

English 329
 Topics in The English Language: African American Language
 (CRN:88234). Instructor: Kirk Hazen, Kirk.Hazen@mail.wvu.edu



Since the 2020 murder of George Floyd, the United States has been in the grips of tension over the state of race, but these tensions have been part of the nation since the first European settlers arrived. Over that time, varieties of English spoken by African Americans have evolved with the social pressures of the time. Today, African American Language is a rich, diverse, and fully grammatical set of varieties. Yet, most often these varieties are derided and scorned, at times with serious consequences, as when the star witness in the trial of George Zimmerman was ignored by the jury because of the way she spoke. In this class, we will explore the words, sounds, and grammar of African American Language to investigate how it is stigmatized and the resulting consequences in society from schools to the courts and everything in between.

This course will be project driven, through analysis of actual speech and discussions about African American Language in society. No previous linguistic experience is needed to take this course.

Text: eCampus readings

Corpus: <https://oraal.uoregon.edu/>

Grades:

Graded Work	Percent of final grade
Projects	50%
Homeworks	30%
Essays	30%