

## Course Syllabus for Historical Linguistics (LIN 362H1F, 2009)

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Office Hours: Wednesday 11-12 am (or by appointment)  
Lecture: Thursday 10-12 pm, SS 1070  
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### Course Description:

Languages change over time. The English we speak today is very different from the English spoken 1000 years ago. Why do languages change? Which aspects of a language change? Are there regular patterns underlying change? Do all languages undergo the same change processes? How do new languages come into existence? How do we decide which languages are related? Can we reconstruct languages that no longer exist? Can recent advances in molecular genetics help us better understand linguistic prehistory? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in this course.

*Prerequisite: LIN 229 Sound Patterns; Exclusions: none*

### Textbook:

Lyle Campbell. *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction*. MIT Press, 2004. (Please bring the textbook to all classes.)

Other readings – scholarly journal articles or book chapters – will be made available.

### Course Webpage:

Access through *Blackboard* (<http://portal.utoronto.ca>). You will need your UTORid and password to log in. These are the same username and password for accessing your U of T email account. Announcements, handouts, and homework assignments will be posted here.

### Assignments:

There will be 3 problem-solving homework assignments. Because homework assignments may be discussed in class the day they are due, they have to be handed in at the beginning of the class. Late assignments or assignments submitted by fax or email will not be accepted.

Students are encouraged to work on assignments in groups of up to four persons. If you work in a group, you can turn in just one copy of the assignment, with everybody's names on it. Such group work is allowed provided the following rules are adhered to. The members of a group must register with the instructor before the due date of the first assignment; this must be done in writing by giving the instructor a list of the group members. No further group changes will be permitted. The members of any given group cannot communicate with students outside of their group on any assignment. Each group member is responsible for the entire content of the written assignment, and therefore the grade given to a group will be recorded for each member.

### **Projects and presentations:**

The class will be divided into groups of 3-4 (which may correspond to the assignment groups). Each group will choose a topic in consultation with the instructor dealing with some aspects of linguistic prehistory of a given language family or a geographical region. In-class presentations on the topic will be based on a thorough review of recent scholarly literature on the topic. One-paragraph topic proposals should be submitted by November 5. Presentations are scheduled for weeks 11 and 12. The grade given to a group will be recorded for each member.

### **Midterm Test and Final Exam:**

The midterm test and the final exam will consist of problem solving and short answer questions. In addition, the final will include an essay containing a critical discussion of some of the readings and relevant results of the student projects.

The midterm test will be given during the regular lecture time (the location will be announced in class). If you have a conflict with a midterm for another class scheduled at the same date and time as our midterm, it is your responsibility to resolve the conflict. University policy clearly states that lectures and tests in a regularly-scheduled class time (such as those for this course) are given priority; the other course must give you an alternative time to write their midterm. If you have to miss the midterm because of illness or injury, you are required to contact me prior to the test by email. When you return to class, I will need an official *University of Toronto Medical Certificate* completed by a physician, specifying the date of your absence and the reason. This documentation must be provided within one week of the test. There is a good chance that I will call the doctor of record to confirm the certificate. Make-ups for the midterm test will not be given under any circumstances. If you have a valid doctor's certificate for the date of the test, the weight of the test will be added to the final exam. Unexcused absence from a test will result in a grade of zero for it. Further, under no circumstances will students be allowed to write the midterm early. If you have travel plans or career plans during the term, you are responsible for ensuring that they do not conflict with our exam schedule.

The date, time, and location of the final exam are to be determined by the university and will be announced later in the term. Please note that no alternate arrangements for the exam can be made. If you cannot attend the exam for any reason, you must go through the registrar to petition to write a deferred exam. Even if you are granted a deferral, please be aware that there is no guarantee that the content of this course (or even the textbook) in future semesters will be identical to what you learn this term.

### **Participation**

The participation grade will be based on your class attendance, participation in class discussion, as well as on your participation in group activities (based on peer evaluations).

### **Evaluation:**

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Assignments          | 12% (3 * 4%) |
| Midterm Test         | 30%          |
| Project Presentation | 10%          |
| Final Exam           | 40%          |
| Participation        | <u>8%</u>    |
|                      | 100%         |

### **Grading policy:**

The Department of Linguistics uses the “Refined Letter Grade Scale”, defined in section A.c.ii of the appendix to the University Grading Practices Policy. It should be noted that when numerical raw scores are used in marking, the numerical equivalents in the grade tables ‘are not to be used to translate a score to a grade directly’ (University Grading Practices Policy, Part 1, section 5).

