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Modern Grammar, Syllabus

Mary Zeigler

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Engl 8080, Modern Grammar, CR#15871
Dr. M. B. Zeigler
Georgia State University  Spring Semester 2007      TTh 5:30-6:45,  Aderhold LC-231
Syllabus

Contact Information:  947-General Classroom Building, (404) 651-2900/654-6160.  
engmez@langate.gsu.edu;  Office Hours: TTh  12:30-2:15 and by appointment, please.

Prerequisite: Graduate Status
Credits: 3 hours.

Description
Modern Grammar is the study of the theories and application of English language structural systems as developed since the onset of the Early Modern English period. The study focuses on American English texts—spoken and written--and applies traditional, structural, and modern linguistic theories to the analysis of English language constructions: words, phrases, clauses, and discourse. The intent of the course is to assist students’ ability to describe, analyze, and restructure words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, within the contexts of oral and written discourse.

The course encourages collaborative learning through mini-conferences and research teams

Required Texts
A collegiate dictionary (Merriam Webster's Collegiate 10th, Webster's New Collegiate, American Heritage, or other recent collegiate publication recommended)

Recommended Texts
See Library Reserve materials.

Useful Websites
www.ncte.org  The CCCC Language Knowledge and Awareness Survey
http://www.ncte.org/edpolicy/quality

Course Objectives

Section 1. Language Variation:

After completing this section, students should

1.1. Appreciate the fact that languages and dialects in general are systematic and rule-governed, and that AAVE is not just a "careless" form of speech in which "anything goes", but a systematic and rule-governed system like other dialects.

1.2*: Be able to explain, with examples, some of the principal ways in which dialects of a language vary, in terms of phonology, grammar, and semantics, in terms of the effects of geography, socioeconomic factors, attitudes, and style, and also in terms of quantitative as well as qualitative differences.
1.3*: Be able to describe, with examples, some of the basic linguistic features of AAVE, as it contrasts with Standard English (SE) in phonology, grammar, and lexicon. Students should be able to give three examples of distinctive AAVE features in each of these areas.

(*The wording of these asterisked objectives follows closely the wording of the Formal instructional Component of the plan submitted by the Ann Arbor School of District Board on August 24, 1979, following a ruling by the US District Court that the School Board had not taken appropriate action, as required by Equal Educational opportunities Act of 1974, to overcome the barrier to equal participation in instructional programs caused by the fact that African American children at the Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School. District Court Judge J. Joiner ruled in favor of the plaintiffs on July 12, 1979, and required the defendant School Board to "take steps to help teachers to recognize home language of students and to use that knowledge in their attempts to teach reading skills and standard English."

The plan submitted by the School Board was an attempt to satisfy the court's ruling, and was intended to inform the professional staff of King Elementary School about the features of AAVE and to assist them in teaching speakers of AAVE to read S.E., by means of a formal course of instruction by a special language consultant.

This is a fairly long digression from my list of objectives for this course but the court decision is a very significant one, and one worth mentioning now even though the objectives will return to it in more detail later on.)

Section 2. Language Acquisition

After completing this section, students should

2.1: Understand the basic adaptation of human beings to acquiring spoken language, first language and second language;

2.2: Be able to explain, with examples, some of the principal ways in which pre-school children acquire language: home language and school language;

2.3: Be able to describe, with examples, the language of school-age children and the development of written language, especially as it involves the spelling system, vocabulary and syntax, sentence structure, and sentence complexity.

Section 3: Lexical Semantics: Vocabulary Development

After completing this section, students should

3.1: Understand the historical development of the English vocabulary, especially its characteristics within the periods of Old English (449-1100), Middle English (1100-1500), Early Modern English (1500-1700), and Late Modern English (1700-present).

3.2: Be able to explain, with examples, the meaning, register, its historical origin, the origin of words as indicated by dictionaries

3.3: Be able to describe, with examples, the development of new words whether by invention, borrowing, compounding, affixation/derivation, acronymy, shortening, category shift, or semantic change.
3.4: Understand the basic semantic concept of word meanings, especially referential meaning, affective and social meaning, homonymy, polysemy as demonstrated in dictionary entries.

