

Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures
Fall 2016

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**SSA 4930 Section 14BG/LIT 4930 Section 05G2/LIN 4930 Section 06AB/AFA 4931 Section
055G**

Black Englishes

Description

Unlike Danish which is the language spoken by the Danes or Japanese which is the language the Japanese, English is not just a language of the English, even if that is where it originates. Today, the language has spread across the globe and has been appropriated by regions such that we can talk of Australian English, Nigerian English, etc. While most of the varieties of English can be understood for the most part by every English speaker, there are restructured varieties such as Sranan spoken in Surinam that are more difficult to follow. In fact, these have developed into different languages.

Objectives

The aim of this course is to present students with varieties of Englishes spoken by Blacks in Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States. Students will learn about the structure of these varieties as well as the social histories which underpin them. They will be made to appreciate difficulties in using terms like dialect versus language to describe these varieties. Further, they will watch movies and interact with native speakers of these varieties with a view to identifying features that set them apart. Students will also be introduced to such concepts like “pidgins” and “creoles”. Students will also learn to distinguish between “broken English” and Pidgin or Creole English.

Course Material

There is a course pack that can be obtained at **Book iT!, 1250 West University Ave. Unit 2, Gainesville, FL 32601**

Requirements

Final grading is based on a mini dialect-project which will be conducted during the labor day weekend and presented in week 3. Students will also watch movies or sketch comedies from three countries in Africa and interact with speakers from these places. They will then be expected to identify 5 distinct features in the language used in the film/sketch and 10 in the speech of each of the speakers. Students are further required (in groups to be determined) to prepare and give a 15-minute presentation. Fellow students will grade each presentation (5 points) and will, in turn, receive 5 points for appropriately grading ALL presentations (see below for more information on group project). There is also a final exam. The breakdown is as follows:

Dialect project	10%
Identifying features of African varieties of English	30
Professor grading of group project	15
Student grading of group project presentation	5
Points for grading classroom presentation	5%
Final exams	35%

Week 1. Aug 22- 26 (Introduction)

Mon. ‘The Beginnings.’ By Robert D. King. In *The handbook of world Englishes*

Wed. ‘The Spread of English.’ In *World Englishes*, Pp 6 – 9

(<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/mar/11/pronunciation-errors-english-language?CMP=EMCNEWEML6619I2>)

Fri. ‘The reality of dialects.’ In *Dialects and American English*. Pp 1-20

Week 2. Aug 29 - Sept 2 (Variation & Non-native Englishes)

Mon. Variation in English. In *World Englishes* Pp 10-41

Wed. ‘Language forms.’ In *English in Africa, an introduction* by Josef Schmied. Pp 46-98

Fri. Non-native Englishes on Trial'. By Ayo Bamgbose. In *English in Ghana*. Pp 9-22

Week 3. Sept 5 – 9. (Dialect Project)

Mon. Labor Day

Wed. Report on Dialect Project

Fri. Report on Dialect Project

Week 4. Sept 12 – 16 (English in Ghana)

Mon. English in Ghana: Growth, Tensions, and Trends. By Gordon Adika. In *IJLTIC 2012 (1)*, 151-166 (<http://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/latic/article/view/2723/2497>)

Wed. Accra Runs (A “Nollywood Movie” set in Ghana with Ghanaian Actors)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAfR5jrUjd0>)

Fri. Conversation with a Ghanaian

Week 5. Sept 19 – 23 (English in Nigeria)

Mon. ‘English in the Nigerian Environment,’ by Ayo Bamgbose in *New Englishes: A West African Perspective* Pp 9 – 26

Wed. Nigerian Movie

Fri. Conversation with a Nigerian

Week 6. Sept 26 – 30 (English in Africa)

Mon. ‘East African Englishes’ by Josef Schmieid. In *The handbook of world Englishes*. Pp 188-202 (available at e-learning site)

Wed. Sketch Comedy & Conversation with an East African

Fri. I am away for a conference

Week 7. Oct 3 – 7 (Pidgins and Creoles)

Mon. ‘Pidgins and creoles: Introduction.’ In *Modern Englishes*. pp 1-34

Wed. ‘The structure of Ghanaian Pidgin English.’ In *Ghanaian Pidgin English*, by J. Amoako Pp37 - 76

Fri. Sweet Mother (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkp3WnUu_WQ)

Week 8. Oct 10 – 14 (Caribbean English)

Mon. Re-examining Caribbean English Creole Continua. By Donald Winford. In *World Englishes*, Vol 16 (2), pp 233-279

Wed. ‘Jamaican grammar’. In *Jamaican talk* by Frederic G. Cassidy Pp 49 - 73

Fri. **Homecoming**

Week 9. Oct 17 – 21 (Jamaican movie & Suriname)

Mon. Movie: Love knows

Wed. ‘The context of creole formation in Surinam.’ In *Creole formation as language contact*. Pp 27-35

Fri. African influence on Sranan (class notes)

Week 10. Oct 24 – 28 (The African-Caribbean-American connection)

Mon. ‘Gullah and the Caribbean connection,’ by Frederic G. Cassidy. In *The crucible of Carolina: essays in the development of Gullah language and culture*. Pp 16-22

