

E321L American English Fall 2007

Sara E. Kimball
Office Calhoun 15
email skimball@uts.cc.utexas.edu

Phone: 471-8363
Office hours: M 9-10 & 1-2
W 1-2 & 3-4

In this class we will examine the development of American English from colonial times through the present. Topics we will cover include: the influence of Native American languages; American post-colonial nationalism and attitudes toward British English; the origins and diffusion of regional dialects; language use in Texas and the south as regional dialect areas. We will also look at modern and modern social and ethnic dialects, including African-American Vernacular English, and at the emergence of new varieties of American ways of speaking and writing in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Readings

Readings packet: Available at Jenn's

Requirements

2 three-to-five page papers with required drafts
1 seven-to ten page research paper with required draft and 1-page topic proposal
Short (10 min.) oral presentation on an immigrant group (with partner(s))
Short (10 min.) oral presentation on final paper

Grading

Two three-to-five page papers (20% each = 40%)
Topic Proposal for research paper (5%)
The final Research paper (35%)
Oral presentation on final paper(10%)
Oral presentation on immigrant group (10%)

Policies

Attendance: Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken during each class. If you must miss class for a valid reason, get in touch with me as soon as possible. More than four (4) unexcused absences will jeopardize your final grade.

I normally do not accept late assignments except by prior arrangement. If you are having problems completing an assignment, get in touch with me as soon as possible to make arrangements. I am delighted to review and comment on drafts of work in progress; I will not, however, review drafts within 48 hours of the time they are due.

What do grades represent in this class?

A Represents outstanding participation in all course activities; all assigned work is completed and of very high quality: The student exhibits an exemplary grasp of linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as demonstrated in the papers. Papers show careful thought, make connections that go beyond the readings, are generally insightful, and they often make original arguments or tackle original subjects. The writing is organized, coherent, intellectually sophisticated, and well-supported with appropriate evidence. The writing not only conforms to reasonable expectations for Standard Edited English, it is mature stylistically.

B Represents good participation in all course activities; all assigned work is completed, and of high quality: The student exhibits a solid grasp of linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as demonstrated in the papers. Papers show attention to thought, and they may make original connections that go beyond the readings, though those connections may not be as insightful or significant as those in an A paper. The writing is generally organized, coherent, and supported with appropriate evidence, though there may be some faults in coherence or support that, while not major, detract from the reader's ability to follow the writing. In general, the paper conforms to reasonable expectations for Standard Edited English. In thought and style the B paper may not be as mature as the A paper. Significant differences between A and B work include students' attention to detail, their intellectual sophistication, and the stylistic maturity of the writing.

C Represents adequate participation in all course activities; all assigned work is completed and of generally good to fair quality: The student exhibits an adequate grasp of linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as demonstrated in the papers, although there may be some significant misunderstandings. Papers show at least some attention to thought, though generally they don't make connections that go beyond the readings, and they usually provide little original insight. The writing is reasonably organized, coherent, and supported with appropriate evidence, though significant flaws in any of these areas tend to make it difficult for a reader to follow the writer's train of thought. In thought and style, the C paper may be immature. Mechanically, the writing may not always conform to reasonable expectations for Standard Edited English.

D Represents uneven participation in course activities; there are marked gaps in assigned work completed, and assignments turned in are of inconsistent or poor quality. The student exhibits a spotty grasp of linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as demonstrated in the papers. Writing shows little attention to thought, and it may contain significant amounts of regurgitation of ideas presented in the readings and in class discussions with little attempt at synthesis. The writing may lack organization, clarity and/or coherence, and support for ideas may be spotty or poorly informed. It may be obvious to a reader that the student hasn't read relevant material from the course packet or does not comprehend the assignment. Mechanics may not consistently conform to reasonable expectations for Standard Edited English.

F Represents minimal participation in course activities; serious gaps in assigned work completed, or very low quality in course work. The student exhibits a markedly deficient grasp of linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as demonstrated in the papers. Writing shows little or no attention to thought, and it contains significant amounts of regurgitation of ideas presented in the readings and in class discussions with virtually no attempt at synthesis. The writing lacks organization, clarity and/or coherence, and support for ideas is generally poorly informed or non-existent. It may be obvious to a reader that the student hasn't read relevant material from the course packet or does not comprehend the assignment. The mechanics may deviate significantly from reasonable expectations for Standard Edited English.