**Section 4: Grammatical Structures**

After completing this section, students should

4.1: Understand some of the basic principles and methods which linguists use in analyzing human language, such as the primacy of speech over writing, and the distinction between phonology (including phones and phonemes, grammar (including morphology and syntax), and semantics (including the lexicon).

4.2: Understand the forms and functions of English language components: phonemes, morphemes, phrases, clauses, and multi-clause sentences.

4.3: Describe grammatical concepts through visual analyses, such as Immediate Constituency, Structural formulas, Reed-Kellogg diagrams or Transformational-Generative Tree diagrams.

4.4 Use a variety of grammatical structures to compose and transform English sentences.

**Section 5: Research and Oral Presentation**

After completing this section, student should

5.1. Understand the critical concepts of discourse and language pedagogy as applied in short-term and long-term research papers.

5.2. Be able to demonstrate their knowledge of discourse and pedagogical contexts in research-documented short oral responses and conference-style presentations.
ENGL 8080, Sp ’07. Course Requirements and Evaluation

1. Assignments & Midterm Exam (30%) Text and Reading Notes may be allowed.
   Make-ups MUST be completed before exam results are returned.

2. Two (2) Micro Studies: 20%
   Each study examines an assigned modern grammar question. For the study, consult at least three sources other than the required texts for the course; only one source may be an internet document. Write a 2-4 page single-spaced documented report on your research findings (=.5 of the evaluation). On the due-date of the assignment, present a two-three minute talk on one salient point drawn from your study, and submit the report during the scheduled class time. No make-up allowed after due date. Further details on attachment.

3. Term Research Paper; Further details on attachment: 20%
   Research paper on any subject related to one of the four primary areas of the course. A one-page proposal describing your paper topic, references and data, is due in class on March 29\textsuperscript{th}. The paper itself, 10-16 double-spaced pages of text, with MLA style citations and bibliography is due in class Thurs, April 19\textsuperscript{th}.

4. Term Oral Presentation (Spring Mini-Conference); See details on attachment: 20%

5. Class Attendance and Participation: (10%) Regular attendance and voluntary, informed discussion. More than three (3) absences is excessive and may result in a lower course grade.
   This plan is based upon expectations for the course at the beginning of the term; it is subject to change. You will be properly informed of all changes as they are made.

NOTE BIEN: Georgia State University has an Academic Honesty Policy which you are advised to read and abide by. Please, refer to the appropriate section of your GSU catalog.
Schedule of Activities


Readings and related assignments should be completed by the date scheduled for discussion.

**Introduction**

Wk 1:
1/09  T    Course overview
1/11  TH   Course overview

Wk 2:
1/16   Introduction. (Clark, Ch 1, 1-6
1/18   cont’d

**Section 1: Language Variation**

Wk 3:
1/23    Variation in English (Clark, Ch 11: 192-208)
1/25    Microstudy #1: Linguistic Autobiography

Wk 4:
1/30    T   cont’d Pronunciation and Spelling (Clark, Ch 4: 58-74)
2/01    TH  cont’d.

**Section 2: Language Acquisition**

WK 5:
2/06    T   Child Language Acquisition (Clark, Ch 13: 273-289)
2/08    Th:  cont’d First language acquisition

WK 6:
2/13    T   Second language acquisition (See other sources)
2/15    Th cont’d,

**Section 3: Lexical Semantics: Vocabulary Development**

WK 7:
2/20    T   Vocabulary of English (Clark, Ch 2: 9-36)
2/22    TH  The Dictionary (Clark, Ch 5: 75-92)
        Word Forms and Functions (“Grammatical Categories,” Clark, Ch 37-57)

WK 8:
2/27  T  cont’d
3/01  TH  Midterm Examination
       Last day to withdraw and receive possible WP

WK 9:  3/06 & 3/08  SPRING BREAK

Section 4: Grammatical Structures
WK 10:
3/13  T  Structure of Statements (Clark, Ch 6: 93-111)
       Structure of Phrases (Clark, Ch 7: 112-142)
3/15  TH  cont’d

WK 11:
3/20  T  Micro–Study #2,
3/22  TH  Structures, cont’d

WK 12:
3/27  T  Semantics: Meaning of a Phrase or Sentence (Clark, Ch 8: 143-153)
       Tense, Aspect, Voice, and Modality (Clark, Ch 9: 154-175)
3/29  TH  cont’d.
       Abstract for Research Paper:—300-word maximum, single spaced, includes research
       topic, theoretical foundation (refer to at least two essential sources), with summary of
       approach and key points. Working bibliography attached, not included in the 300-word
       limit.

