

# Varieties of English

BTAN40029BA/BTAN3029MA

B.A. 3rd year – Linguistics and Communication Track and M.A. in North American Studies  
Fall 2019

## Course Description

This course is an exploration of a variety of empirical and theoretical issues pertaining to various languages and language varieties in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The primary objective of the course is to help students gain awareness and appreciation of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, which is prevalent in these countries. Some of the questions that we address throughout the semester are as follows:

- What is the typology of English regional accents?
- What are some American Indian languages in the United States? Where are they spoken and what are their characteristic phonological, morphological and syntactic features?
- What are vernacular (nonstandard) dialects of English? What is the difference between well-formedness/grammaticality and social acceptability?
- What is the linguistic status of African American English (AAE)? How are the lexical items, pronunciation and syntax of AAE different from Standard American English?
- What is the relationship of Chicano English to English and Spanish?
- What is the sociocultural context of Spanish in the southwestern U.S.?

By the end of the course, students will be able to interpret data from different languages and language varieties. The course is also hoped to improve students' critical thinking, especially when it comes to questions about cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity.

## Textbooks

Algeo, John. (Ed.). (2005). *The Cambridge History of the English Language. English in North America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bauer, Laurie. (2002). *An Introduction to International Varieties of English*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Beal, Joan C. (2010). *An Introduction to Regional Englishes*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Di Paolo, Marianna and Arthur K. Spears. (2014). *Languages and Dialects in the U.S.: Focus on Linguistics and Diversity*. New York: Routledge.

Rickford, John Russell and Russell John Rickford. (2000). *Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Students are requested to consult the librarians in Room 101 so that they have copies of the relevant chapters from the textbooks above.

## Practice

The course will involve the frontal presentation and critical discussion of the topics provided in the weekly syllabus below. Students will also be required to work on various problems outside of the classroom (see the methods of assessment). Furthermore, the screening of a movie illustrating cultural and linguistic diversity will also be part of the course.

The class discussions will be supplemented with handouts posted on the instructor's website at least 24 hours before they are due.

## Methods of Assessment

### *2 problem sets*

Students will work on 2-3 data analysis questions in each problem set.

### *2 response papers*

In these papers students will have to respond to specific questions addressed in articles from newspapers like *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*. The articles will be made available for students at least one week prior to the submission date of the respective response papers. Each paper will be approx. 600 words long.

### *1 major test at the termination of the course*

This test assesses students' factual knowledge of the course material and their ability to interpret linguistic data.

Students' English competence will also be rigorously assessed in the case of the response papers and the end-term test.

## Weekly Syllabus

	<b>Class material</b>	<b>Reading assignments and other requirements</b>
<b>Week 1</b> Sept. 12	Introduction	
<b>Week 2</b> Sept. 19	Variation in the morphology and syntax of various Englishes	Bauer (2002): pp. 46-68
<b>Week 3</b> Sept. 26	Canadian English	Algeo (2005): pp. 422-441
<b>Week 4</b> Oct. 3	Dialect variation in England: regional accents	Beal (2010): pp. 1-24
<b>Week 5</b> Oct. 10	Dialect variation in England: morphology and syntax	Beal (2010): pp. 25-50  <b>Problem set #1 is due.</b>
<b>Week 6</b> Oct. 17	Languages, dialects, and diversity in the United States	Di Paolo and Spears (2014): pp. 3-33

<b>Week 7</b> Oct. 24	American Indian languages: Navajo and Shoshoni	Di Paolo and Spears (2014): pp. 37-68  <b>Response paper #1 is due.</b>
<b>Oct. 31</b>	<b>Consultation Week – No class</b>	
<b>Week 9</b> Nov. 7	Vernacular dialects of English: Appalachian Vernacular English	Di Paolo and Spears (2014): pp. 85-100
<b>Week 10</b> Nov. 14	Vernacular dialects of English: The vocabulary and pronunciation of AAE	Rickford and Rickford (2000): pp. 91-108  <b>Problem set #2 is due.</b>
<b>Week 11</b> Nov. 21	Vernacular dialects of English: The grammar of AAE	Rickford and Rickford (2000): pp. 109-128
<b>Week 12</b> Nov. 28	Movie: <i>Precious</i> (2009) directed by Lee Daniels	
<b>Week 13</b> Dec. 5	Chicano English and Southwest Spanish	Di Paolo and Spears (2014): pp. 115-125, 137-150  <b>Response paper #2 is due.</b> This is an optional requirement in the BA program.
<b>Week 14</b> Dec. 12	Endterm Test	

### Place and Time

Room 55, Thursday 12:00-1:40 p.m.

### Contact

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