

## **Course Outline for LING 325 (Canadian English)**

**Theme:** This course will provide you with an introduction to the study of **CANADIAN ENGLISH**, that is, the English language in Canada. Though our main approach to this subject will be a linguistic analysis of the principal characteristics of Canadian English – the patterns of English vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar that are particular to Canada – we will also examine the subject from a diverse set of other perspectives, including demographic, legal, historical and cultural. This inter-disciplinary treatment makes the course appropriate not only for Linguistics majors but for others with an interest in Canadian culture, Canadian English and language in Canada, including students from Canadian Studies and English, but also from fields as varied as Anthropology, Communications, Cultural Studies, Education, Geography, History, Political Science and Sociology. For example, in addition to linguistic analysis, we will discuss the population that speaks Canadian English and its distribution across Canada; relations between English and other Canadian languages, including legal and government policy issues; the history of English-speaking settlement in Canada; the relations between Canada and the United States and how these factors have affected the kind of English that developed here; and the role of Canadian English as a medium of Canadian culture, from literature to popular music to film and television. In order to give you some hands-on experience with studying Canadian English as a dynamic and varied phenomenon that surrounds us, you will not only read what others have written about Canadian English but make your own contribution to the subject, by collecting and analyzing some data on a linguistic variable of your choice and comparing your results to those of previous research. We will discover that the way Canadians speak English not only varies from place to place and among social groups, but continues to change over time.

**Note:** this class involves traditional teaching methods, including lectures and class discussion; it does not include a web-based component. Regular attendance in class is therefore encouraged.

**Time/Place:** Mon/Wed, 2:35-3:55 p.m., in RPHYS 115 (room subject to change depending on class size).

**Instructor:** Prof. Charles Boberg. Office: 1085 Dr. Penfield, #223. Tel.: (514) 398-4869. E-mail: [charles.boberg@mcgill.ca](mailto:charles.boberg@mcgill.ca). The best way to contact me is by e-mail, not phone.

**Office hours:** Weds., 4:00-5:00; Thurs., 1:30-3:00; or by appointment (e-mail). Quick or simple questions may be asked immediately after class, or by e-mail.

**Prerequisite:** LING 201, LING 200 or permission of instructor. Since this is a 300-level class, 200-level preparation in Linguistics is a formal requirement. In order to encourage participation from a diverse group of students, pre-requisites have been kept to a minimum and can be waived on a case-by-base basis, following consultation with the instructor. Nevertheless, you will find some aspects of the discussion of the linguistic characteristics of Canadian English and some of the assigned readings easier to understand if you have had at

NB: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information). Also note that, per McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

least one previous course in Linguistics. If you have concerns about your level of preparation, consult the instructor.

<u>Evaluation:</u>	Midterm exam	15%
	Fieldwork project	25%
	Term paper	30%
	Final exam (cumulative)	30%

Required textbook: Charles Boberg, *The English Language in Canada: Status, History and Comparative Analysis* (Cambridge U. P., 2010). Available at McGill Bookstore (or on-line).

Other required readings: the following articles are anthologized in a course pack available at McGill Bookstore.

- Allen, Harold B. 1959. Canadian-American speech differences along the middle border. *Journal of the Canadian Linguistic Association* 5/1: 17-24.
- Avis, Walter S. 1954. Speech differences along the Ontario-United States border. I. Vocabulary. *Journal of the Canadian Linguistic Association* 1/1: 13-18.
- Avis, Walter S. 1955. Speech differences along the Ontario-United States border. II. Grammar and syntax. *Journal of the Canadian Linguistic Association* 1/1 (Regular Series): 14-19.
- Avis, Walter S. 1956. Speech differences along the Ontario-United States border. III. Pronunciation. *Journal of the Canadian Linguistic Association* 2/2: 41-59.
- Bloomfield, Morton. 1948. Canadian English and its relation to eighteenth century American speech. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 47: 59-67.
- Chambers, J.K. 1994. An introduction to dialect topography. *English World-Wide* 15/1: 35-53.
- Chambers, J.K. 2006. Canadian Raising Retrospect and Prospect. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 51/2-3: 105-118.
- Clarke, Sandra. 2004a. Newfoundland English: Phonology. In Bernd Kortmann and Edgar W. Schneider (eds.), *A Handbook of varieties of English, Vol. 1* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter), 366-382.
- Clarke, Sandra. 2004b. Newfoundland English: Morphology and syntax. In Kortmann and Schneider (eds.), 303-318.
- Clarke, Sandra, Ford Elms and Amani Youssef. 1995. The third dialect of English: Some Canadian evidence. *Language Variation and Change* 7: 209-228.
- De Wolf, Gaelan Dodds. 1990. Patterns of usage in urban Canadian English. *English World-Wide* 11/1: 1-31.
- Gregg, R.J. 1957a. Notes on the pronunciation of Canadian English as spoken in Vancouver, B.C. *Journal of the Canadian Linguistic Association* 3/1: 20-26.
- Gregg, R.J. 1957b. Neutralisation and fusion of vocalic phonemes in Canadian English as spoken in the Vancouver area. *Journal of the Canadian Linguistic Association* 3/2: 78-83.
- Joos, Martin. 1942. A phonological dilemma in Canadian English. *Language* 18: 141-44.
- Scargill, Matthew Henry. 1957. Sources of Canadian English. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 56: 610-614.
- Scargill, Matthew Henry and Henry J. Warkentyne. 1972. The Survey of Canadian English: A report. *English Quarterly* 5,3: 47-104.

