

Course Outline for LING 325 (Canadian English)

Content: 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 several other perspectives, including demographic, legal, historical and cultural. This makes the course appropriate for anyone with a strong interest in Canada and Canadiana, including students in Linguistics as well as Anthropology, Canadian Studies, Communications, Education, English, Geography, History, Political Science and Sociology. For example, in addition to linguistic analysis, you will read about 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 and 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 your own data. You 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.

Instructional method and technology policy: This class involves traditional teaching methods, including lectures (without PowerPoint) and class discussion, as well as a few document projections. **The course will not involve any online content or materials:** submission of written work and all non-classroom communication between students and the instructor will be exclusively by **email** (*not* myCourses). Emails will be sent to the addresses on the official class list; it is the student's responsibility to make sure that they are received. Regular attendance in class and good note-taking are therefore encouraged, as is doing assigned readings before the class in which they will be discussed. Laptops and voice recorders are permitted in the classroom, but photography is not. Use of laptops and other electronic devices must be appropriate to and respectful of the classroom environment: recreational use of the internet during class is inappropriate and distracting for other students. Cell phones should be turned off and put away during class. If you do not think you can function well in this environment, you are strongly encouraged to choose a different course.

Time/Place: Monday/Wednesday, 08:35-09:55 a.m., in ENGTR 2120 (room subject to change depending on class size and other factors).

Instructor: Prof. Charles Boberg. E-mail: charles.boberg@mcgill.ca. Office: 1085 Dr. Penfield, #223.

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/students/srr/honest for more information). Also note that, in accord with 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.

Access to the instructor: Please e-mail me if you have questions or concerns about the course or about other advising matters. If desired, an in-person meeting can be scheduled by e-mail. If you have brief comments or questions, you are encouraged to talk to me after class.

Prerequisite: LING 201 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 least one previous course in Linguistics. If you have concerns about your level of preparation, consult the instructor.

Evaluation: Midterm exam 20% Project report 40%
Final exam (cumulative) 40%

Required textbook: Charles Boberg, *The English Language in Canada: Status, History and Comparative Analysis* (Cambridge U. P., 2010). Available at McGill Bookstore, from Indigo, Amazon, etc., or as an eBook through McGill Library. See course reserves at:

<https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/courseReserves/course/id/21302594>

Other required readings: the following articles are available in a course pack from the McGill Bookstore. You can find electronic versions of some of them through the Library or elsewhere online, but some are difficult or impossible to find online, so the course pack is the best option.

- 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. (See also: <http://dialect.topography.chass.utoronto.ca/>.)
- 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.

Midterm exam: to be written in class on the day indicated below. Absences on the exam day (anticipated or unanticipated) should be discussed with the instructor as soon as possible. At the instructor's discretion, following discussion of the reason for the absence, a grade adjustment may be possible. In the case of absence on medical grounds, proper documentation of a suitably serious and unanticipated condition is required. Where the absence is not deemed excusable, a grade of zero will be awarded.

Research project: This is your chance to contribute something new to our knowledge of Canadian English. Follow these steps:

1. Working individually or in a group, choose at least **five linguistic variables** of Canadian English to investigate. Variables can be variant words, pronunciations, grammatical forms, discourse markers, spellings, etc. They can be based on your own anecdotal experience of Canadian English or on previous studies: either the studies listed above or others that you find on your own. A list of suggested variables and guidelines on project design will be provided in a separate handout.
2. Having identified your variables and their variants, formulate a **research question** and a **hypothesis** about how they vary: is the frequency of the variants determined by age, sex, social class, region, change over time, a combination of these, or some other factor? What correlations do you expect to see between these independent variables and your chosen linguistic variables?
3. **Design a project** in which you gather and analyze data on the variables you have chosen to study. This will normally involve a questionnaire or set of interviews, administered in person or remotely over the internet, but it is also possible to study written language and archival or media speech, such as newspapers, web sites, films, TV shows, popular song lyrics or internet videos. Normally, all data will be from native speakers of Canadian English, comparing, say, women with men, older with younger Canadians or Ontarians with British Columbians, etc., but you can also compare Canadians with other groups,

like Americans. To study change over time, compare your own data with published reports on earlier periods, like those listed above (especially Scargill & Warkentyne 1972, but also Avis 1954-56, Chambers 1994, De Wolf 1990, Woods 1991, etc.).

