

LIN 439/539LEC: Historical Linguistics
Class #: 24136/24139
Course syllabus
Fall 2020
3 credits

Course Information:

TuTh 2:20-3:35 p.m.
Remote (via Zoom)

Instructor:

Professor David Fertig
638 Baldy Hall (mailbox in 619A Baldy) [see below for Fall 2020]
Office phone: 716-645-0129 [see below for Fall 2020]
fertig@buffalo.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

(Please use e-mail to contact me and arrange appointments during the Fall 2020 semester. I will probably not be able to check my on-campus mailbox or my office phone regularly.)

Course description (from course catalog):

Language change, the divergence and convergence of dialects and languages in time and space, and linguistic reconstruction.

Course overview and goals:

A broad introduction to historical linguistics. Major topics include: types of linguistic change, comparative and internal reconstruction, establishing of historical (genetic) relatedness among languages, the relationship between variation and change, and the role of social factors in language change.

The primary emphasis will be on the analysis of linguistic data for historical linguistic purposes. A secondary goal will be to introduce significant theoretical issues in historical linguistics.

Required texts:

Lyle Campbell. 2013. *Historical Linguistics. An Introduction*. 3rd ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (also Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

Robert Blust. 2018. *101 Problems and Solutions in Historical Linguistics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (also Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

Supplementary readings will be posted on UBLeads. The supplementary readings listed on the syllabus are subject to change depending on student interest.

Technology Recommendations:

To effectively participate in this course, regardless of mode of instruction, the university recommends you have access to a Windows or Mac computer with webcam and broadband. Your best opportunity for success in the blended UB course delivery environment (in-person, hybrid and remote) will require these minimum capabilities listed on the following website: <https://buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/hardware/getting-started-with-hardware/purchasing-or-using-an-existing-computer.html>.

Course requirements:

1. Regular attendance, preparation and participation in Zoom sessions.
2. Regular problem sets and other assignments
3. One test (December 1) and one or more quizzes
4. A final project to be completed in the following stages:
 1. By October 15: E-mail me your topic or a request for help deciding on a topic.
 2. October 29: Turn in a one-paragraph description of the topic chosen.
 3. November 19: Turn in a complete draft of the project.
 4. December 3-December 10: In-class presentations and discussion of projects (grad students & volunteers).
 5. Dec. 18: Turn in the final version of the project.

I assume that most students will do research papers as their projects, but I am open to other ideas. Papers should be approximately 15-20 pages for graduate students and 8-10 pages for undergrads.

Graduate students will be required to present their projects to the class between December 3 and December 10. Presentations are optional for undergrads.

Grades:

Your final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Attendance and class participation.....	20%
Assignments.....	30%
Test and quizz(es).....	20%
Final project	30%

Semester percentage grades will be converted to letter grades according to the following scale:

93-100% = A	90-92% = A-	
87-89% = B+	83-86% = B	80-82% = B-
77-79% = C+	73-76% = C	70-72% = C-
67-69% = D+	60-66% = D	0-59% = F

Tips for effective Zoom sessions

- Make sure that your internet connection, camera and microphone are working properly.
- In order to be on time for class, plan on signing in 5 minutes before the official start time.
- Video will be required for all students. Anyone who has any issues involving video should contact Prof. Fertig as soon as possible.

Learning outcomes & assessment

By the end of this course, students should be able to ...	Method of assessment
explain and illustrate key concepts in historical linguistics.	class discussion, final projects
account for patterns of sound change by analyzing historical data.	Blust chapter on Sound Change; (test)
make principled use of analogy and related notions to account for patterns not predicted by sound change.	Campbell §4.8 exercises
account for patterns of syntactic change by analyzing historical data.	Campbell §11.6 exercises
account for patterns of semantic and pragmatic change by analyzing historical data .	Campbell §9.5 exercises
reconstruct aspects of a proto-language using the comparative method	Blust chapter on Phonological Reconstruction; test
propose and justify a subgrouping of a language family based on the comparative method	Blust chapter on subgrouping
demonstrate in-depth understanding of some aspect of historical linguistics and make an original contribution to scholarship in this area	final project