### **Course Expectations:**

1. Students are expected to attend all lectures. Students are expected to arrive on time so that classes may begin promptly and so that they will not disrupt the class. Announcements will be made at the beginning and end of classes regarding the assigned readings and the expectations for exams.
2. Students are expected to have read all assigned readings before class. Because many students will be learning about a new field of study in this class, some of the materials and concepts may seem fairly complex. In such cases, students should read assigned readings and go over handouts multiple times. Students are expected to bring the assigned textbook to all class sessions.
3. Students will be responsible for all materials covered in the assigned readings and lectures. Lectures will contain material which is not covered in the textbook (and may not appear on the lecture slides). Students are expected to take their own notes. Handouts will provide only a skeletal treatment of these topics. Exams will require students to refer to readings, handouts, and their own lecture notes.
4. Students will be respectful of other students and the instructor. In particular, students will not talk or use electronic devices while the instructor or another student is talking.
5. Plagiarism – the act of claiming someone else’s work as one’s own – is a serious matter and will be dealt with accordingly. Any work submitted for course credit must be your own (or part of your official group work in case of homework assignments or the poster; see above). If a student is found guilty of plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty on an assignment, test, quiz, or exam, the student will receive a grade of zero for the work in question. Additional penalties can include failure of the course and suspension from the university.

### **Email Policy:**

1. Course-related email communication will be limited in the following way:
  - a. I will not respond to messages late in the evening or on weekends. If you send a message late on Friday or during the weekend, I might not reply until the following week.
  - b. I will only respond to email regarding administrative questions/problems or requests of an appointment. Questions requiring replies longer than one or two sentences should be asked in class or during office hours.
  - c. I will not respond to email questions about the content of the course. If you have questions about the content, you should ask them during class, post your question on the discussion board, or visit me during my office hours.
2. Before sending me an email, please check whether the Syllabus or the webpage contain the answer to your question.

- When sending me an email message, please make sure you have proof-read it and signed it. Anonymous messages will not be answered or messages from email addresses other than *utoronto.ca*. Please make sure the Subject line contains the name of the course (“LIN362”).

### Registration Issues:

This course uses an automated waiting list. This means that the instructor cannot register you for this class. You must talk to your registrar’s office directly. If you are late paying your fees you may be bumped out of the class and the first person on the waiting list will get your spot. If this happens you will not be able to get back into the course.

### Important Dates:

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| September 15  | Last day to enrol in fall courses.                      |
| November 3    | Last day to drop fall courses without academic penalty. |
| December 9–18 | Final exams for fall courses.                           |

### Course Schedule:

Please note that the schedule may change if we need to spend more or less time on certain topics.

| <i>Week</i> | <i>Date</i>     | <i>Topic</i>  | <i>Readings</i> | <i>Assessment</i> |
|-------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1           | <b>Sept. 10</b> | Introduction, Sound Change  | Ch. 1, 2        |                   |
| 2           | <b>Sept. 17</b> | Sound Change (cont’d), Borrowing                                  | Ch. 2, 3        |                   |
| 3           | <b>Sept. 24</b> | Comparative Method & Reconstruction,<br>Linguistic Classification | Ch. 5, 6        | Assignment 1      |
| 4           | <b>Oct. 1</b>   | Models of Linguistic Change, Internal<br>Reconstruction           | Ch. 7, 8        | Assignment 2      |
| 5           | <b>Oct. 8</b>   | Syntactic Change, Explaining Linguistic<br>Change                 | Ch. 10, 11      | Assignment 3      |
| 6           | <b>Oct. 15</b>  |   |                 | MIDTERM           |
| 7           | <b>Oct. 22</b>  | Areal Linguistics   | Ch. 12, other*  |                   |
| 8           | <b>Oct. 29</b>  | Languages and Genes   |                 |                   |
| 9           | <b>Nov. 5</b>   | Linguistic Prehistory   | Ch. 15, other   |                   |
| 10          | <b>Nov. 12</b>  | Fall break, no class  |                 |                   |
| 11          | <b>Nov. 19</b>  |   |                 | Presentations     |
| 12          | <b>Nov. 26</b>  |   |                 | Presentations     |
| 13          | <b>Dec. 3</b>   | Indo-European Prehistory, Class Overview                          | other           |                   |

\* Other: additional readings (scholarly journal articles or book chapters).