WK 13:
4/03  T:  Coordination, Subordination, Semicolons, Colons, and Commas (Clark: Ch 12 & 13:
       209-252)
4/05  TH  cont’d.

Section 5. Research and Oral Presentation
WK 14:
4/10  T  Consultations on research
4/12  TH Dr. Zeigler away at South-Eastern Conference on Linguistics (SECOL), Natchitoches, LA.

WK 15:
4/17  T  Consultations on research
4/19  TH  Term Research Paper Due

WK 16: Spring Mini-Conference:
4/24  T  Conference Session 1
4/26  TH  Conference Session 2

5/01-5/07  Final Exam period
5/01  T  Conference Session 3
       Conference Session 4
       Grades Available after 5:00PM
Modern Grammar Micro-Study Series

Purpose: The micro-study series provides the learners with introductory opportunities to practice researching language-based issues with ample reward, yet without risk of severe penalty, for their research conclusions. The assigned topic requires a knowledgeable, research-based response to questions related to English structure, development, influences, and social manifestations. The written report and the oral response are both compact yet detailed to require thoughtful, concise use of sources and discussion.

Method:

Format The micro-study series consists of four topics (questions or problems) which guide the research and the responses. Each response should deal with the question or subject prescribed for the topic. The response to the question/problem has two parts: a brief, oral response in class discussion and a short, documented essay. (See the attached template.)

The oral response: a two-minute in-class talk about your research results—1st, what were your sources of information (title, author, date) and how did each contribute to your research? 2nd, What material or information presented a difficulty and how did you resolve it. 3rd, what research sources paralleled the ones used by your classmates? 4th What part of your researched information contradicted other sources and how, if ever, you resolved the conflict?

The documented essay: Your essay should be between 2 and 4 pages typed, single-spaced but will not exceed 4 pages. You should use and refer to three sources other than our classroom texts. Use parenthetical citations in the essay and attach an MLA-style bibliography.

Due Date The oral and written responses are due on the date scheduled on the syllabus. No make-up allowed. If you are absent on the discussion day and send your essay on or before that day, it will be accepted for half-credit.

Evaluation Each completed micro-study receives a verification point (1T, 1T-, or a 1T+). Proofread carefully.

Grading: two microstudies= 4 responses
4 responses: 2 written reports and 2 oral = A (A-=90, A=94, A+=96)
3 responses: written and or oral = B (B-=80, B=84, B+=88)
2 responses: written and/or oral = C (C-=70, C=74, C+=78)
1 response: written or oral = D (D-=60, D=64, D+=68)
**Micro-study #1, Linguistic Autobiography**

A linguistic autobiography is a creative non-fiction exposition that relates your own experiences with language use, awareness, change, and attitudes surrounding linguistic events over the course of your life. It reports, interprets, and analyzes your experiences on specific linguistic issues as addressed in the research of various linguists.

Begin by relating a particular event involving language use, language awareness, or language attitude either that you experienced or that you witnessed. Then discuss the events and ideas that led to that experience and then examine that which have come subsequent to it or as a result of it. Select one specific element to examine: language attitudes, phonology, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, or some other. Consult linguistic sources to help with definitions and descriptions of the element. Use the terminology of language study to talk analytically about your language experiences.

Include any one or several of the following perspectives if they contribute to your discussion:

--Consider the external influences: What did others say about the speech or language use? What events or people influenced some choices you’ve made about your language use?
--Consider the age of language acquisition: what were you aware of? What do you recall others saying about the language growth--talkative, quiet, early talker, later talker, tied-tongue, etc?
--Consider your attitudes toward your own language use: when did you become most aware of it? What decisions did you make about it? Did you make any changes? Or consider your attitudes about other people’s language use? What influenced these attitudes?

**Micro-study #2: Language Politics: “Standard English” defined**

The time period from 1500 to 1800 is considered a highly eventful one for the development of Modern English. Numerous external events brought attention to the usefulness of the language in science, trade, and education while the language was still undergoing internal linguistic changes. The variety of English that we have come to know today as Standard English was born during this time period.

But what is “standard English”? How would a linguist describe it?

