

Instructor	Scott Jarvie
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Office Hours	Online, by appointment.
Class Day/Time	Thursdays* 1:30PM - 2:45PM
Classroom	Online

My quarrel with the English language has been that the language reflected none of my experience. But now I began to see the matter another way...Perhaps the language was not my own because I had never attempted to use it, had only learned to imitate it. If this were so, then it might be made to bear the burden of my experience if I could find the stamina to challenge it, and me.

—James Baldwin

Course Description

Why do we teach English grammar, and what does it mean to teach it today? This course explores the growth, structure, and history of English, with a particular focus on grammar pedagogy. Together we'll think through the implications of power, culture, experience and identity for how we use language in our lives and how we teach it in classrooms. We'll cover various grammatical concepts, as well as issues of usage and "correctness". We'll also take up critical theoretical perspectives on grammar to trouble those concepts, considering their implications for our practices as readers, writers, speakers, and teachers in classrooms. While the course emphasizes grammar pedagogy, the material also examines the historical ways English language has been structured and possibilities for how we might imagine it differently.

Format

The course will be conducted online, with a mix of synchronous meetings and asynchronous discussions on Canvas. Students will need computer/Internet access, as well as a camera for participating in class and small-group conversations.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify & explain various English grammatical concepts.
2. Analyze the functions of grammatical structures in written & spoken language.
3. Critique varied uses grammar along lines of power, culture, & identity.
4. Plan grammar lessons that reflect a variety of approaches to teaching English.

*In lieu of our Tuesday sessions, we'll meet asynchronously via Canvas—more on this in our first class.

Required Text

How English Works: A Linguistic Introduction, by Anne Curzan & Michael Adams. Pearson, 2nd Edition, 2008. (Used is fine. I went with the 2nd edition, because it's significantly cheaper. If you have an issue getting a hold of this let me know. See calendar below—we won't begin readings from it until September).

Additional readings provided on Canvas.

Course Requirements & Assignments

Participation. This is a discussion-based course, so your participation makes all the difference in the experience we'll have together. This means we'll proceed with the expectation that you'll (a) do the reading, and (b) share your perspective on it in insightful, challenging, and creative ways. You'll do this in two primary ways: (1) every Thursday through various course discussions during our meetings, and (2) through weekly asynchronous assignments on Canvas. Across those spaces, the goal is to co-construct our learning about English: You are invited to contribute whatever interests or moves or bothers or confuses you, and I'll do the same. (Counts for 30% of final grade; assesses [Program Learning Outcomes](#) 1, 3-5).

Grammar Lesson. One of the primary ways we'll think about grammar in this course is *pedagogically*: How we teach and are taught by grammar in different ways throughout our lives. For the first major assignment, you'll pair up to teach a brief lesson to the class about a specific grammatical concept. This is an opportunity for all of us to learn more about various grammatical concepts, but it's also a chance for you to think through how people come to learn about grammar, and how they might learn differently. As you plan your lesson, you'll consider: What assumptions are you beginning with about the concept, and about grammar generally? What do you want to teach about the concept specifically? Why those lessons? What do you want students to know, or be able to do, at the end of your lesson? How can we teach grammar online? After your lesson, we'll have a class debrief to think through your pedagogy and what we learned together. (20%; PLO 1, 4)

Personal Essay. A second assumption of this course is that grammar matters on a *personal* level. Grammar is important to how people express themselves, to the formation of their identities, and it often reflects people's educational experiences, social and cultural backgrounds, and their raced, classed, gendered, and linguistic identities. In this assignment, you will explore the intersection of grammar and your own personal experience through an extended piece of narrative writing. How have you been taught to think about grammar? Where, when, and by who? What event(s) have shaped your understanding of how you use language? What role has language played in how you understand the world, and yourself? Leading up to this, we'll read and talk through a variety of examples of what this might look like. (20%; PLO 3, 4)

