

Course Outline for LING 425 (Historical Linguistics)

Content: This course will provide you with an introduction to **HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS** -- the study of how languages change over time, of the changes that have occurred throughout the history of individual languages or language families, and of the historical “genetic” relations among languages with shared ancestry. In the first half of the course, we will examine sound change, borrowing and analogy, the three major types of change that underlie the comparative method of reconstructing proto-languages. In the second half, we will examine the comparative method itself and survey a number of other issues in historical linguistics, including the genetic classification of languages into historical families; models of linguistic change; language-internal reconstruction; semantic, lexical and syntactic change; explanations for linguistic change; proposals for distant genetic relationships; and the study of linguistic prehistory, with a particular focus on the Indo-European language family. In addition to a standard introductory textbook, we will read articles that focus on major contemporary issues in the field: the regularity of change, the transmission of change, and the establishment of remote genetic relations among languages.

Instructional method and technology policy: This course involves traditional teaching methods, including lectures (without PowerPoint) and class discussion, with some overhead projections; it does *not* include an on-line component. 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, 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.

Time/Place: Tuesday/Thursday, 10:05-11:25 a.m., in ARTS 260 (room subject to change depending on class size).

Instructor: Prof. Charles Boberg. Office: 1085 Dr. Penfield, #223. E-mail (always best): charles.boberg@mcgill.ca. Tel. (usually not effective): (514) 398-4869.

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

Prerequisites: LING 330 (Phonetics) and LING 320 (Sociolinguistics 1), or permission of instructor. As a 400-level class, Historical Linguistics involves advanced skills in linguistic analysis and a considerable amount of work. In particular, it assumes a solid understanding of phonetics and phonemic analysis and builds on the basic principles of linguistic variation and change taught in LING 320. Students without this background may experience difficulty. Consult the instructor if you have any concerns about your level of preparation.

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 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.

<u>Evaluation:</u>	Exercises (4 @ 5% each)	20%
	Midterm exam	30%
	Final exam (cumulative)	50%

Required textbook: Lyle Campbell. 2013. *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Available at McGill Bookstore (or Amazon, Indigo, etc.), or electronically or on 3-hour reserve at McGill Library.

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

- Labov, William. 1981. Resolving the Neogrammarian controversy. *Language* 57: 267-308.
 Ross, Philip E. 1991. Hard words. *Scientific American* (April): 70-79.
 Wright, Robert. 1991. Quest for the mother tongue. *Atlantic Monthly* (April): 39-68.
 Labov, William. 2007. Transmission and diffusion. *Language* 83/2: 344-387.

Policy on exercises: either individual or group work and submissions are acceptable. Names of all group members should be clearly indicated on the submission and all group members will receive the same grade. Exercises must be submitted in class (in hard copy, either typed or hand-written, not electronically) on the dates indicated below. Late submissions will not be accepted except in cases of properly documented medical or other exceptional grounds, at the instructor's discretion.

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.

Tentative schedule of lectures, readings, assignments and exams:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Lecture topic/Exam</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>
09.04	TU	Introduction: overview of course	Campbell Ch. 1	
09.06	TH	Introduction, cont'd		
09.11	TU	Sound change	Campbell Ch. 2	
09.13	TH	Sound change, cont'd		
09.18	TU	Sound change, cont'd		
09.20	TH	Borrowing	Campbell Ch. 3	Exercise #1
09.25	TU	Borrowing, cont'd		
09.27	TH	Analogical change	Campbell Ch. 4	Exercise #2
10.02	TU	Analogical change, cont'd		
10.04	TH	MIDTERM EXAM (in-class)		MIDTERM EXAM
10.09	TU	Comparative method	Campbell Ch. 5	
10.11	TH	Comparative method, cont'd		
		Midterm exam review		
10.16	TU	Comparative method, cont'd		

10.18	TH	Linguistic classification	Campbell Ch. 6	Exercise #3
10.23	TU	Models of linguistic change	Campbell Ch. 7	
10.25	TH	Models of ling. change, cont'd		
10.30	TU	The Neogrammarian controversy	Labov 1981	Exercise #4
11.01	TH	Internal reconstruction	Campbell Ch. 8	
11.06	TU	Semantic & lexical change	Campbell Ch. 9	
11.08	TH	Morph. & syntactic change	Campbell Ch. 10, 11	
11.13	TU	Explaining linguistic change	Campbell Ch. 13	
11.15	TH	Transmission and diffusion of change	Labov 2007	
11.20	TU	Distant genetic relationship	Campbell Ch. 14	
11.22	TH	Distant genetic relationship, cont'd	Ross, Wright	
11.27	TU	Linguistic prehistory	Campbell Ch. 16	
11.29	TH	Proto-Indo-European language & culture		
TBA		FINAL EXAM		FINAL EXAM