

LING S-120. Introduction to Historical Linguistics (CRN: 31367)

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The first part of this course will address language change at all levels of grammar--phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and lexical. Such topics as the role of child language acquisition in language change, what changes are and are not possible in natural language, and what constitutes "language change" in the first place will be considered, along with an evaluation of theories trying to account for the source of change. The second part of the course will treat the subject of language relatedness: the scientific establishment of language families and the comparative method, the reconstruction of ancestral languages, etymology, and philology, with an overview of Indo-European historical linguistics and the Indo-European roots of English. Last but not least, an exploration of language variation, pidgins, and creoles will round things off. No prior experience with linguistics or Indo-European is required or assumed.