Pop Culture Analysis. Your final project will engage grammar *culturally*. Throughout the semester, you'll keep a log of interesting uses of English drawn from daily life: in your reading, in music and television and film, on social media, and in everyday conversation. Each week you'll have opportunities to share your findings with the class, and together we'll analyze these uses grammatically. The project will culminate in a final paper, in which you'll identify one particularly significant grammatical construction drawn from culture today. You'll analyze this construction for us, breaking down its components as we've come to understand them through our course readings, its functions, flaws, and the linguistic traditions it operates within or breaks away from. Then – the fun part – you'll situate it within the broader culture, making a case for the role this form plays in people's lives today. You'll present your work during our final exam session. (30%; PLO 1, 3-5)

Grading Information

I will always give you detailed instruction and support in class for major assignments. When applicable, I will also distribute rubrics that should help guide your thinking. You will have access to exemplar texts whenever possible. Additional grading info related to the assignments above will be addressed in class. If you have questions or concerns about your grades, contact me within a week of receiving the grade.

Late work will not receive full credit. I know things happen. Please communicate with me as needed.

We'll use the following grading scale to determine final grades:

93-100	A	80-82	B-	67-69	D+
90-92	A-	77-79	C+	63-66	D
87-89	B+	73-76	C	60-62	D-
83-86	B	70-72	C-	0-59	F

Attendance

It is a professional expectation that you will be present and on-time to every synchronous meeting, as well as present and engaged in our asynchronous work on Canvas each week. While I am understanding of extreme circumstances such as serious illness or family emergency, simply letting me know that you will be absent does not count as an excused absence. Please notify me in advance of any absence and work with your peers to collect materials and information shared.

University Policies

Relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g., learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the Office of Undergraduate Education's [Syllabus Information page](#).

ENGL 103 Spring 2021 Calendar

Schedule subject to change as needed & depending on our conversation in the first class. Readings should be completed by the date they're listed below.

1/28	Introductions; course co-construction.
2/4	Language, identity, culture, & power. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 2, "Language & authority" -- Dunn & Lindblom (2003), "Why revitalize grammar?" -- Smitherman (1973), "Grammar & goodness" or (1998), "Ebonics, King, & Oakland"
2/11	Language, identity, culture, & power. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 11, "Language variation" -- <u>Two</u> of the following: + Ahmad (2007), <i>Rotten English</i> (excerpt) + Cisneros (1997), "An offering to the power of language" + Lyiscott (2014), "3 ways to speak English" + Noah (2017), <i>Born a crime</i> (excerpt) + Tan (1990), "Mother tongue" + Williams, "Why I write"
2/18	Histories of English. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 13, "History of English: Old to early modern English"
2/25	Grammar pedagogies. -- Dean (2001), "Grammar without grammar: Just playing around, writing" -- Zuidema (2005), "Myth education: Rationale & strategies for teaching against linguistic prejudice"
3/4	Grammar pedagogies. -- Baker-Bell (2020b), "Dismantling anti-Black linguistic racism in English language arts" -- Zuidema (2012), "The grammar workshop: Systematic language study in reading & writing contexts"
3/11	Phonology of English. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 3, "Phonology"
3/18	Morphology of English. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 4, "Morphology"
3/25	English syntax, pt. I. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 5, "English syntax: The grammar of words"
4/8	English syntax, pt. II. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 6, "English syntax: Phrases, clauses, & sentences"
4/15	Semantics of English. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 7, "Semantics"
4/22	[Open] * Personal Essay due.

4/29	Applications: Writing. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 9, "Stylistics" -- <u>One</u> of the following: + Hale (2013), <i>Sin & syntax</i> (excerpt) + Dreyer (2019), <i>Dreyer's English</i> (excerpt)
5/6	Applications: Spoken language. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 8, "Spoken discourse"
5/13	Future(s) of English. -- Curzan & Adams, Ch. 14: "History of English: Modern & future English" -- McWhorter, "Lexicon Valley: Future English speaker: Can you read me?" (podcast) * Pop Culture Analysis due.
5/20	Final Exam: Thursday, May 20 th , 12:15PM - 2:30PM, online. Present pop culture analyses.