- Tagliamonte, Sali A. 2006. "So cool, right?": Canadian English entering the 21st century. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 51/2-3: 309-332.
- Tagliamonte, Sali A. and Alexandra D'Arcy. 2004. He's like, she's like: The quotative system in Canadian youth. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 8/4: 493-514.
- Woods, Howard B. 1991. Social differentiation in Ottawa English. In Jenny Cheshire (ed.), *English around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 134-149.

Fieldwork project: This is your chance to contribute something new to our knowledge of Canadian English. Carefully examine the *Survey of Canadian English*, carried out by Scargill and Warkentyne in 1972, which is included in your course pack. Find a question from the *Survey* that interests, surprises or puzzles you and design a follow-up study of that question, using data from today's speakers of Canadian English. Begin with a *hypothesis*: how do you think people would respond to this question today? In order to test your hypothesis, you'll need to find at least twenty native-speakers of English who are good representatives of at least one of the regions in the *Survey* (one of Canada's ten provinces); that is, they should have grown up almost exclusively in that place and should ideally still live there today. You may contact them personally (e.g., classmates or dorm mates) or by phone, mail, e-mail, etc. (e.g., friends and family in the place you come from). Ask these twenty people the same question that Scargill and Warkentyne asked, tabulate the responses, and compare your results to the earlier data and to your hypothesis. Was your hypothesis correct? Has usage changed in the two generations since the *Survey* was published? If so, can you explain the change in terms of the influences on Canadian English that we discuss in the course? You may investigate and report on more than one question, or more than one region, if you wish. Write up a 3-page report of your study (12-point font, double-spaced), including four labeled sections: 1) *Introduction* (what did you study and what was your hypothesis?); 2) *Method* (how did you choose your respondents and gather your data?); 3) *Results* (a table of your results with comparison to earlier data); 4) *Discussion* (identification, analysis and explanation of your results, including evaluation of your hypothesis).

Term paper: The term paper will be an essay of 5-10 pages (12-point font, double-spaced), in which you will have an opportunity to explore in greater depth the aspect of Canadian English that you find most interesting. Term papers may be related to or inspired by the content of lectures, class discussion and assigned readings, but should go substantially beyond the course's treatment of the selected topic in order to demonstrate specialized knowledge you have acquired. Suggested topics are listed below. They are intended to appeal to a broad range of student backgrounds and interests. Topics beyond those listed may also be proposed, but require approval of the instructor. Even if you choose a pre-approved topic, consultation with the instructor about your specific approach to it is recommended.

- a) Plan and carry out a comparative study of some feature of Canadian English, examining usage patterns either among two or more distinct groups of Canadians (divided by region, age, sex, social status, etc.), or between Canadians and some other group, like Americans. You should have at least 20 people in each group you are comparing. Begin with a hypothesis and submit a report along the same lines as the fieldwork project above.

- b) Research and analyze the history of settlement in some region of Canada: who came there, from which places, in what numbers and at what time(s), and how did this influence the development of Canadian English in that place? Can you point to any features of local English that clearly reflect the settlement history you have documented? Is the influence of initial settlement fading over time? If so, how and with what linguistic consequences?
- c) Carry out a linguistic analysis of a work of Canadian literature or non-fiction, or of a Canadian film, television program or set of lyrics, focusing on the linguistic features of your chosen text that make it distinctly Canadian (based on the knowledge of Canadian English you have acquired in this course). Does the author (or screen-writer or lyricist) use Canadian English to claim a Canadian cultural identity for either the authorial voice or for one or more characters? If so, what are the nuances and symbolic importance of this identity, and how are these reinforced with language?
- d) Using techniques of computer cartography, produce a printable map of one or more variable features of Canadian English, showing the distribution of the variants of your variable over social, regional or diachronic space. Write an accompanying text of 1-2 pages that cites the source of your data and explains what your map shows us, focusing on the particular advantages of the visual representation you have chosen over other techniques or approaches.
- e) Write a position paper on some aspect of language policy or legislation in Canada. The most obvious issue to address is English-French bilingualism at the federal and/or provincial and local levels: is current policy adequate, effective, equitable or justified? If not, why not and how should it be changed? Other issues might involve non-official languages, like those spoken by immigrants or First Nations groups, but all papers should relate their discussion to Canadian English as well. Support your discussion with references to current or historical demo-linguistic data from Statistics Canada.
- f) Prepare a classroom module for teaching school children about one or more aspects of Canadian English at an educational level and in a curricular context of your choice. Develop a motivation for including the material in the curriculum (why is it important for students to be exposed to this material and what are the direct and indirect benefits of teaching it?), and a lesson plan with instructional materials and exercises that would help to enhance the module's educational effectiveness with your target group.
- g) Compose an essay that examines the question of Canadian cultural identity from a linguistic point of view: considering what you have learned about Canadian English in this course, what does its character tell us about the past, present and future status of Canadians as a distinct people, group or nation? The obvious issue here is the way Canadians approach their multiplex historical and cultural relations with Britain and the United States, and how their use of language reflects this approach, from controversies over spelling to shifting usage of particular words, pronunciations or grammatical forms, but you may explore other issues as well, from English-French duality to First Nations to multiculturalism to modern popular culture. Your discussion should always be rooted, however, in a consideration of particular linguistic features of Canadian English.