Course/UB policies:

Incompletes. If you are considering discussing the possibility of an incomplete with your instructor, please familiarize yourself first with UB's official policy at:

<https://catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/explanation.html>

Academic Integrity. All students should be sure that they understand the University's Academic Integrity policy before completing any assignments or taking any tests. If you have any questions or concerns about the policy, please discuss them with your instructor(s). You will find the policy at: <https://catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/integrity.html>

Accessibility Resources. If you have any disability which requires reasonable accommodations to enable you to participate in this course, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources in 60 Capen Hall, 716-645-2608 and also the instructor of this course during the first week of class. The office will provide you with information and review appropriate arrangements for reasonable accommodations, which can be found on the web at: <http://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/who-we-are/departments/accessibility.html>.

Critical Campus Resources

Sexual Violence

UB is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking. If you have experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), UB has resources to help. This includes academic accommodations, health and counseling services, housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and assistance with reporting the incident to police or other UB officials if you so choose. Please contact UB's Title IX Coordinator at 716-645-2266 for more information. For confidential assistance, you may also contact a Crisis Services Campus Advocate at 716-796-4399.

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. These might include strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, health concerns, or unwanted sexual experiences. Counseling, Health Services, and Health Promotion are here to help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn more about these programs and services by contacting:

Counseling Services:

- 120 Richmond Quad (North Campus), 716-645-2720
- 202 Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-5800

Health Services: Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-3316

Health Promotion: 114 Student Union (North Campus), 716-645-2837

LIN 439/539: Historical Linguistics, Fall 2020 – Course schedule

Date	Class topic	Project deadlines and Test	Campbell	Supplementary readings
Sept. 1	Introduction			
Sept. 3	Historical and thematic overview		Chap. 1	
Sept. 8	Sound change I: traditional approaches		Chap. 2	
Sept. 10	Sound change II			Garrett & Johnson 2013
Sept. 15	Sound change III			(Labov 1981)
Sept. 17	Sound change IV			
Sept. 22	Morpho(phono)logical change I		Chap. 4	
Sept. 24	Morpho(phono)logical change II			Harris & Faarlund 2006
Sept. 29	Morpho(phono)logical change III		Chap.10	
Oct. 1	Grammaticalization I		(§10.8)	Traugott 2010
Oct. 6	Grammaticalization II			(Lehmann 2015)
Oct. 8	Syntactic change		Chap. 11	
Oct. 13	Semantic change I		Chap. 9	
Oct. 15	Semantic change II and historical pragmatics	Topic selection		Traugott 2011
Oct. 20	Dialectology		Chap. 7	
Oct. 22	Sociolinguistics and the study of “change in progress”			Labov 1989
Oct. 27	Contact I: Borrowing, interference/imposition		Chap. 3	
Oct. 29	Contact II: Areal linguistics	Descriptions due	Chap. 12	Thomason 2000
Nov. 3	Contact III: Pidginization and creolization			Mufwene 2015
Nov. 5	Methodology: working with written data		Chap. 15	
Nov. 10	Reconstruction and the comparative method I: introduction		Chaps. 5	
Nov. 12	Reconstruction and the comparative method II: internal reconstruction		Chap. 8	
Nov. 17	Reconstruction III: Genetic classification and distant relationships		Chaps. 6, 14	
Nov. 19	Reconstruction IV: Computational phylogenetics	Project drafts due	Chap. 17	Bowern & Atkinson 2012
Nov. 24	Language, archeology and prehistory		Chap. 16	
Nov. 26	HAPPY	THANKS-	GIVING!	
Dec. 1		Test		
Dec. 3	Student presentations/discussion			
Dec. 8	Student presentations/discussion			
Dec. 10	Student presentations/discussion			