

Linguistics 580
Historical Comparative Linguistics
Spring 2016

Professor: Natasha Warner

Class meets:

3:30-4:45 PM, Tuesday Thursday
Harvill 232

Class website: <http://d2l.arizona.edu>

Office hours: TBA, Douglass 320

Phone: 626-5591

Email: nwarner@u.arizona.edu

Books/materials:

Millar, Robert McColl. 2007. *Trask's Historical Linguistics*, 2nd ed. Hodder Education.

Other readings:

Journal articles and book chapters, to be posted on d2l or downloaded from the library.

General organization of the course:

This course will be a general graduate-level introduction to historical linguistics. I do not assume you have ever dealt with historical linguistics before, but the course material does assume you are familiar with various methods of synchronic linguistics, such as formal phonological analysis, basic morphological and syntactic analysis, etc.

We will spend approximately the first half of the semester reading and discussing the textbook, to get a good exposure to all the main topics of historical linguistics. We will discuss one chapter per class session, so it is crucial that you keep up with readings and have readings done before coming to class. We will take a few extra days to do in-class activities on some topics.

For the rest of the semester, we will read published literature in historical linguistics, to get exposure to a variety of smaller topics in-depth, and to see what kinds of research are done in various parts of the sub-field. Some students (see below) will also find an article to present to the rest of the class, on a topic of the student's own interest.

There will be two homework assignments, the article presentation mentioned above, required written discussion questions on articles, and a final paper (**due Friday May 6 by 11:59 PM**). You will also turn in a proposal of the topic of your paper. There is no required in-class formal presentation on your paper topic, but we will go around the class and discuss progress and findings for the papers.

There are several options for types of topics for the final papers, because it is almost impossible to learn enough about older stages of a language to do original current research on historical linguistics within one semester using the traditional methods of this field. (If you think of a topic you can do, though, that's a possibility!)

- Take a paper you're writing **this semester** as a prelim, dissertation chapter, or dissertation prospectus, and add a sub-section on some historical aspect of the phenomenon.
- Choose a poorly documented extinct or dormant language you are interested in, locate documentation of its related languages, and apply the comparative method to reconstruct as much as you reasonably can in one semester.
- Carry out traditional historical linguistics work (reconstruction, determining what the relationships in a language family are, etc.) on an understudied language family. (There has to be enough data available and a question no one has done yet.)
- Design and carry out a perception experiment to try to replicate a historical sound change in the lab with modern listeners (cf. J. Ohala). (Requires phonetics skills.)
- Do a paper on sound change using computational modeling. (Requires computational modeling skills.)
- Carry out sociolinguistic research (production study most likely) on a change in progress. Include discussion of implications for historical change.
- Choose a historical development in a language you are familiar with (at least the modern form), and provide a very thorough review of literature paper, including also your own thoughts on any issues in the literature.
- Other ideas???

Requirements/grading:

Homework assignments:	30% (15% each)
Article presentation:	25%
Topic proposal:	5%
Term paper:	25%
Required questions:	10%
Discussion/participation:	5%

Late policy: 10% reduction of the possible grade per day late, except for hospital, police, or similar level excuses. Work turned in partly on one day and partly on a later day will be counted as of the day the last part is turned in.

Tentative schedule:

Date	Topic	Readings/requirements
Week 1 (Jan. 14, 19)	Introduction, language change in general; Lexical and semantic change	Trask Ch. 1 (Th./Tu.), Ch. 2 (Tu.), (Bring ex. from a language to class Tues.)
Week 2	Types of sound change; change to sound systems	Trask Ch. 3 (Bring ex. to class Thurs. if possible) , Ch. 4
Week 3	Morphological change; syntactic change	Trask Ch. 5, Ch. 6
Week 4	Language families (tree/wave); Comparative method	Trask Ch. 7, 8
Week 5	Comparative method activity	In-class activity (Th., Tu.)
Week 6	Internal reconstruction; internal reconstruction activity	Trask Ch. 9 (Th.); In-class activity (Tu.), HW1 due Th. Feb. 18

Week 7	Sociolinguistics and language change; language contact and planning;	Trask Ch. 10 (Tu.); Trask Ch. 11, Topic proposal due Tu. Mar. 1
Week 8	Evolution of language; catch-up	Trask Ch. 12
Week 9 (Spring Break = Mar. 15, 17)	Teleology/origin of sound change; Relationship of historical ling. to synchronic theory	Ohala 1989; Hale 2007 Ch. 6;
Week 10	Lexical diffusion/regular sound change with student article presentation (2 of those chapters)	Labov 1994 (Ch. 15/16/18), HW2 due Tu. Mar. 29
Week 11	Meaning of modals; guest lecture (Wedel)	Mithun; none/TBA
Week 12	Penutian, Japanese and Korean	Callaghan 2001; Riley 2003 or TBA
Week 13	guest lecture (Norquest); student articles	none/TBA
Week 14	Very long-range linguistic history; origin of PIE	Nichols 1998; Chang et al. 2015
Week 15	language evolution; wrap-up and talk about papers	Fitch et al.; none
May 6, by 11:59 pm		Paper due on d2l

There are 4 slots for student-chosen articles (25 min. each), and >4 registered students. Therefore, you have a choice of presenting an article that you choose and the rest of us haven't read for a third of a class period, or leading discussion of one of the assigned articles with more discussion from the class and me for a whole time period. We might be able to shorten some of the assigned articles some in order to make more slots for student-chosen articles if you would prefer.

Various statements:

Students with Disabilities:

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

Academic misconduct:

The university's policies about plagiarism, academic honesty, and academic conduct are at <http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies/>. Study groups (especially for homework) are fine for this class, but you are not allowed to write up your homework together or share files in the writing process. If you work with a study group, you should make a note on the top of your homework stating who you studied with.

Potentially offensive/objectionable content:

The material in this course is primarily not political, but there may be some discussion of endangered languages, dialects and opinions on them, societal pressures on languages, etc.

Conduct in class:

Please turn off cell phones when in class, and only use computers or other devices for looking up class-related material. Everyone is required to treat others in class with respect. Disruptive behavior is prohibited.