The problem with defending the purity of the English language is that English is about as pure as a cribhouse whore. We don't just borrow words; on occasion, English has pursued other languages down alleyways to beat them unconscious and rifle their pockets for new vocabulary.
--James D. Nicoll

Meetings Tuesday/Thursday 9:25-10:40
Classroom Herzstein Hall 210
Instructor contact Office, Herring Hall 209; Tel. 348-6225; email, kemmer @
Instructor office hours TTh 10:45-11:50 and by appointment.
TA contact Jennifer (Jen) Hoecker, jlh2 @
TA office and hours Office, Herring Hall 127, hours, Mondays 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.

Course description
This course applies linguistic principles to the study of the English vocabulary. We will examine the rich stock of morphemes, or meaningful elements, in English words, and observe how these combine to derive much of the vocabulary of English. Other topics include the development of the English vocabulary, derivational processes, articulatory (i.e. pronunciation) processes, etymology (word origins and histories), sound change and meaning change, the linguistic relations of English, sources of new words, usage and variation, and slang. No previous experience with Linguistics is required.

As far as possible, students will be encouraged to make their own investigations and discuss their findings and questions about words in class. Students will work to increase their mastery of English vocabulary from the technical, literary, scientific and other domains by acquiring recurrent morphemes and words incorporating them; and by generally increasing their awareness of the structure, history, and use of English words.

Course objectives
By the end of the course, the student should

- have an awareness of the internal structure of words and of the systematic relationships among words in English
- have a basic understanding of the history of the English language, with particular reference to the major periods of vocabulary expansion that it has undergone and how those periods are reflected in the modern lexicon
- understand some basic principles of language change that have affected the English language, including principles of sound change and meaning change
- know the basic stock of Classical roots and affixes that recurrently appear in English words; be able to interpret newly encountered words incorporating elements of that stock
- be familiar with a wide range of words and their origins, meanings, and domains of use; be able to apply the knowledge gained so as to be able to say something about the origin and/or meaning of unfamiliar words
- understand how the study of words can be used as an access point into knowledge and history of an entire culture, and be able to further pursue such knowledge via the study of words
- have a good working knowledge of the incredibly rich lexical resources available in the English language, providing a basis for increased mastery of the spoken and written language
Course schedule and announcements

A tentative course schedule for 2009 is posted at Ling/Engl 215 Course Schedule. It is up to date now, but any changes will be announced in class and in Owlspace. Exam dates are set and will not be changed.

Regarding the dates in the schedule: The date a reading (whether textbook or web) appears in the schedule is the date by which the reading is to be done. Assignment and exam dates will also be indicated in the course schedule. The Announcements on the Ling/Engl 215 site on Owlspace will be the first place I announce any changes to the schedule.

Course requirements

The percentages are tentative as of Sept 15 2009, but if they change at all they will not change by much. We will add an extra credit opportunity for an additional 5% of the grade. More on that later.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm #1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm #2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm #3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Vocab Quizzes</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Journal</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence/Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>100% = 100 course points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra credit</td>
<td>up to 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total possible points in class:</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to assigned readings specified on the Course Schedule, students are responsible for reading the pages in the Course Content Links, from the bordered grid of links on this page below, as these links become activated on the web.

Participation points for the course are based students' questions posed or answered in class; my perception of your presence as the course goes on; and submission vs. non-submission of the sample new words assignment.

Students are responsible for getting an Owlspace account so they can read the Announcements and get any course materials posted there. When we post an Announcement, we will also make it go directly to your email account.

Course records will also be maintained on the Owlspace site and will be made accessible to each student as far as is possible.

Word Journal project

The one significant piece of writing in this class is the Word Journal project. The purpose is to get you attuned to the words in the language used around you. One part of the assignment is to help you expand your vocabulary in the specialized subject matters that you are dealing with in your academic subjects. The other part of the assignment is to notice and collect neologisms and figure out how and why they were created; and to describe the various linguistic processes they demonstrate. The vocabulary you are learning in classes is not that different in kind from the neologisms: all technical vocabulary and jargon, for example, were once neologisms, either borrowed from other languages or created out of existing morphemes.

The Word Journal is covered under the Honor Code as well: you have to 'catch' the words in use yourself -- that means you must hear or read them in a real context, and not take them from anyone else's written or online discussion of them as words; and your definitions for the words must be in your own words. See the three links below under Honor Code issues for further explication.

The Word Journal will take a fair amount of time, but it can be done in fairly small increments. It is advisable to use the whole semester to collect and write about the words. There is nothing worse than trying to find a whole bunch of words and think of things to write about them in a short period of time. The project will go smoothly if you do a little at a time and keep up with the class so you can use concepts from the course in your observations about the words.

