

ENGL 355-01 Language Variety in the South

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Class Room: EHFA 257
Class Time: MWF 2p-2:50p
Office Hours: MW 11a-12p and R 10a-11a

Tell about the South. What's it like there. What do they do there. Why do they live there. Why do they live at all. —William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*

The South is the most distinctive speech region of the United States.
—Michael Montgomery (1989) *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*

There's a southern accent, where I come from / The young uns call it country / The Yankees call it dumb / I got my own way of talkin / But everything gets done, with a southern accent / Where I come from. —Tom Petty (1985) *Southern Accents*

Course Description

In this course, we examine the fundamental linguistic characteristics of the language(s) spoken in the American South. We will explore the characteristics of Southern English from a variety of levels of abstraction, including sounds, words, grammatical features, sentence structure, and discourse style. We will study these characteristics from a scientific perspective being guided by contemporary Sociolinguistic theory. We will seek answers to questions regarding the fundamental features of Southern English as well as its origins, its shared features and socio-cultural history with other varieties (e.g., African American English and Cajun English), and attitudes towards and evaluations of Southern English.

Required Materials

Stephen Nagle and Sara Sanders. 2003. *English in the Southern United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Handouts given online in PDF.

Learning Objectives

- To understand the historical foundations of Southern English
- To identify phonological and morphosyntactic features of Southern English
- To understand the social and cultural issues associated with the shared history and features of Southern English with African American English
- To identify aspects of structural variation in linguistic data
- To identify elements of social variation in linguistic data
- To collect and analyze linguistic data using sociolinguistic methodology, theory, and principles
- To professionally present findings on linguistic variation in both oral and written format

Course Requirements and Evaluation

In this course you will show your familiarity and synthesis of topics and theories presented in the readings through reading responses, homework problems, quizzes, and a midterm examination. Your ability to apply course concepts to real world data will be assessed through individual and group presentations and a major group research project involving oral and written presentation.

Course Grade Determination

• Reading quizzes	10%
• Exams	40%
• Research	10%
• Final Project	40%
• TOTAL	<u>100%</u>

Quizzes

There will be several reading quizzes throughout the semester. These are meant to assess the level of attention you have given to the readings for the class period.

Exams

There will be 3 exams. The exams will assess your level of retention of the material we have read and the concepts and theories we have discussed in class up to that point in the semester. The exams may involve multiple choice, short answer, as well as essay questions.

Research and Final Project

There will be a major research project involving both primary and secondary research. This project will ask you to participate as a member of a research team in which you investigate actual sociolinguistic variation in Southern American English. This multifaceted project will first involve data collection, data entry, and data coding, which will be graded for completion. Additionally, different parts of the development of the final paper (proposal, literature review, data analysis) will be assessed. You will then give a brief presentation to the class describing the results of your study. Finally, you will write a research paper (~15 pages) cataloging the literature review, methods, and results of your study.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance

To do well in this class, it is essential that you be in class each meeting. If you are unable to attend a class for any reason, you are responsible for contacting me to receive any materials distributed on that day and to turn in any assignments. You will be held responsible for anything missed during an absence.

Late Work

All work must be turned in on time on the date it is due. Late work will not be accepted. (Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis)

Academic Integrity

Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. See the university's policy on academic integrity.

Classroom Etiquette

All cell phones must be put away during class. It is disrespectful to the professor and your fellow students to be giving your attention to anything other than the class discussion taking place.

You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner regarding your interaction with the professor as well as with your fellow classmates. Lively discussion and multiple viewpoints are encouraged in this class; however, you are always expected to respond in a professional manner towards the ideas and opinions of your classmates.

This schedule is tentative and subject to change as necessary

week	date	description	reading & project
1	21-Aug	Eclipseapocalypse	
	23-Aug	Introductions	
	25-Aug	Historical origins of SAE	Algeo (ESUS 6-16)
2	28-Aug	Connections to British varieties	Schneider (ESUS 17-35)
	30-Aug	SAE and AAE influences	Mufwene (ESUS 64-81)
	1-Sep	Divergence of SAE and AAE	Cukor-Avila (ESUS 82-105)
3	4-Sep	Labor Day	
	6-Sep	AAE origins of SAE features	Feagin 1997 (HO)
	8-Sep	out for hurricane	
4	11-Sep	out for hurricane	
	13-Sep	Review	
	15-Sep	Exam 1	
5	18-Sep	Overview of SAE features	Charity Hudley and Mallinson 2011 (HO)
	20-Sep	SAE features continued	
	22-Sep	Vowel Shifts	Feagin (ESUS 126-140)
6	25-Sep	More Southern Shift	
	27-Sep	Plan study of Southern phonology	
	29-Sep	Morpho-syntactic Features	Bernstein (ESUS 106-118)
7	2-Oct	More morpho-syntax	Feagin 1976 (HO)
	4-Oct	More morpho-syntax	Montgomery 1996 (HO)
	6-Oct	Morpho-syntax discussion	
8	9-Oct	Plan study of Southern morpho-syntax	
	11-Oct	SAE Discourse Features	Davies 1997 (HO)
	13-Oct	Student Holiday	
9	16-Oct	Review	Conduct study
	18-Oct	Exam 2	
	20-Oct	Language Attitudes Perceptual Dialectology	Preston 1997 (HO); Data collection due
10	23-Oct	Discuss how to code data	
	25-Oct	Language Attitudes Surveys	Hasty 2008 (HO)
	27-Oct	Evolution of SAE	Tillery and Bailey (ESUS 159-172)
11	30-Oct	SAE Lexical variation	Johnson 1997 (HO)
	1-Nov	Is SAE dying out?	Dodsworth 2013 (HO); Coding due
	3-Nov	Out for a conference	
12	6-Nov	Review	

	8-Nov	Exam 3	
	10-Nov	How to do literature review	Research topic due
13	13-Nov	Literature review	
	15-Nov	Literature review	
	17-Nov	How to do Data Analysis	Literature Review Due
	20-Nov	Thanksgiving	
	22-Nov	Thanksgiving	
	24-Nov	Thanksgiving	
14	27-Nov	Data Analysis	
	29-Nov	analysis of data conferences	
	1-Dec	analysis of data conferences	
15	4-Dec	analysis of data conferences	
	6-Dec	research presentations	
Final	13-Dec	1:30pm research presentations	