General notes on submission of written assignments (field project and term paper): all written assignments must be submitted in hard copy to the instructor by 5:00 p.m. on the date specified in the schedule below. Late submissions will be penalized at a rate of 10% of the grade per day, including weekends. Extensions will not be granted except in cases of legitimate, unanticipated and properly documented medical emergency or other serious incapacity. Electronic submission is not acceptable except under the same circumstances and by special permission.

All written assignments should be neatly presented with a title page stating the student's name and McGill ID number, the title of the submission, the course (LING 325) and the date. Page numbers and a header containing the student's name should be included on every page of text (following the title page) except, if you prefer, the first page; page numbering should count the first page of text, not the title page, as page 1. Papers should conclude with a list of references to all works cited in the text, in a consistent format (use the reference format in the textbook or one of the assigned articles as a guide if necessary). The text should be free of typographical, stylistic and grammatical errors. Tables and figures (graphs or illustrations) should be sequentially numbered for easy reference and accompanied by brief captions explaining their content. Appendices of extra material may be included after the list of references but will not be read unless specifically referred to in the body of the paper; appendices do not count towards the page-length of the paper.

If you have any questions or concerns about written assignments, you are encouraged to consult the instructor as early as possible.

See next page for Tentative schedule of lectures, readings, assignments and exams.

Tentative schedule of lectures, readings, assignments and exams:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Lecture topic/Exam</i>	<i>Readings due, etc.</i>
09.03	W	Introduction: overview of course	
09.08	M	English in the Canadian context	Boberg Ch. 1
09.10	W	English and French in Quebec; bilingualism	
09.15	M	Canadian & American English	Avis 1954-56; Allen 1959; Chambers 1994
09.17	W	Canadian English & Canadian culture; previous research on Canadian English	Scargill & Warkentyne 1972
09.22	M	English-speaking settlement of Canada	Boberg Ch. 2
09.24	W	Immigration & the development of CanE	Bloomfield 1948; Scargill 1957
09.29	M	Features of CanE: Vocabulary	Boberg Ch. 3.1
10.01	W	Features of CanE: Vocabulary, continued	
10.06	M	Pre-midterm review; fieldwork project workshop	
10.08	W	MIDTERM EXAM	MIDTERM EXAM
10.13	M	No class: Thanksgiving	
10.15	W	Review of phonetics & phonology	In-class handout
10.20	M	Review of phonetics & phonology, cont'd	<b>Fieldwork projects due</b>
10.22	W	Features of CanE: Pronunciation	Boberg Ch. 3.2
10.27	M	Features of CanE: Pronunciation	Gregg 1957a, b; Joos 1942; Chambers 2006
10.29	W	Features of CanE: Pronunciation	
11.03	M	Features of CanE: Pronunciation	Clarke et al. 1995
11.05	W	Features of CanE: Grammar and discourse features	Boberg Ch. 3.3; Tagliamonte & D'Arcy 2004; Tagliamonte 2006
11.10	M	Variation and change in vocabulary	Boberg Ch. 4
11.12	W	Term paper workshop	
11.17	M	Variation and change in vocabulary, cont'd	<b>Term papers due</b>
11.19	W	Variation and change in phonetics	Boberg Ch. 5
11.24	M	Variation and change in phonetics	
11.26	W	Variation and change in phonetics	
12.01	M	Social variation	De Wolf 1990; Woods 1991
12.03	W	Newfoundland English	Clarke 2004a, b
12.04	TH	(Monday schedule) Pre-Final Exam review	Boberg Ch. 6
TBA		FINAL EXAM	FINAL EXAM