

LINGUISTICS 273  
Spring 2008  
MR 11:50-1:05, Blau 207

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Blaustein 329

## SYLLABUS

273 STORY OF LANGUAGE, or, why and how languages change?

Introduction to historical linguistics for students who know at least one foreign language (or who took Linguistics 110)

### Why take the class?

- To anchor your previous study of foreign languages
- To observe how language moves and lives, and understand why
- To learn about the dynamics of English, today and across its history
- To discover the language genius in daily life of an ordinary language
- To understand the story of yourself as you discover that of language

YOUR GRADE will be determined by:

Attendance and active class participation based on thorough preparation for each class:

*Reading guide questions (posted on the web) on the assigned chapters from Aitchison and Barber, and on the videos are intended to facilitate your study; please study them in preparation for the upcoming class and submit selected ones in writing*

4 Exams (1 hour, essays and problem solving)

Class presentation on a linguistic topic of your choice (20 minutes; based on independent research and analysis of primary data); topics due March 9 (please schedule a consultation for the week of March 5 or earlier)

Research paper on your presentation topic (due in the last class, May 8; 10 pages, incl. bibliography)

### TEXTBOOKS:

Jean Aitchison, *Language Change*, Cambridge U Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

Charles Barber, *The English Language: a Historical Introduction*, Cambridge, 1993

BBC video series, *Story of English* (in Shain library)

video *In Search of the First Language*, and others

To consult in the library:

*Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture*, by Mallory and Adams, 1997 REF CB 201 E53

*The Atlas of Languages*, by Comrie, Matthews and Polinsky

*The Encyclopedia of Language*, by David Crystal

*The Encyclopedia of English Language*, by David Crystal