

ENG 528: Language Change Research Seminar
Fall 2005
Winston 020, T 6:00-8:45

Instructor: Erik Thomas

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Office Hours: MWF 1:30-3:30, and by appointment; if I'm not in my office during office hours, I'll probably be in the lab. I'll be glad to help you any other time that you catch me if time permits.

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It is recommended that students who wish to contact me remotely when I am not holding office hours use e-mail instead of telephoning my office.

SYLLABUS

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should:

Be able to examine language change using techniques and theories from experimental phonetics.

Be able to apply a spectrograph, a speech synthesizer, and computerized plotting to problems in language change.

Produce a paper on language change that is suitable for an academic conference.

TEXTS

Texts for this course consist of one book, Keith Johnson's *Acoustic and Auditory Phonetics* (2nd ed., 2003; about \$35) and a series of articles and chapters from books. The Johnson book is available at the NCSU bookstore. Other readings are available on electronic reserve at <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/reserves/>.

REQUIREMENTS

The most important requirement for this course is the major paper. Papers may investigate change and/or variation, either historical or contemporary, on any aspect of language covered in this course. It should involve some sort of instrumental phonetic analysis. Projects may involve fieldwork, but they do not have to.

Other requirements include a) a short, informal, preliminary oral presentation on plans for the major paper; b) a twenty-minute formal oral presentation of the major paper, with a question-and-answer period afterward, on the last day of class; c) weekly summaries of the assigned readings, which may be typed or handwritten, with approximately half a page per article or chapter, due at the beginning of the first class during which we discuss them; and d) completion of four exercises that are designed to help students learn to use equipment. Weekly summaries will not be accepted after the class in which they are due unless a proper excuse is provided. Credit may be subtracted if the major paper or the exercises are late. Guests will be invited to hear the oral presentations and are welcome during other classes.

Attendance at all classes is expected and is essential to learning the material that we will cover.

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The breakdown of grades is as follows:

Major Paper:	60%
Weekly Summaries:	13%
Exercises:	16%
Informal Oral Presentation:	1%
Formal Oral Presentation:	10%

It is the instructor's understanding and expectation that the student's signature on any assignment means that the student neither gave nor received unauthorized aid. The university's academic integrity statement can be found at the following website:

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php

The policy on working with students with disabilities can be found at:

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.1.php

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE (All dates on this list are subject to change).

8/23: Introduction to the course; review of phonetics; introduction to the spectrograph.

8/30: Understanding sound; practice with the spectrograph.

READ: Chapters 1 and 2 of Johnson.

9/6: Acoustics of vowels; vowel normalization

READ: Chapters 5 and 6 of Johnson. Skim chapter 3. Also read Adank, Smits, and van Hout, "A comparison of vowel normalization procedures for language variation research."

9/13: Acoustics of consonants.

READ: Chapters 8 and 9 of Johnson. Skim chapter 7.

DUE: CSL exercise # 1 (measuring your own voice, normal and yawning).

9/20: Perception experiments; use of the ASL speech synthesizer.

READ: Chapter 4 of Johnson; Thomas, "Sociophonetic applications of speech perception experiments." Also recommended: Strand, "Uncovering the role of gender stereotypes in speech perception;" Janson and Schulman, "Non-distinctive features and their use."

9/27: Vowel differences in dialects of English (especially North Carolina).

READ: Labov, "The three dialects of English;" Thomas, *An Acoustic Analysis of Vowel Variation in New World English*, chaps. 4 and 6 and pp. 50-58 (skim the rest of chapter 2).

10/4: Vowel space and its relationship with vowel change.

READ: Martinet, "Function, structure, and sound change;" Lindblom, "Phonetic universals in vowel systems."

DUE: Proposals for major papers.

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10/11: Intonation; pitch tracking.

READ: Beckman and Elam, "Guidelines for ToBI Labeling;" selections from Cruttenden, *Intonation* (read pp. 128-38, skim the rest); Tarone, "Aspects of intonation in Black English." Also recommended: Wolfram & Thomas, *The Development of African American English: Evidence from an Isolated Community*, chapter 8.

10/18: Rhythm; demonstration of measurement of PVI.

READ: Low, Grabe, & Nolan, "Quantitative characterizations of speech rhythm: syllable-timing in Singapore English" (read pp. 377-85, skim the rest); Ramus, Nespors, & Mehler, "Correlates of linguistic rhythm in the speech signal," pp. 265-275; Fought & Fought, "Prosodic rhythm patterns in Chicano English."

DUE: ASL exercise (synthesis of vowels).

10/25: Progress reports on major papers (prepare to give a 5-10 minute informal presentation); perception vs. production as sources of sound change.

READ: Ohala, "The phonetics of sound change;" Lindblom et al, "Is sound change adaptive?"

11/1: Effects of duration on speech production and sound change; plotting data with Origin.

READ: Lindblom, "Spectrographic study of vowel reduction" (don't worry about the mathematical formulas); reread pp. 50-55 of Thomas, An acoustic analysis of vowel variation in New World English; Thomas, "Instrumental phonetics" (in Chambers et al, *Handbook of Language Variation and Change*), pp. 175-84 (skim the rest of the paper).

DUE: Intonation exercise.

11/8: Consonantal variation, a factor that American sociophoneticians ignore; language contact and consonantal variation.

READ: Docherty & Foulkes, "Derby and Newcastle: Instrumental phonetics and variationist studies" (in Foulkes & Docherty, *Urban Voices*); Fourakis & Port, "Stop epenthesis in English." SKIM: Thomason & Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, chapter 3 (Contact-induced language change: An analytic framework).

11/15: Phonetics and phonology.

READ: Ohala, "The costs and benefits of phonological analysis;" Coleman, "Phonetic representations in the mental lexicon" (in Durand & Laks, *Phonetics, Phonology, and Cognition*); Johnson, "Speech perception without speaker normalization."

DUE: CSL exercise #2 (plotting duration vs. formant values).

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11/22: Theories of linguistic change; oral presentations.

READ: Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog, "Empirical foundations for a theory of language change" (pay particular attention to the earlier sections, especially pp. 101-02; later sections can be skimmed). No summary is due for this reading.

11/29: Oral presentations.

12/6 (Tuesday): Major papers due.