

Ling 446/546
Introduction to Language Change

Spring 2017: **Tue, Thur 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm**
Mitchell Hall 217

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1. Course Description

This course is an introduction to theories and methods of comparative and historical linguistics, with an emphasis on a typologically informed understanding of diachronic change in several Linguistics subfields. Students will be introduced to concepts that will assist in determining common cross-linguistic paths and mechanisms of language evolution in a data-driven fashion. Through working with materials from a diverse sample of languages, students will have the opportunity to expand their grasp of issues that pertain to the study of phonetic, phonological, morphosyntactic and semantic change.

2. Required Textbook

BYBEE, JOAN. 2015. *Language Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

3. UNM Learn: Supplemental and Additional Readings

All required readings will be posted on [UNM Learn](#) beforehand.

UNM Learn support: (505) 277-0857 or learn@unm.edu

UNM Learn student help site: <http://online.unm.edu/help/learn/students/>

4. Course Requirements

Requirement	Grade %	More info
14 Questions on the weekly readings (lowest score will be dropped)	13%	SECTION 10 (p. 3)
3 Homework Assignments	24%	SECTION 11 (p. 3)
In-class Exercises	5%	SECTION 12 (p. 3)
3 Critical Essays ¹	24%	SECTION 13 (p. 4)
Annotated Bibliography	4%	SECTION 14 (p. 4)
Draft of Final Paper/Prospectus ²	5%	SECTION 15 (p. 5)
Final Paper/Prospectus	25%	SECTION 15 (p. 5)

See due dates in the Course Schedule

¹ Undergraduate students may submit either only 2 of the Critical Essays or submit all 3 and have their lowest grade dropped.

² Graduate students will write a full research paper, whereas undergrads are expected to do a prospectus of a possible study.

5. Grading Scale

A+	98-100%	B	83-87%	C-	70-72%
A	93-97%	B-	80-82%	D+	68-69%
A-	90-92%	C+	78-79%	D	63-67%
B+	88-89%	C	73-77%	D-	60-62%

Students are held accountable for all the material covered in the course. Thus, if you miss a class, please first refer to the syllabus and then consult classmate if necessary. Students may not write the instructor about missed content. In order to avoid this issue, write down the name and email of a classmate below:

Classmate's name: _____ Email: _____

6. Incompletes

The instructor will only give incomplete grades (I) for this course in cases of documented, serious emergencies. Please note that this is a UNM policy: "incomplete grades are given only for reasons beyond the student's control." In other words, incompletes can only be granted in very extraordinary cases.

7. Late Work Policy

Late assignments cannot be accepted for full credit. The only valid justification for late assignments is a proof of a medical excuse. If you are unable to turn in your homework on time, please contact me by email. It is always better to let the instructor know why an assignment will be delayed, rather than simply not turning it in. Some specific policies:

- Assignments handed in until 2pm on the day after the due date will be accepted with a grade reduction of 25% (i.e., the maximum possible score would be 75 out of 100).
 - *Assignments turned in any time after that will not be accepted.*
- All extra-class assignments are due at the beginning of class.
- In-class exercises must be turned in on the days they are scheduled.

8. Attendance

Regular attendance is key to success in this class. Attendance will be taken in the beginning of class throughout the semester. In-class worksheets that are completed during class activities may also serve as attendance records. Students who miss too many classes without due reason may be dropped from the course. Exceptions to this policy will be granted only in the case of extenuating circumstances such as a medical emergency, with a doctor's note.

9. Academic Honesty

You are responsible for your own learning. Proper citing and scientific honesty form the basis of fruitful academic progression. Students are expected to practice honesty on all exams, quizzes, etc. Any student found to practice dishonesty, including all forms of plagiarism, will receive a failing grade.

10. Questions on the Weekly Readings

Starting with the readings for Week 2, students will be required to post TWO QUESTIONS related to the readings specified in the syllabus for the *coming week* on UNM Learn. These must be specific enough to reflect your understanding of the chapter(s)/article(s) in question and not be so general as to give the impression you have not done a careful reading of the content. **Questions will be graded** based on their pertinence. Some further details:

- The thread for questions will be available on Thursdays some time after class and you will have until **5pm** on the following **Monday** to post them.
- When there is more than one reading for a given week, your questions should refer to the entirety of the content for that week.
- You may draw from your own experience with language to formulate your questions, but those must also be informed by the concepts in the readings (please state the part of the reading which instigated the question with the appropriate citation formatting).
- Individual questions will be replied at random, so make sure to check for answers once the grade is posted on Learn!
- A rubric with suggestions of what constitutes appropriate questions will be available on UNM Learn. Please use it as a guideline when proposing yours.
- Writing conventions are to be followed when proposing questions, such as adequate use of punctuation, citation formatting (APA) and proper spelling.