Wed. Equivocal structures in some Gullah complex sentences. By Salikoko Mufwene. (<http://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/2819/CRLC00249.pdf?sequence=1>)

Fri. Movie: Family across the sea. Columbia, SC: South Carolina ETV, c1990; San Francisco, CA: California Newsreel [distributor]

Week 11. Oct 31 - Nov 4 (African-American English)

Mon. ‘African American English’ by Lisa Green. In *Language in the USA*. Pp 76-91

Wed. ‘Lexicons and meaning’, by Lisa Green. In *African American English* pp12-3

Fri. Shades and Fros (Video Interview)

Week 12. Nov 7 – 11 (Ebonics)

Mon. The original Oakland Resolution on Ebonics
(<https://linguistlist.org/topics/ebonics/ebonics-res1.html>)

The Ebonics controversy. By Robert L. Williams. In *Journal of Black Psychology*, 1997

Wed. What No Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and School. By Shirley Brice

Heath. In *Language in Society*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Apr., 1982), pp. 49-76 (available at e-learning site)

Fri. Veteran's Day

Week 13. Nov 14 – 18 (African-American English)

Mon. 'Black American English.' By Arthur Spears. In *Anthropology for the nineties*. Pp 96-113

Wed. Phonetic Transcription of African American Vernacular English. By Karen Pollock. In *Communication Disorders Quarterly* 23:1, 47-53

Fri. 'The relationship between African American and White Vernaculars in the American South.' By Guy Bailey. In *Sociocultural and historical contexts of African American English*. Pp 53-92

Week 14. Nov 21 – 25

Mon. Group Project

Wed. Thanksgiving

Fri. Thanksgiving

Week 15. Nov 28 - Dec 2 (Project Report)

Mon. Group presentations

Wed. Group presentations

Fri. Group presentations

Week 16. Dec 5 – 7 (Project Report)

Mon. Group presentations

Wed. Review

Wednesday December 14 (10:00 – 12:00)

FINAL EXAMS

Final Exams (35 pts)

There will be ONLY ONE written examination on **Wednesday December 14, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm**. This will involve questions requiring short answers and will cover almost all the topics covered in class.

Dialect project (10 points)

Students are expected to ask ONE person who is NOT familiar with the technical definition of dialect the following questions:

- 1. What is a dialect?
- 2. Name 3 dialects in the United States and their distinctive properties.

Note that students are not expected to ask leading questions. They should limit the questions to the two given above and determine whether the responses fall into any of the myths we discuss in class. The interviews should be recorded and played in class (Each student has 3 minutes to do the presentation). The distribution of the points is as follows

Interview (as evidenced by recording)	3
Sticking to the 3 minute time allotted	2
Determining correctly whether a response falls into the category of a myth	5

Identifying features of African varieties of English (30 pts)

Students will also watch movies or sketch comedies from three countries in Africa and interact with speakers from these places. They will then be expected to identify 5 distinct features in the language used in the film/sketch and 10 in the speech of each of the speakers. They will be awarded up to 10 points for identifying the appropriate features in each of the languages.

Professor Grade for Group Project (15 points)

Students will work on a 15 minute presentation which they will present in class. The presentation will be on one Black English variety which they themselves will choose and it should contain material that has not been presented by your professor. The subject matter should touch on at least one of the following:

- Is the variety a creole and, if so, what makes it a creole?

- Is the variety a pidgin and, if so, what makes it pidgin?
- Is the variety a dialect of Standard English or a different language?
- Would you characterize the variety as broken English and why?

Each presentation should reference THREE PUBLICATIONS that are not in the syllabus. These should be provided at the end of the presentation (be it a Word document or Powerpoint presentation). The presentation should be submitted at the course site in Canvas using Turnitin so that it is checked for plagiarism.

The professor will grade the presentations for content (10), clarity (3), and references cited in the work (2).

Student Grade for Group Project (15 points)

Students are expected to send an email to the professor after each presentation in which they award **3 points** for content and **2 points** for clarity (this excludes students' own presentation).

Student Evaluation of project presentation (5 pts)

Students receive a TOTAL of 5 points for evaluating ALL the project presentations as explained above. They need to give proper explanations for why they award the points. Simply stating that a presentation is clear will not suffice for a point. Points for each presentation will depend on the number of group presentations.

Grading Scale

93-100 (A); 90-92 (A-); 87-89 (B+); 83-86 B; 80-82 (B-); 77-79 (C+); 73-76 (C); 70-72 (C-); 67-69 (D+); 63-66 (D); 60-62 (D-); 59 or below (E)

A grade of Incomplete (I) will not be issued under any circumstance.

Grading Policy

Information on current UF grading policy can be found

at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Students with disabilities

The University of Florida provides high-quality services to students with disabilities, and you are encouraged to take advantage of them. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should 1) Register with and provide documentation to Disability Resources (352-392-8565), and 2) Bring a letter to the instructor from Disability Resources indicating that you need academic accommodations. Please do this as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of class.

Honor/Conduct Code

An academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage. As a University of Florida student, one is expected to neither commit nor assist another in committing an academic honesty violation. Additionally, it is the student's duty to report observed academic honesty violations. Violations of the Honor Code and academic dishonesty will be sanctioned.