
This is the study programme for 2017/2018. It is subject to change.

The module covers the history of English from the point of view of the written language, beginning with the earliest records and ending with the present day. We look at what texts looked like in the past and what they look like today. We read about who was literate in the Middle Ages, and we look at the development of the writing system itself, including the standardisation of spelling.

FACTS

Course code: MLI315_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

Learning outcome

Knowledge:

The students will gain knowledge of:

- The changing roles of writing within society, with a focus on the English-speaking world
- The uses and characteristics of spoken and written language
- The interaction of the medium, form and function of written texts
- The historical development of English writing
- Issues of identity, correctness and standardisation

Skills:

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

- Identify the typical functions and characteristics of spoken and written genres
- Relate changes in writing habits and conventions to social and technological change and to education
- Explain and describe the use of different kinds of signs and writing conventions, as well as choices of medium, in contemporary and historical English texts
- Identify some of the major changes that have taken place in the English written language
- Discuss issues of correctness and standardisation in an informed way, and relate them to different sociolinguistic situations

General competence:

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

- Understand the general characteristics and functions of writing
- Understand the changing roles of writing within society

- Place current and historical English texts in a general linguistic and sociohistorical context
- Apply this understanding to tasks dealing with written language, including teaching

Contents

The module addresses the changing forms and functions of English writing, both at the present time and through history. It introduces different ways of analysing and understanding writing, and considers the development of English writing in relation to social, educational, and technological change.

Required prerequisite knowledge

None.

Exam

	Weight	Duration	Mark	Supporting materials
Assignment	1/1		A - F	All.

Written paper: 5000 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

Obligatoriske krav

- Seminars, 75 % attendance.
- Minimum of one draft of the paper, of at least 3000 words, submitted by a given date
- Minimum of two supervision meetings

Attendance at seminars is obligatory. Students who are absent from more than 25 % of the seminar meetings will not be allowed to sit 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.

Subject teacher(s)

Course coordinator

Merja Riitta Stenroos

Programme coordinator

Oddvar Norland, Signe Ekenberg

Method of work

Lectures and seminars; individual work on paper, with supervision meetings

Overlapping courses

Course	Reduction (credits)
English Writing from Runes to SMS (MLI310_1)	10
Literacy from a Production Perspective (MLI100_1)	15

Open to

Literacy Studies - full-time and 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:

Barton, David. 2007. *Literacy: An introduction to the ecology of written language*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell. Chapters 1-8 (pp. 1-130).

Cook, Vivian. 2004. *The English writing system*. Excluding pp. 68-88 and 121-148. London: Arnold.

Horobin, Simon. 2013. *Does spelling matter?* Oxford University Press.

Kern, Richard. 2015. *Language, literacy and technology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Selected chapters.

Compendium:

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

Coulmas, Florian. 1989. *The writing systems of the world*. 'What writing is all about', pp. 3-17. 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.

Hughes, Rebecca. 1996. *English in Speech and Writing*. "Properties of speech and writing", pp. 1-36. London: Routledge.

Squires, Lauren. 2016. "Computer-mediated communication and the English writing system" in Vivian Cook and Des Ryan (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of the English Writing System*, pp. 471-486. London: Routledge.

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.

Highly recommended for reference:

Christopher Upward and George Davidson. 2011. *The History of English Spelling*. Oxford: Willy-Blackwell.

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