaticalization and the creation of functional categories: morphologization and bleaching – Changes in morphological type – Syntactic reanalysis – Markedness shifts – Word order changes – The rise and fall of case systems – Language change, acquisition, and the restructuring of grammars.

- [13] **THL** / chapter 6 'Syntactic change' (pp. 171-201).
- [14] **Hopper and Traugott**, *Grammaticalization* / chapter 1 'Some preliminaries' (pp. 1-17); chapter 3 'Mechanisms: Reanalysis and analogy' (pp. 32-62); chapter 4 'Pragmatic inferencing' (pp. 63-93); chapter 5 'The hypothesis of unidirectionality' (pp. 94-129); chapter 6 'Clause-internal morphological changes' (pp. 130-166). < P299.G73 H66 1993 >
- [15] **Lightfoot**, *The Development of Language: Acquisition, Change, and Evolution* / chapter 2 'The Nineteenth Century of history' (pp. 21-48) [optional]; chapter 3 'Grammars and language acquisition' (pp. 49-76); chapter 4 'Gradualism and catastrophes' (pp. 77-110); chapter 5 'The loss of case and its syntactic effects' (pp. 111-143); chapter 6 'Cue-based acquisition and change in grammars' (pp. 144-177). < P142.L54 1999 >

III. Comparative Linguistics and Reconstruction

Language diversification and classification : Dialects and dialect continua – Isoglosses – Dialect divergence and convergence – Genetic relatedness and language families – Subgrouping – Shared innovations versus shared retentions – The tree model versus the wave model – The language families of the world.

- [16] **THL** / chapter 7 ‘Relatedness between languages’ (pp. 207-244).

Linguistic reconstruction : Sound correspondences – Assembling cognate sets – The comparative method: assumptions and techniques – Limitations of the comparative method – Semantic reconstruction – Reconstruction and synchronic typology – Morpho-syntactic reconstruction – How real are proto-languages? – More on subgrouping – Internal reconstruction – Morpho-phonological alternations: synchronic grammar versus diachronic change – The limits of internal reconstruction and the reality of pre-languages.

- [17] **THL** / chapter 8 ‘The comparative method’ (pp. 253-303).
[18] **Campbell**, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (2nd ed.) / chapter 5 ‘The comparative method and historical reconstruction’ (pp. 122-167). < P140.C36 2004 / e-reserve >
[19] **THL** / chapter 9 ‘Internal reconstruction’ (pp. 311-327).
[20] **Harris and Campbell**, *Historical Syntax in Cross-Linguistic Perspective* / chapter 12 ‘Reconstructing syntax’ (pp. 344-376). < P291.H25 1995 / e-reserve >

IV. Language Contact and the Spread of Change

The social mechanisms of language change : How is change possible? (the Saussurean paradox) – Synchronic variation, social differentiation/register, and language change – Sporadic and incomplete changes: lexical diffusion versus ‘dialect borrowing’ – Near-mergers – Language contact, bilingualism, and borrowing – Pidgins and creoles – More on convergence: linguistic areas – Language planning and language death.

- [21] **THL** / chapter 10 ‘The origin and propagation of change’ (pp. 333-378).
[22] **Labov**, ‘Resolving the Neogrammarian controversy’, *Language* vol. 57 (1981), number 2 (pp. 267-308). < journal article available online >
[23] **THL** / chapter 11 ‘Social and historical pressures upon language: contact, planning and the birth and death of languages’ (pp. 387-440).
[24] **Joseph and Janda** (eds.), *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics* / chapter 23 ‘Contact as a source of language change’ (Thomason) (pp. 687-712). < P140.H35 2003 / e-reserve >
[25] **Harris and Campbell**, *Historical Syntax in Cross-Linguistic Perspective* / chapter 6 ‘Language contact and syntactic borrowing’ (pp. 120-150). < P291.H25 1995 / e-reserve >
[26] **Hymes** (ed.), *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages* / ‘Convergence and creolization: A case from the Indo-Aryan/Dravidian border in India’ (Gumperz and Wilson’ (pp. 151-167). < PM7802.P5 1971 / e-reserve >
[27] **Thomason and Kaufman**, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics* / chapter 9 ‘Case studies’ (pp. 214-342). < P130.5.T46 1988 / section 9.8 (pp. 263-342) on e-reserve >

Language and historical reconstruction : Linguistics and archaeology - Lexicostatistics and glotto-chronology - Remote relationships (macro-families) and mass comparison - Reconstructing population movements from linguistic evidence.

[28] **THL** / chapter 12 'Language and prehistory' (pp. 449-477).