

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, THEATRE, AND MEDIA STUDIES
ENGL 224 A LITERARY HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

COURSE OUTLINE (1/3 2008)

COURSE ORGANIZATION

Teaching staff

Professor Robert Easting	VZ 901, tel. ext. 6803 (course convener)
Dr Christine Franzen	VZ 919, tel. ext. 6805 (course convener)
Associate Professor Peter Whiteford	VZ 801, tel. ext. 6820
Professor David Norton	VZ 810, tel. ext. 6811

Class times and room number

Lectures: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 3-4 in HM LT 105.

Tutorial: One hour per week, to be arranged. You will be given a form to fill in at the first lecture. Tutorial lists will be posted on the English notice-board on Floor 3 of HM on Friday 29 February. Tutorials begin in the week commencing Monday 3 March. Check the lists on the notice-board before that date. **Additional information:** the course blackboard site and announcements in lectures will be used to notify the class of any changes to the course programme. Students should check the Registry noticeboard in Kirk for the official examination timetables.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES, AND CONTENT

Course aims

To survey the history of the development of the English language from its origins to the present day, concentrating on the period up until the early seventeenth century--the period of the language's greatest changes.

Course objectives

Students successfully completing the course will have the ability to identify and trace the development of significant features of the English language as it has changed over time and become standard Present Day English, by reading a wide range of short texts (mainly literary) from Old English to the twentieth century and studying Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale* and Shakespeare's *Love's Labours Lost* in some detail, all with particularly close attention paid to their language. Students will also understand some of the ways in which the changing forms of the English language affect the development of literature in English.

The skills of improved reading comprehension and analysis imparted by this course should be of value to all students of English literature and the English language. (Past students have also commented that it has assisted their understanding of foreign language learning.)

Course content

Initially the course requires students to familiarise themselves with basic grammatical terminology: parts of speech, grammatical forms, etc., in order to be able to identify such features in the texts under discussion. Thereafter in reading through the texts attention will be paid also to phonology, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, spelling, and style, including rhetorical and other literary and linguistic devices. For details of the arrangement of the course content, see the Course Schedule, below, and the contents pages of the Coursebooks.

Set Texts to be Purchased

All the text books for the course are available from Student Notes.

1. ENGL 224 The Essentials of Grammar

This will be used especially during the first month of the course while students prepare for the Test held on Wednesday 26 March. This volume includes exercises that students can work through by themselves; the answers are provided at the end of the book. This material will be discussed in the first three tutorials and in lectures.

2. ENGL 224 Coursebooks: Introduction 1 and 2, and Texts 1 and 2.

These four books contain the texts that students are required to study in detail, and introductory material to assist them.

3. ENGL 224 Worksheets.

This volume contains weekly Worksheets to be prepared for tutorials and much useful introductory material on how to prepare for the Test, and how to complete the Worksheets and Assignments.

Recommended text to be read but not necessarily purchased

Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 4th edn. 1993. Multiple copies are available in the Library (which also holds copies of the 3rd edn. which is also acceptable.) Students are recommended to read this book as a complement to the Coursebooks, and this is best done chapter by chapter, week by week, as appropriate to match the chronological progress of the course; details are provided in the Worksheets.

Victoria Book Centre has ordered some copies of Baugh & Cable for those students who wish to purchase their own.

ASSESSMENT

In-course 60%, final examination 40%.

In course: Test and two Assignments, each worth 20%.

1. **Test**, week 5, mainly on grammar, with some exercises on Old English. To be held in the lecture hour, **Wednesday 26 March**. This is a Mastery Test requiring an 80% mark to pass. If necessary, a second chance will be offered on a date to be arranged.
2. **Assignment 1, Chaucer and the 14th Century**, due **Friday 4 April**.
3. **Assignment 2, The 15th Century and Shakespeare**, due **Monday 12 May**.

Note: In order that Assignments may be marked and returned promptly with an answer sheet, Assignment 1 will not be accepted after 12.00 p.m. Friday 18 April, and Assignment 2 will not be accepted after 12.00 p.m. Monday 26 May. If extensions have not been granted, Assignments will be penalized by the reduction of one grade within the first week late and by two grades within the second week late. **IF YOU HAND IN ASSIGNMENT 1 AFTER 12.00 P.M. FRIDAY 18 APRIL, OR ASSIGNMENT 2 AFTER 12.00 P.M. MONDAY 26 MAY, IT WILL NOT BE MARKED, RESULTING IN A ZERO MARK FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT.**

Final examination 40%, three hours, not open-book, sometime between 2-28 June: questions on Chaucer, Shakespeare, and 16th-20th centuries.

Relationship between assessment and course objectives

The course objective is to enable students to identify and trace via literary texts the development of significant features of the English language as it has changed over time and become standard Present Day English (PDE). The assignments and examination variously

assess students' ability to do this across a wide chronological range, with a particular focus on Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale* and Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*.

WORKLOAD AND MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

It is not possible to specify how many hours work are necessary to complete the course satisfactorily, for differences in work habits, reading skills, concentration, and sheer ability are so great. The FHSS Faculty Course Information Checklist recommends 15 hours per week as a basic work commitment for a 22-point 200-level one-semester course, inclusive of class contact hours (three lectures and one tutorial); i.e., **you should be reading and working on material for this course by yourself for AT LEAST 11 hours each week.**

This work will basically comprise:

- (a) carefully and repeatedly reading the texts and introductions in the Coursebooks for each week's periods;
- (b) working through the appropriate week's worksheet;
- (c) reading the appropriate chapter(s) in the Recommended Text;
- (d) preparing for the Test, Assignments, and the final examination.

Candidates must pass the Test, complete the Assignments (see Assessment, Note, above), and attend at least eight tutorials. Any student who fails the Test the first time will be given the opportunity of a second chance at an equivalent test.

At each tutorial students must bring their completed worksheet for the previous week's material, and have their set texts with them.

Note: The bulk of the texts you read for this course is not large in comparison with that required for many other English courses, but you will be expected to read the texts with **close attention to the detail of their language.**

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the VUW homepage at:

http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically at:

http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/downloads/course_outlines_general_information.pdf

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

Robert Easting & Christine Franzen, Course Conveners