

Variation in English
Linguistics 311
Course Syllabus
Fall 2015

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 theories and methods of dialectology and variationist sociolinguistics.

B. Required texts

J.K. Chambers & Peter Trudgill. 1998. *Dialectology*, 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

This text will provide basic background readings on language variation. It will be supplemented by reading material from the Internet.

Grading

Semester grades will be calculated as follows:

Attendance/participation	15%
Assignments and exercises	40%
Test	15%
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

D. Course requirements

1. Regular attendance, preparation and participation
2. Regular assignments
3. One in-class test
4. A final project to be completed in the following stages:
 1. October 23: Submit a one-paragraph description of topic (make appointment to discuss ideas before this date if necessary).
 2. November 20: Turn in a rough version of the project.
 3. December 7-11: In-class presentations and discussion of projects (optional).
 4. December 16: 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.

Learning outcomes and assessment for LIN 311: Variation in English

By the end of this course, students should be able to ...	Method of assessment
identify major dialect regions of Britain and North America and the key linguistic characteristics of each	test 1; dialect map assignments
accurately transcribe speech in any dialect of English	transcription assignments
explain factors that shape popular perceptions of regional variation	attitude maps assignment
explain major theoretical approaches to the study of variation	test 1; final projects
explain and apply major methodological approaches to the collection, organization, analysis, and interpretation of dialect data	test 1; questionnaires assignment; interview assignment; final projects
use software for phonetic analysis of dialect speech	Praat assignment
describe and compare major approaches to the study of the relationship between language and identity	test 1
explain major theories of the historical origins of creole languages	test 1

Semester schedule for Variation in English – Fall 2015

Date	Topic	Chambers and Trudgill	Other readings	Assignments & exam
Aug. 31	Introduction			
Sep. 2	Language variation	Chapter 1		
Sep. 4	Regional dialects	Chapters 2		transcription 1
Sep. 7		Labor Day		(no class)
Sep. 9				
Sep. 11		Chapter 3		questionnaires
Sep. 14	Dialects of England		Sounds Familiar?	
Sep. 16		Chapter 7		
Sep. 18				transcription 2
Sep. 21				
Sep. 23		Chapter 8		
Sep. 25				

Sept. 28	Scotland			
Sept. 30		Chapter 9		
Oct. 2	Australia/NZ/S. Africa/etc.			transcription 3
Oct. 5	N. American regional dialects			British dialect maps
Oct. 7		Chapter 11		
Oct. 9			ANAE Ch. 23	
Oct. 12			ANAE Ch. 11	Praat
Oct. 14		Chapter 4		
Oct. 16				
Oct. 19			ANAE Ch. 21	attitude maps
Oct. 21		Chapter 5		
Oct. 23				proj. paragraph
Oct. 26	Social variation			
Oct. 28		Chapter 6		
Oct. 30				
Nov. 2				interviews
Nov. 4		Chapter 10		
Nov. 6				
Nov. 9	Race and ethnicity		Labov 1972	North Amer. dialect maps
Nov. 11		Chapter 12		
Nov. 13				
Nov. 16			ANAE Ch. 22	
Nov. 18				
Nov. 20	New Englishes			rough drafts
Nov. 23				
Nov. 25-27		THANKS-	GIVING	
Nov. 30	Pidgins & creoles			
Dec. 2				Exam
Dec. 4				
Dec. 7	Student presentations			
Dec. 9	Student pres.			
Dec. 11	Student pres.			