



University of Nicosia, Cyprus

Course Code LALI-491	Course Title Historical Linguistics	ECTS Credits 6
Department Languages and Literature	Semester Spring	Prerequisites LALI-240
Type of Course Required (Linguistics and EFL concentration)	Field Linguistics	Language of Instruction English
Level of Course 1 st Cycle	Year of Study 4 th	Lecturer(s) Dr Andry Sophocleous
Mode of Delivery Dist. Learning	Work Placement N/A	Co-requisites None

Objectives of the Course:

Linguists are united by their conviction that languages change. However, how and why language change arises? This course attempts to explain why change occurs, how it can be investigated and explained, and what the effects of change are in terms of phonology, grammar and lexicon. Specifically, we consider issues such as language birth and death, pidgins and creoles and the process of language standardisation, why language change takes place and how sounds and syntactic changes spread through a community. Examples of language change will be considered from familiar European languages but also from a variety of non-European languages to consider the depth and range of the concepts central to language variation and change.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a knowledge of how languages begin and end
2. Study changes in progress
3. Examine the process of pidginisation and creolisation
4. Examine the key concepts in the study of language change
5. Show a detailed familiarity with the major events in the history of English
6. Assess issues related to language change (social, psychological and political)
7. Examine how sound and syntactic changes spread through a language
8. Consider how age and social variation between speakers lead to the spread of change

Course Contents:

The course will be divided into three large sections which will explain the change of language:

1. Beginnings of languages: Language contact, language birth (pidginisation, creolisation, standardisation)
2. Language Death: reasons leading to language death
3. Transition periods: study changes in process such as lexical, semantic, phonological, morphological and syntactic changes. Investigate how these changes spread.
4. Causation: why change takes place
5. Case studies of language contact and change:
Asia Minor Greek: heavy borrowing from Turkish
English: Brief sociolinguistic history, Norse influence, the beginnings of London Standard English
Afrikaans: a historical descendant of Dutch

Teaching Methods:

Lectures and class discussions

Assessment Methods:

Two homework assignments, final exam, class participation

Required Textbook

Author	Title	Publisher	Year	ISBN
McColl Millar, Robert	<i>Trask's Historical Linguistics (2nd edition)</i>	Hodder Arnold	2007	978-0-340-92765-6

Recommended Textbooks/Reading:

Authors	Title	Publisher	Year	ISBN
Campbell, Lyle	<i>Historical linguistics: An introduction (2nd edition).</i>	The MIT Press	2004	978-0-262-53267-9
Aitchison Jean	<i>Language Change: Progress or Decay?</i>	Cambridge University Press	2000	978-0-521-79535-7
Grey Thomason, Sarah and Kaufman,	<i>Language Contact, Creolisation, and Genetic Linguistics</i>	University of California Press	1992	0-520-07893-4

Terrence				
Thomason, Sarah G.	<i>Language Contact</i>	Georgetown University Press	2001	0-87840-854- 1