

Variation in English
Linguistics 311
Course Syllabus
Fall 2009

A. Course description

Introduction to the major regional dialects and contact varieties of the English-speaking world and to the many dimensions of social variation in British and North American English. Hands-on activities and projects will help familiarize students with the theories and methods of dialectology and variationist sociolinguistics.

B. Required texts

J. K. Chambers and Peter Trudgill. 1998. *Dialectology*, 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge U.P.

This text will provide basic background readings on language variation. It will be supplemented by material from the Internet on the specific topics covered in the class, in particular the online *Atlas of North American English*, available only through the UB Libraries website.

C. Grading

Semester grades will be calculated as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Attendance/participation | 15% |
| Assignments | 30% |
| Exam | 15% |
| Final paper/project | 40% |

D. Course requirements

1. Regular attendance, preparation and participation
2. Regular assignments
3. One test
4. A final project to be completed in the following stages:
 1. By October 16: Make an appointment to discuss possible topics with me.
 2. October 23: Turn in a one-paragraph description of the topic chosen.
 3. November 20: Turn in a rough version of the project.
 4. December 9-11: In-class presentations and discussion of projects (optional).
 5. December 18: Turn in the final version of the project.

I strongly encourage students to include some fieldwork or other original data collection in their final projects, although papers based entirely on library research are also acceptable. Papers should be approximately 8-10 pages in most cases. Students who wish to present their projects to the class will have the opportunity to do so at the end of the semester.

Semester schedule for Variation in English – Fall 2009

| Date | Topic | Chambers & Trudgill | Other readings | Assignments & exam |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Aug. 31 | Introduction | | | |
| Sept. 2 | Language variation | Chapter 1 | | |
| Sept. 4 | Dialectology | Chapters 2-3 | | |
| Sept. 7 | | Labor Day | | (no class) |
| Sept. 9 | Variationist sociolinguistics | Chapter 4 | | |
| Sept. 11 | Contact and Creolistics | | | |
| Sept. 14 | Regional dialects of England | Chapter 7 | | questionnaires |
| Sept. 16 | | Chapter 8 | | |
| Sept. 18 | | Chapter 11 | | |
| Sept. 21 | | Chapter 12 | | transcription |
| Sept. 23 | | Chapter 9 | | |
| Sept. 25 | Scotland | | | |

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|------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Sept. 28 | | Yom Kippur | | (no class) |
| Sept. 30 | | | | |
| Oct. 2 | | | | |
| Oct. 5 | Australia/NZ/S. Africa/etc. | | | media reports |
| Oct. 7 | | | | |
| Oct. 9 | N. American regional dialects | | ANAE Chap. 23 | |
| Oct. 12 | | | ANAE Chap. 11 | Pratt |
| Oct. 14 | | | | |
| Oct. 16 | | | | topics due |
| Oct. 19 | | | ANAE Chap. 21 | attitude maps |
| Oct. 21 | | | | |
| Oct. 23 | | | | paragraphs due |
| Oct. 26 | Social variation | Chapter 5 | | |
| Oct. 28 | | Chapter 6 | | |
| Oct. 30 | | Chapter 10 | | |
| Nov. 2 | | | | interviews |
| Nov. 4 | | | | |
| Nov. 6 | | | | |
| Nov. 9 | AAVE | | Labov 1972 | |
| Nov. 11 | | | | |
| Nov. 13 | | | ANAE Chap. 22 | |
| Nov. 16 | | | | |
| Nov. 18 | | | | |
| Nov. 20 | New Englishes | | | rough drafts due |
| Nov. 23 | | | | |
| Nov. 25-27 | | THANKS- | GIVING | |
| Nov. 30 | Pidgins & Creoles | | | |
| Dec. 2 | | | | Exam |
| Dec. 4 | | | | |
| Dec. 7 | | | | |
| Dec. 9 | | Student presentations | | |
| Dec. 11 | | Student presentations | | |