

Veranstalter	Prof. Dr. Thomas Berg
Thema	The History of English [AA-V1a/b, ENG-10, ENG-4a, AA-W, AA-M2, ASW M2/M14, ENGAGE-M2] - Kernzeit
Art der Veranstaltung	Vorlesung
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-504
Zeit	2st. Mi 10-12
Raum	Phil G
Beginn	02.04.2014

Course description:

This lecture course will present a survey of the historical development of the English language from its “birth” in the year 449 to the present day. It has a bipartite microstructure in that the nonlinguistic history is given almost as much attention as the linguistic history. This is for the obvious, though not trivial, reason that the linguistic changes cannot be properly understood unless they are placed within the wider destiny of the linguistic community. After a brief look at the original inhabitants of England in the Stone Age and an account of the Roman settlements, a thorough analysis of the major historical events, in particular those that had a major impact on the language, will be given. This provides a background onto which the linguistic developments will be projected. The three major stages of the language

- Old English,
- Middle English and
- Early Modern English

will be examined in some detail both from a synchronic and a diachronic point of view. As the English language has undergone changes on an impressively large scale, it is ideally suited to providing insights into the inner dynamics of language, the relationship between synchronic variation and diachronic change as well as the interaction between language and society. A further aim that this course pursues is perhaps the most important of all. A profound understanding of English as it is spoken today is only possible if it is known how the language came to be that way. This is what makes the study of the history of the language an integral and essential part of the study of Modern English. The course will end on an outlook on possible changes that the English language is likely to undergo in the future.

Recommended Reading

- Baugh, Albert C. & Thomas Cable: *A history of the English language*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- McCrum, Robert, Robert MacNeil & William Cran: *The story of English*. London: Faber and Faber, 1986.
- McMahon, April: *Understanding language change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.