4. **Collect enough data to support a comparison** of at least two groups of ten speakers each, differentiated in terms of your independent variable(s): two or more age groups, regions, time periods, etc. If comparing new data with an earlier study, you may collect just one set of twenty or more responses. If you are working in a group, each member should contribute 20 or more responses. The more data you collect, the more confidence you will have in the patterns you observe (this is an advantage of group work).
5. Write a **report** of 10-12 pages (12-point font, double-spaced), to be submitted on the date indicated below, in which you present your project. This report should have six labeled sections:
 1. **Introduction**: explain the topic of your project and the linguistic and independent variables you studied and present your hypothesis about the variation. This discussion should be supported with references to appropriate previous research, including that presented in the textbook and other readings for this course, but also other studies that you have found on your own, relating your topic.
 2. **Method**: explain how you collected your data and the characteristics of your sample (how many people in each group, attributes of those people, etc.).
 3. **Results**: present, in tabular or graphic form or both, the data you collected. This presentation should be clearly related to your research question and hypothesis: if you hypothesized that younger people would use a word or pronunciation more than older people, your table or graph should show summary data for your two age groups so the reader can compare them. Normally, only aggregate, group-level data are presented, not individual data on each speaker or respondent.
 4. **Discussion**: identify the patterns in your data and explain how they answer your research question and address your hypothesis. Was your hypothesis correct? If so, what does this tell us about Canadian English? If not, why might this be? Might a different method have achieved a different result, or did your hypothesis not take an important factor into account?
 5. **Conclusion**: briefly summarize your project and its conclusions and offer suggestions for future research based on what you learned.
 6. **References**: list, in alphabetical order by author's last name, all published works and other sources that are cited in the text of your report.

Policy on submission of written assignments (project report): either individual or **group work** and submissions are acceptable. For group submissions, names of all members should be clearly indicated and all members will receive the same grade.

Reports should be **submitted by email** (to charles.boberg@mcgill.ca) as a **Word or pdf attachment**, by 11:59 pm (23h59) on the date indicated in the schedule below. It is the **student's responsibility** to ensure timely and effective submission of all written work; any irregularities in this respect, including late submissions, should be communicated clearly to the instructor. It is best not to wait until the last minute to submit your work, as unanticipated delays can occur: you should plan to submit your work at least an hour before the deadline.

Late submissions will be penalized at a rate of 10% of the paper grade per day, including weekends and starting at midnight of the due date (a minute after 11:59 pm). **Extensions** of submission deadlines will not be granted except in cases of legitimate, unanticipated and

properly documented medical emergency or other serious incapacity. Requests for extension should be made as soon as possible and it is the student's responsibility to mitigate as much as possible any delays arising from unexpected obstacles. The instructor reserves the right to reject extension requests that do not appear to be adequately justified.

In writing and **formatting** your text, you should observe the following guidelines:

- All written assignments should be **neatly** presented, beginning 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. For group assignments, ID numbers may be omitted on privacy grounds.
- **Page numbers** and a header containing the student's or group'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.
- The main text of the paper should be in **12-point font, double-spaced**.
- The text should be free of typographical, stylistic and grammatical errors, so **edit** your work carefully before submitting it. Care in this regard shows respect both for your own work and for your reader. If you have difficulties in this respect, or you are not a native-speaker of English, you are encouraged to seek help in checking over your text before you submit it.
- **In-text citation** should follow the normal practice in Linguistics, which is to identify the author's last name and the year and, if possible, page number of the citation in parentheses after the quotation or cited idea, e.g., "quoted text" (Smith 1975:12).
- Students are reminded that all ideas, facts and spoken or written passages taken from other sources or authors must be properly attributed to their original sources and/or authors, and that failure to do so may constitute **plagiarism**, which could result in a failing grade on the paper or, potentially, more serious disciplinary measures. If you have questions or concerns about citation, consult the instructor.
- Papers should conclude with a **list of references** to all works cited in the text, in a consistent format, with entries listed alphabetically by author's last name. Beyond that, the particular reference format you use is up to you (if in doubt, use the reference list in the course textbook or one of the assigned articles as a model).
- **Tables and figures** (graphs or illustrations), if used, 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 additional questions or concerns about written assignments, you are encouraged to consult the instructor as early as possible.

Policy on attendance: attendance in classes is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged, as students who do not attend regularly will miss important material, which may have a significant negative impact on their performance in the course. This includes classes in which exam results are reviewed. If you must be absent for medical or other serious and unavoidable reasons, upon presenting documentation of those reasons you may request an individual meeting in which the material you missed can be reviewed and discussed. If your absence is not sufficiently justified, no accommodation will be offered, but students who were absent for an exam review may ask to see their exams briefly after a subsequent class.

Policy on grades: the grades assigned to assignments, papers and exams in this class are **not negotiable**. Students are encouraged to point out mathematical errors in grade calculation and are also welcome to request explanations of grades in cases where they do not understand the basis of the assessment, but requests for review and explanation aimed principally at negotiating for a higher grade (also known as “grade-grubbing”) will not be well received. Students should keep in mind that such requests reflect poorly on the student making them and are disrespectful of both the instructor and the other students in the class.