Your neologisms collected will be entered online into the Neologisms Database

I will be telling you more about entry of the words as the semester progresses.

Exams and Quizzes

Exam and quiz policies

Any illness or other disaster that keeps a student from taking an exam or quiz during the time period set must be reported to me (kemmer AT rice.edu) before the exam is due (if you can't notify me, then ask your parent or college master to do so). There are no
make-up exams or quizzes for non-emergency situations.

Exam and Quiz nature and dates
The course will have 3 in-class midterms ("midterm" is a Rice word for a non-final exam), whose dates are now set and in the Course Schedule. There is no final examination. Note that Midterm #3 is on the last class meeting day (Dec. 3) but there is a make-up day for Midterm #3 for those who have a lot of deadlines the final week of classes. More on exam format is given under "Exam and Quiz Format" below. There will be 11 quizzes offered but only 10 will be counted; students can drop the lowest score. The dates for the quizzes, except for the last one, are all in the schedule. If a quiz needs to be moved, advance notice will be given in class and in Owlspace Announcements.

Exam coverage
Midterm exams will cover readings, the two DVD episodes, class discussions, the web materials in the Course Content Links, and any materials distributed in class. Quizzes (total 11 but only 10 counted) are based on sets of Word Elements following most of the chapters of our textbook.

Exam and Quiz format
Midterm exam questions are primarily multiple choice, T/F, matching, placing in correct time sequences, fill in the blank, and short answer. There will also be "parsing", which means dividing a word into its component morphemes (the form and the meaning) and providing the associated word definition. [Note: this year due to size of class, the midterms will be all choices and no fill-in-blanks or short answer. I will incorporate parsing in some way in all three midterms as it is an ongoing theme of the course.]

The vocabulary quizzes are all multiple choice; 15 questions on word elements selected from a particular set of word elements at the end of a chapter; and 15 questions asking for definitions for English words illustrating those word elements. Most of the words asked will be from the examples given after the word elements; but some will be words similar to those in form and meaning, and in a few cases there will be other words on the quiz that might be found on the SAT or GRE.

Exam and Quiz policies
Any illness or other disaster that keeps a student from taking an exam during the time period set must be reported to me (kemmer AT rice.edu) before the exam is due (if you can't notify me, then ask your parent or college master to do so). There are no make-up exams or quizzes for non-emergency situations.

Exam reviews
The following lists of relevant terminology will be linked in the week before each exam:

- Midterm #1 Review
- Midterm #2 Review
- Midterm #3 Review

The review pages, when linked above, should give you an idea of what you do or do not know, so look at them and bring any questions you have to class.

Honor Code issues

Honor code for exams
All exams in the course are pledged, closed book, closed notes, closed mouths, closed ears (to others talking) and no internet surfing during exams. The Quizzes are closed book too, since they are of little value otherwise.

Honor code for Word Journal
Students are welcome, in fact encouraged, to talk about their Word Journals with classmates, as long as they don't use for their Journals words collected from other Ling 215 students (current or former). Some people will come up with some of the same words independently, but that's OK if you caught the word 'in the wild' yourself. Your own journal entry for the word (all of the writing you submit for these assignments) should be original to you of course.

The words you submit should not be taken from any collection of new words, on line or in any print materials.

To avoid unclarity about academic standards relating to use of the World Wide Web, these standards are posted on the following links:

- New words guidelines
- Using Web Sources: Basic Academic Standards
- Creating Web Materials: Basic Academic Standards; Copyright Issues

Students should consult these before using the web to produce coursework (in this or any course!!)

Disabilities
Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this class is encouraged to contact me after class or in my office. Contact also the Disabled Student Services office in the Ley Student Center to find out how they can be of further assistance.
Grading

Grading is done by points. The course has 100 points total, plus a maximum of 5 additional points for an extra credit project (discussed in class September 22). The mean is set at about a B-.

To pass the class, a student needs 50% or more of the total 100 points. This is expected to be well below average performance, but it is acceptable for passing given the amount and nature of the material.

A word to the wise: A fair amount of material in the course is not known to most speakers of English. And unfortunately, most speakers of English believe a good number of myths about the language. It is probably not possible to pass the course relying on "general knowledge", since so much of what passes for general knowledge about English and about language in general is simply false: there are many popular misconceptions about English and about language in our culture, often dating back centuries and spread through the school curriculum.

A large part of the course consists of information that is completely new to most speakers, or at least different from what they thought was the case. So reading the book, web pages, and attending class is necessary to do well.