11. Homework Assignments

Written homework assignments will be available on the Learn page one week before they are due. These will consist of a handful of questions relating to specific datasets in the homework. Questions in these assignments will address content seen over the course the weeks prior to the due date, that is, all homework assignments are **cumulative**. Some further instructions:

- Please turn in the completed assignment at the beginning of class on the specified date.
- Only hardcopies will be accepted.

12. In-class Exercises

From time to time you will be asked to work on specific questions pertaining to the topics discussed during class. Students who are absent on a day when an in-class exercise is proposed cannot get credit for the missed activity. However, exceptions might be granted in the case of extenuating circumstances (see Late Work Police above). There will be two kinds of activities:

- **Datasets.** You will be given a dataset and a specific question that will require a detailed analysis of the material to arrive at the answer. *Undergraduate students* may work in pairs and submit one answer per duo.
- **Writing tasks.** You will be given a short writing tasks designed to ensure that you read the required material attentively. Each student must submit their own individual answer.

13. Critical Essays

There will be two or three critical essays (CEs) over the course of the semester, depending on your status as an undergraduate (2 CEs) or a graduate student (3 CEs). For these essays, you are expected to describe one debate that has arisen with respect to language change. Critical essays must draw on a number of specific references that address each topic (see SECTION 20 for full references). *Undergrads* may choose whichever two topics about which they would like to write. Some specific instructions:

- The essay should be approximately **2-3 pages** long (1.5 spacing, 1in margins), excluding references.
- Both sides of the debate must be described accurately and concisely.
- You may choose to pick a side, but you should point out strengths and weaknesses in each perspective of the debate.
- Discuss ways in which future studies may shed light on the given issue.
- You must use all of the references suggested for each topic.
- Please draw on specific examples from the suggested sources to support your claims.
- Feel free to cite sources beyond the required readings for the class.

Critical essays will discuss the following debates in the literature:

1. *Origins of sound change* (**due Jan 31st**). Bybee 2015 argues that sound change stems from one source, whereas authors such as Ohala 2003 propose a different view.
2. *The nature of grammaticalization* (**due Mar 09th**). Bybee 2015 and others (e.g. Heine 2003, Traugott 2003) see grammaticalization as a key factor behind language change, whereas some other authors disagree (e.g. Campbell 2001, Norde 2001).
3. *Sources of language change* (**due May 04th**). The literature offers different perspectives on the sources of language change, with a significant role given to internal (e.g. Bybee & Beckner 2015), external (Thomason 2003), generational (Stanford 2015) or yet other elements (e.g. Hruschka et al. 2003).

14. Annotated Bibliography

Writing an annotated bibliography (AB) is excellent preparation for a research project. Although collecting sources for a bibliography is useful in itself, the process of annotating them requires a much more careful reading of each individual source. Writing an annotated bibliography will thus help you gain a more thorough perspective on what has been said about your topic. The format of the AB is much like that of a reading response paper, albeit much shorter. An AB should contain the following:

- The bibliographical information of the source (please use APA formatting).
- A **single paragraph** with your annotation, which should describe:
 1. The topic addressed in the source;
 2. how that topic relates to your own research interest;
 3. an evaluation of the author's results and/or conclusions; and
 4. how your own study fits into the discussion proposed.
- Length
 - *Undergraduate* students must submit an AB with 5-8 sources;
 - *Graduate* students are expected to write an AB containing 10 to 12 sources.

NB: For this assignment, only academic sources constitute valid references, such as articles published in refereed journals, books or book chapters. You may refer to other types of sources (e.g. news articles, conference presentations, dictionaries, etc.) in the final paper/prospectus, however.

15. Final Paper/Prospectus

The Final Paper (for *graduate* students) or Prospectus (for *undergraduate* students) should discuss a question that pertains to the general topic of Language Change. The main difference between a paper and a prospectus is the accompanying data. **Research papers** should present relevant new data that support one's hypotheses, whereas a **prospectus** is an outline of a possible research project, informed by a solid review of the literature. The following components should be included in either:

1. Clear statement of the specific question and why it is of interest to the study of Language Change as a whole.
2. Statement of your hypotheses and how previous research informs your predictions.
3. Description of the Method. What type of source did/would you use? For instance, online corpora of historical data, recordings of synchronic change, comparative dictionaries, etc.
4. Results.
 - a. *Research papers:* Do the data obtained confirm or reject the hypotheses you laid out? In which way?
 - b. *Prospectus:* What do you expect to find based on previous literature? For instance, does a related language show a similar phenomenon?
5. Discussion and conclusion. This component should tie in all of the previous ones, and propose an evaluation of how the study contributes/would contribute to the field of Historical Linguistics from a broader perspective.

▪ *Important dates*

- **Mar 28th** An email of a few sentences describing your topic. I may approve the topic, request further information, or suggest you find a different topic. I strongly suggest that you discuss potential topics with me prior to this.
- **Apr 11th** The annotated bibliography for the final paper or prospectus.
- **Apr 27th** The first draft of the paper or prospectus. This should contain at least the statement of the research question, the appropriate literature review and at least an outline of the method section.
- **May 10th** The essay, expected to be approximately in the range of 10-12 pages for the prospectus and 12-15 pages for the final paper, with 1.5 spacing and a point 12 font (not including bibliography).
 - ⇒ *Please drop off a hard copy of your essay in my mailbox (Hum 526) BEFORE 5PM on this date (NB: it is a Wednesday).*

16. Writing and Academic Resources

Tips for successful academic writing of different types can be found at the [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#).

The Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS) offers linguistic tutoring at **no additional cost** for *undergraduate students*. CAPS is located on the third floor of Zimmerman Library. Please visit [their website](#) for more information.

17. Title IX - Reporting Harassment and Discrimination on campus

UNM has increased its efforts to fight harassment and discrimination on campus. UNM faculty, Teaching Assistants, and Graduate Assistants are considered *responsible employees* by the [Department of Education](#). This designation requires that any report of gender discrimination which includes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence made to a faculty member, TA, or GA must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at the [Office of Equal Opportunity](#). The same is true for any ethnic, racial, gender and/or sexual orientation discrimination based on religion. For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct and discrimination, see the [University Policies](#). There are three confidential reporting locations on campus: LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center, Women's Resource Center, and the LGBTQ Resource Center.

18. Accommodations

Accessibility Services (Mesa Vista Hall 2021, 277-3506) provides academic support to students who have disabilities. If you think you need alternative accessible formats for undertaking and completing coursework, you should contact this office right away to assure your needs are met in a timely manner. If you need local assistance in contacting Accessibility Services, see the Linguistics Department office or your instructor.

19. Open Channels of Communication

My preferred method of communication is via email (ricardodesouza@unm.edu). Please note that proper greetings and writing conventions are much appreciated! If you are uncertain about how to communicate with an instructor, please check [this webpage](#) for tips on effective email writing.

20. References for Critical Essays

- Bybee, J., & Beckner, C. (2015). Language use, cognitive processes and linguistic change. In Bower, C. & Evans, B. (Eds.) *The Routledge handbook of historical linguistics*, pp. 503-518. New York, NY: Routledge Press.
- Campbell, L. (2001). What's wrong with grammaticalization? *Language Sciences* 23, 113-161.
- Heine, B. (2003). Grammaticalization. In Joseph, B. D., & Janda, R. D. (Eds.). *The handbook of historical linguistics* (Blackwell handbooks in linguistics), pp. 575-601. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Hruschka, D. J., Christiansen, M. H., Blythe, R. A., Croft, W., Heggarty, P., Mufwene, S., Pierrehumbert, J., & Poplack, S. (2009). Building social cognitive models of language change. *Trends in cognitive sciences* 13, no. 11: 464-469.
- Norde, M. (2001). Deflection as a counterdirectional factor in grammatical change. *Language Sciences* 23, 231-64.
- Ohala, J. J. (2003) Phonetics and Historical Phonology. In Joseph, B. D., & Janda, R. D. (Eds.). *The handbook of historical linguistics* (Blackwell handbooks in linguistics), pp. 669-688. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Stanford, J. N. (2015). Language acquisition and language change. In Bower, C. & Evans, B. (Eds.) *The Routledge handbook of historical linguistics*, pp. 466-83. New York, NY: Routledge Press.
- Thomason, S. G. (2003). Contact as a Source of Language Change. In Joseph, B. D., & Janda, R. D. (Eds.). *The handbook of historical linguistics* (Blackwell handbooks in linguistics), pp. 687-712. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Traugott, E. C. (2003). Constructions in Grammaticalization. In B. D., & Janda, R. D. (Eds.). *The handbook of historical linguistics* (Blackwell handbooks in linguistics), pp. 624-647. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

21. Supplemental Reading References

These references refer to the required readings other than chapters of Bybee 2015.

- Brinton, L. J., & Traugott, E. C. (2005). Toward an integrated approach to lexicalization and grammaticalization. In Brinton & Traugott *Lexicalization and language change*, pp. 89-109. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Campbell, L. (1997). Typological and areal issues in reconstruction. *Linguistic Reconstruction and Typology*, 45-72.
- Campbell, L. (2010). Language Isolates and Their History, or, What's Weird, Anyway? In Rolle, N., Steffman, J., and Sylak-Glassman, J. (Eds.) *Proceedings of the 36th annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Linguistics Society, 16-31.
- Epps, P. (2015). Historical linguistics and socio-cultural reconstruction. In Bower, C. & Evans, B. (Eds.) *The Routledge handbook of historical linguistics*, pp. 579-567. New York, NY: Routledge Press.
- Harrison, S. P. (2003). On the Limits of the Comparative Method. In Joseph, B. D., & Janda, R. D. (Eds.) *The handbook of historical linguistics* (Blackwell handbooks in linguistics), pp. 213-243. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Mufwene, S. (2008). What do creoles and pidgins tell us about the evolution of language? In Laks, B. *Origin and evolution of languages: Approaches, models, paradigms*, pp. 272-297. London: Equinox.
- Nichols, J. (2003). Diversity and Stability in Language. In Joseph, B. D., & Janda, R. D. (Eds.) *The handbook of historical linguistics* (Blackwell handbooks in linguistics), pp. 283-310. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

22. Additional Recommended Sources

- Bower, C. & Evans, B. (2015). *The Routledge handbook of historical linguistics*. New York, NY: Routledge Press. ([Available as an ebook](#) at UNM Libraries)
- Campbell, L., & Mixco, M. J. (2007). *A glossary of historical linguistics*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press. ([Available as an ebook](#) at UNM Libraries)
- Joseph, B. D., & Janda, R. D. (2003). *The handbook of historical linguistics* (Blackwell handbooks in linguistics). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Trask, R. L. (1996/2007). *Historical Linguistics*. London: Hodder Arnold.

Tentative Course Schedule Ling 446/546
Schedule and readings are subject to change

Week	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments *
1	Tue 01/17	Introduction to Language Change	no readings	
	Thur 01/19	Introduction to Sound change	Bybee 2015 – Ch. 1	
2	Tue 01/24	Phonetic change - Assimilation	Ch. 2, §2.1 - 2.4	
	Thur 01/26	Phonetic change - Reduction	Ch. 2, §2.5 - 2.7	
3	Tue 01/31	Phonetic change (cont.)	Ch. 2, §2.8 - 2.11	CE 1 due
	Thur 02/02	Phonological change	Ch. 3, §3.1 - 3.3 and 3.7	
4	Tue 02/07	Phonological change - Prosody	Ch. 3, §3.5 - 3.6 and 3.8	
	Thur 02/09	Sound change & Grammar	Ch. 4, §4.1 - 4.4	HW 1 due
5	Tue 02/14	Sound change & Grammar (cont.)	Ch. 4, §4.6 - 4.8	
	Thur 02/16	Analogical change	Ch. 5, §5.1 - 5.5	
6	Tue 02/21	Analogical change (cont.)	Ch. 5, §5.6 - 5.11	
	Thur 02/23	Grammaticalization	Ch. 6, §6.1 - 6.5	
7	Tue 02/28	Grammaticalization	Ch. 6, §6.6 - 6.14	
	Thur 03/01	Grammaticalization paths - Tense & Aspect	Ch. 7, §7.1 - 7.3	CE 2 due
8	Tue 03/07	Grammatic. paths - Pronouns & Agreement	Ch. 7, §7.4 - 7.5	
	Thur 03/09	Grammatic. paths - Particles, Cases, etc.	Ch. 7, §7.6 - 7.11	
9	Tue 03/14	<i>Spring break</i>	<i>no classes</i>	
	Thur 03/16			
10	Tue 03/21	Syntactic change - Constructions	Ch. 8, §8.1 - 8.3	HW 2 due
	Thur 03/23	Syntactic change - Word order change	Ch. 8, §8.4 - 8.6	
11	Tue 03/28	Lexical change - Words and meaning	Ch. 9, §9.1 - 9.3	Project topic due
	Thur 03/30	<i>Guest lecture by Joan Bybee</i>		
12	Tue 04/04	Tendencies in semantic change	Ch. 9, §9.4 - 9.7	
	Thur 04/06	Lexicalization & Grammaticalization	Brinton & Traugott 2005	
13	Tue 04/11	Comparison, Reconstruction & Typology	Ch. 10, §10.1 - 10.3	AB due
	Thur 04/13	Comparison, Recons. & Typology (cont.)	Ch. 10, §10.4 - 10.6	
14	Tue 04/18	The use of historical corpora	Curzan 2009	
	Thur 04/20	Language Isolates	Campbell 2010	HW 3 due
15	Tue 04/25	Pidgins & Creoles	Mufwene 2008, Bybee §11.3	
	Thur 04/27	Sources of lg. change - Internal factors	Bybee §11.1	Project draft due
16	Tue 05/02	Areal linguistics, External Factors	Bybee §11.2, Simpson 2015	
	Thur 05/04	Socio-cultural implications	Epps 2015	CE 3 due

*** All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Please turn in a hard copy**

* CE = Critical Essay ; HW = Homework assignment ; AB = Annotated bibliography