

# English 321

ENGL 321, Lara Farina, Fall 2007

**English 321: History of the English Language**  
**Professor L. Farina**  
**Fall 2007**

“English—who needs it? I’m never going to England.”  
Homer Simpson

**Course Objectives:** English 321 fulfills the Linguistics requirement for the English Major. Like English 221, Structure of the English Language, it familiarizes students with linguistic approaches to the study of language and literature, including methods for analyzing phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. English 321 and 221 aim to foster a certain knowledge of (and hopefully an appreciation for) the material qualities of language. Speaking, writing, and even reading, are, after all, physical acts—something we often forget when discussing literature. Our task here is to recall the ways in which the abstract concept of “English” is embodied in material habit.

That said, English 321 is unlike English 221 in that it focuses on how these material habits both change over time and vary with culture. Those of us with slightly more sophistication than Homer Simpson know that English isn’t just spoken by the English. And English has not just been appropriated by a variety of communities and cultures, but is itself a collection of often wildly diverse practices. We will thus need to examine how the limits of the concept, “English,” have been drawn and by who. Accordingly, we will look at the historical politics of English, asking: What communities have used English and why? How have interactions with non-English speakers affected this use? What meanings have been attached to variance of dialect, pronunciation, or vocabulary? How has linguistic variance reflected or provoked social change?

## Required Texts:

- Russell Hoban, *Riddley Walker* (Indiana UP)
- C.M. Millward, *A Biography of the English Language* (Harcourt)
- Millward, *Biography Workbook*

Quite a bit of additional material will be placed on our e-campus page. You must download these materials and bring them to class.

## Required Coursework:

- Homework (workbook assignments and responses) [20% total]
- Two midterm exams (short answer format) [20% each]
- One final exam [25%]
- Class participation [15%]

## Course Policies:

- **Late Work:** I will not accept late homework. If you have to miss class on a day homework is due, you may email me the homework before our scheduled class. Missed midterm exams may be rescheduled, provided you have an acceptable reason. You may not reschedule the final exam. Note that there will be no extra credit options in this class, so don't ask for make-up work if you have missed or done poorly on required work.
- **Attendance:** Past experience has taught me that students who do not attend class do not pass—without exception. Therefore, to keep everyone on track, I have a strict attendance policy. You may be absent twice without your grade suffering. Additional absences will affect your class participation grade negatively. At six absences, you will fail the class. In general, I do not care why you are absent and do not want to see any notes. The only exceptions to this are cases where some serious condition requires you to be absent for a week or more or on an exam day.
- **Social Justice:** WVU is committed to providing students with equal access to educational opportunity, regardless of race, class, gender, sexual orientation or religious belief. I share that commitment and expect classroom interaction to be respectful and fair.

**Contact Info:** My drop-in office hours are from 3:00-4:00 Tuesday and Thursday in 357 Stansbury Hall. If you can't make these hours, please feel free to make an appointment to see me at another time. You can email me via MIX or at Lara.Farina@mail.wvu.edu. I will email important announcements or schedule changes to the class via MIX, as well as announce these in class. Do not email me for class notes: get in touch with another student for these.

**Schedule:** HM = Homework Assignment

Tu. 8/21 Introduction

Th. 8/23 Milroy, "The Legitimate Language" (e-reserve)

Old English:

Tu. 8/28 Millward, pp. 1-32, HM 1.8 & 2.4

Th. 8/30 Millward, pp. 74-93, 115-129; excerpt from Bede

Tu. 9/4 Millward, pp. 94-115, OE texts (e-reserve), HM 5.9

Middle English:

Th. 9/6 Millward, pp. 142-162, 195-202, HM 6.12

Tu. 9/11 Millward pp. 216-221; Mankynd (e-reserve)

Th. 9/13 Mankynd, cont'd

Tu. 9/18 ME Video and Exam Review

Th. 9/20 MIDTERM #1

Early Modern English:

Tu. 9/25 Millward, pp. 224-250, 283-288, HM 7.16 & 7.22

Th. 9/27 Millward, pp. 250-283, HM Vowel Shift

Tu. 10/2 excerpts from The Tempest (web)

Th. 10/4 Greenblatt, "Learning to Curse" (e-reserve)

Tu. 10/9 Sidney, "Defense of Poesy" (e-reserve), HM Summary

Standardization in the Eighteenth Century:

Th. 10/11 TBA

Tu. 10/16 Millward, pp. 302-310; Swift, "A Proposal for Correcting..." (e-reserve); Johnson, "The Plan of a Dictionary" (e-reserve)

Th. 10/18 Millward, pp. 310-324; Watts, "From Polite Language..." (e-reserve)

Tu. 10/23 Millward, pp. 324-330; Frantzen, from Desire for Origins (e-reserve)

Th. 10/25 EXAM #2

Contemporary Englishes and Issues:

Tu. 10/30 Millward, pp. 344-368, HM 9.5

Th. 11/1 Bailey, from Images of English (e-reserve); Wyld (e-reserve)

Tu. 11/6 Borderlands, (e-reserve)

Th. 11/8 Assiter (e-reserve)

Tu. 11/11 Millward, pp. 393-403; Crystal, "Broadcasting the Nonstandard..." (e-res)

Th. 11/13 Literary Non-Standards (e-reserve)/ World Englishes (Video)

Thanksgiving Holiday

Future English?

Tu. 11/27 Riddley Walker, pp. 1-70, Afterword, & Glossary

Th. 11/29 Riddley Walker, pp. 71-148

Tu. 12/4 Riddley Walker, pp. 149- 220

Th. 12/6 Review

Final Exam on Scheduled Exam Day