Extra credit

Up to 5% extra credit can be earned by making a multimedia presentation, to be shown in class, about some aspect of words in English. Generally this presentation will be a video of approximately 3 minutes in length.

Your topic can be basically anything that relates to the material of the course. Your video can go into more depth than the course did in some area. For example, one possible topic might be a particular set of loanwords from a particular language we did not talk much about: Arabic, Dutch, Malay, Chinese....and how this set of words came into English via cultural contact between speakers of that language and English.

Lisa Spiro of the Digital Media Center (DMC) in Herring Hall came to class on Sept. 22 and told the class how to get equipment for making a video. Basically, the DMC has all the equipment and editing software you need; you will provide imagination and the work it takes to shape your content and get it into a visually interesting electronic form.

You can work in groups of up to 3. Any more than that is too big for a small project like this.

See me or email me if you want to broach a possible topic for this kind of extra credit project.

Visit the DMC in Herring Hall (far end of building, toward Shepherd School) to see what facilities and equipment are available to you, or start by visiting their webpage at Rice Digital Media Center.

There is a student video contest that the Rice Center for Civic Engagement, in cooperation with the Digital Media Center, is putting on in spring. One of the categories is research, so any class project is eligible apparently. You can treat your extra credit video for this class as a planned entry to the spring contest. The website for the contest is: Video Contest.

 Needless to say, you can also enter the video contest with a video completely unrelated to our class, although it doesn't count for extra credit!

Text and reference materials

Textbook

Note that the required version is the the SECOND EDITION and not the outdated 1995 first edition. You can also get new and used copies on Amazon. It is not an expensive book.

English language dictionaries
Different purposes call for different dictionaries. Nowadays online dictionaries can be used for definitions. But for etymologies, a better resource is needed than standard online dictionaries. Many online dictionaries don't have any etymological information, and some have very little.

The following print dictionaries can be used for preparing and/or checking your etymologies for the Word Journal assignment; or you can use the OED Online, see below.

The unabridged dictionary referred to in our textbook is the Webster's 3rd New International Dictionary of the English language, unabridged (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam Webster, 2002) which is in Fondren, call number PE1625 .W36 2002 .

The print dictionary I prefer for etymologies is the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language My copy is the 2nd edition which has the Dictionary of Indo-European Roots in the back, as well as an excellent article on the Proto-Indo-European language. The publisher removed those materials in the 3rd edition, but restored them in the 4th edition by popular demand. Fondren has the 4th
**OED Online:** Comprehensive on-line dictionary

Rice has access to an online version of the famous [Oxford English Dictionary Online](http://www.oed.com) Second Edition. [The link on this page has been updated. If it doesn't work, please tell me. --S.K.] You have to be using an on-campus computer to access it, or else have a VPN connection to Rice from off-campus. The *OED*, both the unabridged print dictionary and its online version, is the gold standard of dictionaries. The online edition has recently been updated to include new words and citations up to about 2000.

**Basic on-line dictionary**

[Merriam-Webster Online](http://www.merriam-webster.com). Quick search capability allow you to get definitions instantly. However, the etymology information is not detailed enough for our purposes.

Among online dictionaries, only the [Oxford English Dictionary Online](http://www.oed.com) linked above gives sufficient information on etymologies to be used as the source for etymologies presented in class. If you don't want to digest all the detail of the etymological information in the OED, use one of the large print dictionaries referred to above.

**Additional resources for this course**

See [Online and Other References](http://www.library.rice.edu/learningcenter/Online/).

**Course content links**

Many of the other web materials for this course have been organized into a public, stand-alone website, available to the world with an organizational logic independent of this course. This site is [Words in English public website](http://www.wordsinenglish.org/).

Course pages corresponding to the text and classroom content, plus relevant pages from the above site, will be linked below as we come to them in the course of the semester. You can also surf around on the public site; see the [site map](http://www.wordsinenglish.org/map.html) for quick navigation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions about words in English</th>
<th>English as a World Language</th>
<th>The Lord's prayer in English through time</th>
<th>Chronology of the English Language</th>
<th>Varieties and Dialects</th>
<th>List of English Dialects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some Loanwords in English</td>
<td>Morphemes</td>
<td>Roots vs. affixes</td>
<td>Some affixes of English</td>
<td>Parsing</td>
<td>Sound Terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic Change</td>
<td>Word Stories</td>
<td>Classical morphology</td>
<td>The Latin Language</td>
<td>Sir William Jones Quote</td>
<td>Genetic Relationships of Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Proto-Indo-Europeans</td>
<td>PIE cognates</td>
<td>Indo-European Family Tree (traditional tree)</td>
<td>Indo-European Family Tree (another view)</td>
<td>The Story of the Shibboleth</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Maps: Visual Aids for the History of England and English**

[List of maps of Britain from various centuries](http://www.wordsinenglish.org/maps.html) (The most relevant ones are selected and linked in the proper order below, with others from elsewhere.)