Define the term as viewed by lexicographers as well as other linguistic sources. Examine and explain how English developed a standard variety? From an historical perspective, what were some of the social, or political, or intellectual influences on this development in American English before the American Revolution as well as after the American Revolution? What effects have the politics of Standard English had on dialects, bilingualism in America?

Suggested Sources: Consult texts on the English language and its history and development.
Algeo, John and Thomas Pyles. *The Origins and Development of the English Language* (also earlier editions of Pyles and Algeo by the same title)
Barber, Charles. *The English Language: A Historical Introduction*.
Baugh, Albert and Thomas Cable. *A History of the English Language* (numerous ed)
Fennell, The Story of English
Millward, Celia W. *A Biography of the English Language*.
See also sources on World English and works by Suzanne Romaine, Jeanne Aithcheson, David Graddol, Dick Leith, Joan Swann, Braj Kachru.
polyhistor /palee-hiss-ter/ --noun : a person of great and varied learning. having a general knowledge spanning many fields.

--noun : polyhistorian, polyhistory
--adjective: polyhistoric

Difference between polyhistor and polymath: Many dictionaries of word origins list these words as synonyms. Thus today, regardless of any differentiation they may have had when originally coined, they are often taken to mean the same thing (except when used by specialists). The root terms histor and math have similar meanings in their etymological antecedents (to learn, learned, knowledge), though with some initial and ancillarily added differing qualities. Innate in histor-Å (Greek and Latin) is that the learning takes place via inquiry and narrative. HÅ-stÅr also implies that the polyhistor displays erudition and wisdom. From Proto-Indo-European it shares a root with the word "wit". Inquiry and narrative are specific sets of pedagogical and research heuristics. Here are two conceivable definitions of polymath. Firstly, the overt 'greatly learned,' which would be inclusive of polyhistor (though not all polymaths would be polyhistors, all polyhistors would be polymaths). Another definition would include the adjunct of science, with the Greek mathematike techne implying that the knowledge and learning are specifically about sciences or have been gained through scientific inquiry or, more broadly, are based in mathematical logic. Science is a somewhat different set of specific research heuristics.

Etymology: from Latin polyhistor from Greek polyistor very learned

First use in English: 1570
Research Project
Select and narrow the topic of your study with two perspectives in mind:
(a) a theoretical perspective which examines what and why,
(b) a pedagogical perspective which presents how for students of writing, or rhetoric, or literary text analysis.
How would you help a class of students understand the concepts? Design a lesson in which you use one classic means, one modern means, and one contemporary medium, (hip-hop included).

Abstract: 300 words, single spaced, includes research topic, theoretical foundation (reference to two essential sources), summary of approach and key points. Working bibliography attached, not included in the 300-word limit.

Length of paper: 10 to 15 pages including bibliography.
Appendices not included in length
Style: Follow the manuscript style of the MLA Style, APA Style or Language Style sheet; subsections are numbered and titled and the documentation employs author-date form. See your collegiate handbook consult the websites below

Length of presentation: 15-20 minutes

Topic: Discourse
Definition: In linguistics, discourse is a unit or piece of connected speech or writing that is longer than a conventional sentence. Discourse analysis is the close examination of connected speech and writing, and their relationship to the contexts in which they are used. Discourse analysts study written texts, conversation, institutionalized forms of talk, communicative events in general, and aspects of electronic text-processing.
History: Early researchers included the structural linguist Zellig Harris in the US in the 1950s, at a time when linguistics was largely concerned with the analysis of single sentences. Harris was interested in the distribution of elements in extended texts and the relationship between a text and its social situation.
In the 1960s, the American linguistic anthropologist Dell Hymes studied speech in its social setting (forms of address). The work of British linguistic philosophers such as J.L. Austin, J.R. Searle, and H.P. Grice was influential in the study of language as social action, through speech-act theory, conversational maxims, and pragmatics (the study of meaning in context) in general. (McArthur, T. (ed.) 1992. The Oxford Companion to the English Language

Also see terms and scholars such as coherence, cohesion, conversation, M.AK. Halliday, pragmatics, speech act, text, theme, tone.

Some Useful Sources (numerous others exist):
Coupland, Nikolas (ed.) 1988. Styles of Discourse
Schiffrin, Deborah. 1994. Approaches to Discourse.