Policy on fairness and accommodations: it is crucially important that all students in this class be assessed and evaluated according to the same standard, as set forth in this course outline. Requests that special circumstances be taken into consideration in individual cases must therefore be assessed very carefully, as granting them may give one student an unfair advantage over others: without proper justification, a request for advantageous treatment of one student, such as a deadline extension, amounts to asking that all other students be put at an unfair disadvantage. Students with professionally diagnosed and ongoing medical or psychological conditions that require accommodation have recourse to the Student Accessibility and Achievement service (<https://www.mcgill.ca/access-achieve/>). In all other cases, any accommodations that are granted shall have the goal of restoring fairness in situations where it has been compromised by serious and unavoidable barriers or challenges faced by an individual student, such as an unanticipated medical condition or family trauma. Even in these situations, students are expected to act responsibly to mitigate the impact of the setback, as well as to communicate promptly, clearly and honestly with the instructor about their situation. Only requests judged by the instructor to be both valid and properly documented shall be granted and the nature of any accommodation offered shall be at the instructor’s discretion.

Policy on cell phones and other electronic devices in relation to exams: further to the general technology policy stated above, students are reminded of McGill’s policy, stated in its University Regulations and Resources, that, “As per the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, Article 17, cheating in any examination is considered a serious offence that could lead to expulsion from the University. Students are not permitted to have in their possession, or to use, any unauthorized materials during an examination. This includes electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, MP3 players, PDAs, smart watches, and other web-access devices. Unauthorized items used during an exam will be reported to the Disciplinary Officer.” In this class, any student who consults a cell phone or other device during an exam will receive a grade of zero on the exam and be reported to the university authorities. Exams in this class are confidential. Any student who photographs an exam or is suspected of sharing copies or images of an exam with other students, or of receiving such copies or images, will be reported to the authorities.

Policy on use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) applications: the written work you submit in this class should represent your own research, thinking and writing. Using AI tools to produce written work limits your learning as a student and misrepresents the skills and achievements that are being assessed in this course. Inappropriate use of AI will be treated as a form of cheating and reported to the Disciplinary Officer.

Tentative schedule of lectures, readings, assignments and exams:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Lecture topic/Exam</i>	<i>Readings due, etc.</i>
08.28	W	Introduction: overview of course	
09.02	M	No class: Labor Day	
09.04	W	English in the Canadian context	Boberg Ch. 1
09.09	M	English and French in Quebec; bilingualism	
09.11	W	English and other languages in Canada and Quebec: class discussion	
09.16	M	English and other languages in Canada and Quebec: class discussion, continued	
09.18	W	Canadian & American English	Avis 1954-56; Allen 1959; Chambers 1994
09.23	M	Cdn English & Cdn culture; previous research on CanE; discussion of ideas for research project assignment	Scargill & Warkentyne 1972
09.25	W	English-speaking settlement of Canada	Boberg Ch. 2
09.30	M	Settlement history cont'd; immigration & the development of CanE	Bloomfield 1948; Scargill 1957
10.02	W	Features of CanE: Vocabulary	Boberg Ch. 3.1
10.07	M	Vocabulary, cont'd, & pre-midterm review	
10.09	W	MIDTERM EXAM (in-class)	MIDTERM EXAM
10.14	M	No class: Canadian Thanksgiving	
10.16	W	No class: Fall Reading Break	
10.21	M	Midterm exam review; basic concepts of phonetics & phonology	Handout
10.23	W	Features of CanE: Pronunciation	Boberg Ch. 3.2
10.28	M	Research projects workshop (discussion)	
10.30	W	Features of CanE: Pronunciation, cont'd	Gregg 1957a, b; Joos 1942; Chambers 2006
11.04	M	Features of CanE: Pronunciation, cont'd	Clarke et al. 1995
11.06	W	Features of CanE: Grammar and discourse features	Boberg Ch. 3.3
11.11	M	Features of CanE: Grammar and discourse features, cont'd	Tagliamonte & D'Arcy 2004; Tagliamonte 2006
11.13	W	Variation and change in vocabulary	Boberg Ch. 4
11.18	M	Variation and change in vocabulary, cont'd	Project reports due
11.20	W	Variation and change in phonetics	Boberg Ch. 5
11.25	M	Variation and change in phonetics	
11.27	W	Social variation	De Wolf 1990; Woods 1991
12.02	M	Newfoundland English	Clarke 2004a, b; Boberg Ch. 6
12.04	W	Pre-Final Exam review	
TBA		FINAL EXAM	FINAL EXAM