**Map:** Germanic tribes arrive in England from the Continent, starting 410 a.d.

**Map:** Tribal control ca. 550 a.d.

**England prior to Viking attacks and before rise of Wessex (700s)**

**Viking Invasions in Europe (800s and later)**

**England after rise of Wessex and after partition between Anglo-Saxons and Danes (800s)**

**The Danes take the whole thing: England under Canute, Scandinavian king (1014-1035)**

**Dominions of William I, Post-Conquest**
Dictionaries of Earlier English

A Dictionary of Old English
Electronic Middle English Dictionary

Texts and Images from English History

The Lord's Prayer in English Through Time
Excerpt: Anglo-Saxon Chronicle
About the Bayeux Tapestry
View the Whole Bayeux Tapestry
Harold, King of the English
Canterbury Tales, First Page of Prologue
The Canterbury Tales, Digital Facsimile
Caxton, First Printed Book in English
The King James Bible: Source of common phrases in Modern English
William Shakespeare: His Dramatic and Linguistic Legacy

Beowulf

Recent translations of Beowulf and a high budget movie that was released in November 2007 can make this epic come to life for those interested in ancient Germanic stories (ultimately, the same source from which J.R.R. Tolkien created The Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings trilogy). The movie homepage and other links are on our Resources Page under the heading for Beowulf. The links are optional, but recommended, and in the case of the movie, very cool.

English Spelling reform?

Spelling reformers have gained supporters at various times in English history. George Bernard Shaw was perhaps the most famous, as he left his fortune to an association promoting English spelling reform. This little article is a joke, but it does suggest some of the problems that would arise with spelling reform.

Proto-Indo-European links

Proto-Indo-European demonstration and exploration website
The Comparative Method and IE Languages
"Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans", by Calvert Watkins. This is the essay that was originally published in the 2nd edition of the American Heritage Dictionary in about 1976--the dictionary I had when I was in high school and which I bring to class when I remember. I read it and was blown away by all of this information, which was completely new to me, and as I found, completely unknown to anyone else around me. It put me on the path to becoming a historical linguist (although I did not become an Indo-Europeanist, but a diachronic typologist, another variety of historical linguist.)
Dictionary of Indo-European roots This dictionary of reconstructed roots of the Proto-Indo-European parent language can be used a) to explore the deeper origins of words whose etymologies are given in the American Heritage Dictionary; these etymologies cite the roots which you can then look up here; and b) to browse through, and thereby explore word families, that is, sets of words that are etymologically related (i.e. descended from the same parent root) although you might never know it from their current forms.

Collections of neologisms from Ling 215

A searchable database for neologisms collected by students in this class was created by Daniel Rasheed in consultation with the instructor, and with participation from other students, in Dec. 2006.

The words collected were entered by the students, each entering his or her own collection. In addition, a number of students input entries (and/or edited and corrected entries, in teamwork coordinated by Daniel Rasheed) from Word Journals from Fall 2004 and from the earlier online Journals cited below.
This prototype database can be accessed at: Neologisms Database.

The new site Rice University Neologisms has been upgraded to include full searchability on all fields, similar to an online dictionary like the Oxford English Dictionary Online. You will enter your neologisms on the site. Collect them in the meantime in a Word file and you can cut and paste later.

Earlier incarnations of class neologism collections:

Neologisms, Fall 2003.

New Word Journal Interactive, 1998-2002 Web interface. Designed by Jenn Drummond. Click on the link under Output near the bottom, "View a list of existing entries", to see the collection of words.

New Words in English, 1996-97 A collection of new words (neologisms) begun in Fall 1996 from Word Journal entries by students in this class.

Outside links

For a fuller list, see the Online and Other References link. But the following are some of my favorites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word A Day</th>
<th>British-American Dictionary</th>
<th>World Wide Words</th>
<th>Word Spy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word Play</td>
<td>Word Detective</td>
<td>Online Etymology Dictionary</td>
<td>Language Log</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Since C.C. Fries's Structure of English (1953), language teachers have described English words as falling into two broad types: those that belong in the dictionary like 'stormâ€™ and 'confabulateâ€™, called content or lexical words, and those that belong in the grammar like 'ofâ€™ and 'theâ€™, called structure, function or grammatical words. To see the difference, here is a quotation from a Theodore Sturgeon story using made-up content words but real function words: So on Lirht, while the decisions on the fate of the miserable Hvov were being formulated, gwik still fardled, funted and fumped