The research topics come from the areas of PRAGMATICS and SPEECH ACTS and CONVERSATION. Select from one of the topics described below for your term research project that will produce a paper and an oral presentation.

Each topic is limited to three persons

PRAGMATICS
Topic 1: Choose a short article (approximately one newspaper column), or an excerpt from an article from the front page of a newspaper, or an excerpt from the first page of a fiction work. Identify all the sentences that have undergone a syntactic
operation of some kind (such as passivization or clefting). In each case, explain carefully the most likely reason for using a transformed sentence instead of the equivalent basic sentence.

Topic 2: Syntactic Semantics—Analysis of Sentence Meaning through NP Roles

Not only is meaning conveyed through lexical features, but meaning relationships also hold over and above the individual meanings of words and morphemes in the sentence. Many such meaning relationships are involved in sentence semantics, i.e. the meanings that are tied to sentence structure—the meaning relations that hold between NPs and between NPs and verbs. This study will focus on the roles that NPs contribute to sentence meaning.

Select a poem, a song, an excerpt from a narrative, or excerpt from a drama (No more than 10-15 lines/sentences). Examine how the sentence delivers meaning through the role(s) of the NPs involved.

This method of semantic analysis is also related to Noam Chomsky’s theories about how we generate meaning through structural relationships and structural transformations. You may want to consider how a Chomskian theory might contribute to your analysis.

Suggested Sources:

Topics 3, 4, 5, etc. See the attached topic list as suggested by Mary M. Clark in *The Structure of English* for other topic choices. Notice the topics that have checks beside them.
The Oral Presentation
(the Mini Conference)

(20% of the course grade)

Length of Individual Presentation:
  10 minutes, theoretical;
  10 minutes, pedagogical application

Handouts:
  Required -- outline and annotated bibliography (2-3 sentences). Distribute a copy to each member of the class before you begin the presentation. (13 copies)
  Optional: other suitable visuals

Supporting peripherals:
  Visual and/or audial aids, well focused on a narrowed aspect of the research topic.

Oral Presentation Evaluation
Ratings: Outstanding (A+), Excellent (A), Very Good (A-), Good (B), Fair (C), Don’t do dat! (D)

Your presentation will give one aspect of your research project. The presentation itself is essentially an oral composition. As such, it will adhere to appropriate characteristics of planning, organization, development, and clarity of delivery. Your presentation will be evaluated according to the characteristics listed herein, and it should follow the order given.

Introduction
  Topic: Background (How topic developed, origin/history) and Focus
  Overview of points/questions to be addressed

Body of Discussion
  Examination of key points -- Details, Explanation, Examples, Illustration
  Organization
  Knowledge, Accuracy
  Clarity of presentation
  Use audial and/or visual aids: charts, music or video clips, pictures, live demonstration, copies of literary selections-- to help to explain, demonstrate, and make your presentation as interesting as it is informative.

Conclusion
  Summary/Concluding Points; Useful Sources
Time will be allowed for a brief question –comment--answer session. Practice your presentation before the time to present. One full page of double-spaced text equals two minutes of speech; allow two minutes to explain each chart, graph, or other visual.
Oral Presentation Evaluation

Title: _________________________________________________________________

Topic that inspired the study:
______________________________________________________________

Required Handouts:
___ Outline
___ Bibliography

_____Introduction
-- Background, Body of works
-- Focus,
-- Overview of points/ questions to be addressed

_____Body of Discussion
Examination of key points
-- Organization,
-- Explanation, Examples, Illustration
-- Accuracy; Clarity,
-- Scholarly Reference

_____Supporting peripherals: Visual and/ or Audial Aids

_____Pedagogical Application
Intended Goals

_____Conclusion: Summary/Concluding Points Useful Sources
Evaluator ____________________________
Evaluation AVG ____________

Length: 15-18 minutes presentation, and 5 min Q&A

Rubrics by which each segment of the presentation is evaluated:
5  = Outstanding performance. Exceeds expectations. (A+)
4  = Excellent, sustained performance of expectations. (A)
3  = Very good performance of expectations (B+)
1-2 = Meets expectations. (B-/C+)
0  = Absent, Not apparent
Why did you enroll in this course?
What do you expect this course to do for you?
What questions or topics do you want this course to address?

List your responses: