
This is the study programme for 2018/2019. It is subject to change.

This module covers the history of the English language from the beginnings to the present day. It combines the study of language history with a specific focus on the written evidence, and on the social context of language change. We look at what texts were like in the past, who produced and read them, and how changes in language and literacy interact with social and technological change. We also address the question of present-day uses of the past: how much can we know about past languages, and how can we apply and communicate the findings of historical research? At the same time, the course provides a solid, practical introduction to earlier stages of English and addresses the major linguistic developments from Old to Present-Day English.

i **FACTS**

Course code: MLI325_1

Credits (ECTS) : 15

Semester tuition start:

Spring

Duration: 1

Exam semester:

SPRING

Language of

instruction: English

Offered by: Faculty of

Arts and Education,

Department of Cultural

Studies and Languages

the different periods

Learning outcome

Knowledge:

The student will gain knowledge of:

- The traditional periods of the history of the English language and the historical, cultural and technological developments that mark them
- The main linguistic characteristics of Old, Middle, Early Modern and Late Modern English
- The major linguistic and sociolinguistic changes in the history of English, with specific reference to the written evidence
- The linguistic characteristics and historical context of specific texts chosen for study
- Text production, major genres and literacy practices in

Skills:

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

- Explain the traditional periodization of English, with reference to social, cultural and technological change, and point out the major characteristics of English in the different periods
- Translate and comment in detail on the language of selected texts representing Old, Middle and Early Modern English. Comment on the language of an unseen text in an informed way, placing it in the correct historical period
- Describe major linguistic and sociolinguistic changes in the history of English and refer to well-known theories and controversies about them
- Consider critically the written evidence for our knowledge of the history of English
- Pursue a research topic dealing with historical texts

General competence:

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

- Read historical English texts with better fluency and understanding
- Understand better the complexities of present-day English language
- Introduce a historical awareness into her/his own work (e.g. English teaching)

Contents

The module provides an outline of the historical development of written English from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present day, with a particular focus on issues such as standardization and the use of written texts as linguistic evidence. The module relates the history of written English to the history of literacy and text production in the English-speaking world.

Required prerequisite knowledge

Pre-required knowledge equivalent to admission for the master in literacy program.

Exam

Written home assignment and written exam

	Weight	Duration	Mark	Supporting materials
Written home assignment	1/3		A - F	All.
Written exam	2/3	4 hours	A - F	

Written assignment: 2500 words (+/- 500), not including reference list.

In the assessment, English language and academic writing skills will be taken into consideration in addition to the course content.

Coursework requirements

- Seminars, 75% attendance
- Two short written assignments (in addition to the graded assignment)

Attendance at seminars is obligatory. Students who are absent from more than 25% of the seminar meetings will not be allowed to take part in the exam. The student has to be present for at least 2/3 of the duration of the individual seminar meeting for attendance to be recorded.

The students are to submit three written assignments during the course, at the dates specified at the start of the semester for each submission. The first two are not graded, but students will receive feedback.

Subject teacher(s)

Course coordinator

Oliver Martin Traxel

Course teacher

Kjetil Vikhamar Thengs, Delia Schipor

Programme coordinator

Signe Ekenberg

Method of work

Lectures and seminars

Overlapping courses

Course	Reduction (credits)
English Writing from Runes to SMS (MLI310_1)	5
Literacy from a Production Perspective (MLI100_1)	5
English Writing: Function, Form and Change (MLI315_1)	5

Course	Reduction (credits)
History of written English (MLI350_1)	10

Open to

Literacy Studies - full-time, Literacy Studies - part-time

Course assessment

Quality control by students is a central element of the UiS plan to improve teaching. In the Department of Cultural Studies and Languages this system includes student evaluation of courses.

Literature

Books:

van Gelderen, Elly. 2014. *A History of the English Language*, rev. ed. Amsterdam: John Benjamins (294 pages)

Mugglestone, Lynda (ed.) 2012. *The Oxford History of English*, rev. edn. Chapters 1-5. Oxford: Oxford University Press (145 pages)

Spearing, A.C. 2016 (ed.) *The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*, rev. edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (110 pages)

Compendium:

Clanchy, Michael. 2013. *From memory to written record*. 3rd edn. Chapters 6-8 (pp. 199-294). Oxford: Blackwell.

Graddol, David. 1996. "English manuscripts: the development of a visual identity". In David Graddol, Dick Leith and Joan Swann (eds), *English: history, diversity and change*. London: Routledge. 41-94.

Hope, Jonathan. 2012. "Shakespeare and the English Language" in P. Sargeant and J. Swann (eds) *English in the World: History, Diversity, Change*, pp. 83-92. London: Routledge/The Open University.

Jucker, Andreas H. and Irma Taavitsainen. 2013. *English Historical Pragmatics*. Chapter 5 ("For I thou thee, thou Traitor: terms of address"). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 73-91

Laqueur, Thomas. 1976. "The cultural origins of popular literacy in England 1500-1850", *Oxford Review of Education* 2, 255-275.

Nevalainen, Terttu. 2006. *An Introduction to Early Modern English*. Chapters 4,5 ("Old words and loan words", "Word-formation and semantic change"). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 45-72.

Smith, Jeremy J. 2005. *Essentials of Early English*. London: Routledge. Selected texts.

Stenroos, Merja and Jeremy J. Smith. 2016. "Changing functions: English spelling before 1600" in Vivian Cook and Des Ryan (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of the English Writing System*, pp. 125-142. London: Routledge.

Stenroos, Merja. 2017. "Perspectives on geographical variation" in Laurel Brinton (ed.), *English Historical Linguistics: Approaches and Perspectives*, pp. 303-331. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Total number of pages: 831

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Last updated: 10.10.2018