

Historical Linguistics
Syllabus

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 1-1:50
CSB 004

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Office hours: Tuesday 2-3 and Wednesday 10-11
(and by appointment)

Text: Campbell, Lyle (2004) *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (2nd Edition), The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

This course is an introduction to Historical Linguistics; we will be concerned with how languages change and how this change leads to families of related languages. Particular emphasis will be on techniques of historical reconstructions.

The coursework will consist of weekly homework assignments, a take-home midterm, and a take-home final. Please see the grading policy (other side of this sheet), but note it is **very important** to do all the homework in a timely fashion. There is a textbook, but the course will be centered around class discussions and problems sets. Hence, regular attendance is crucial.

The following is a rough outline of the topics:

- Types of language change
- Phonetic versus phonemic change
- The Comparative Method
- Internal Reconstruction
- Languages families - the Tree Model versus the Wave Model
- Putative language families of the World
- Lumping versus Splitting and other controversies
- Aspects of Indo-European

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Grading Policy

There will be seven or eight homework assignments and two exams. The course grade will be determined as follows:

- (1) Both exams must be taken to pass the course.
- (2) The two exams will be averaged. This average will be adjusted based on the homework scores.

Homework

It is very important to do all the homework in a professional manner. Each assignment should be written up as a short paper; that is, it will almost always be necessary to write prose. Be sure to use complete sentences, and illustrate your points with examples. Do your best to explain your analyses as clearly as possible.

I encourage you to work in groups. However, it is essential that the results are written up independently. *Papers that are not done independently are very obvious, and, according to Departmental and University policy, will be reported to the Dean.* If you write sufficient prose, the difference between papers of those who work together should be substantial. You must also list the names of the people you work with on each assignment.

Homeworks will be graded with +, ✓+, ✓, ✓-, and - :

+ Nearly perfect analysis, good, professional presentation.	Add 2% to final score
✓+ Good analysis and good presentation; perhaps a few errors, and/or minor problems in presentation.	Add 1% to final score
✓ Good effort; perhaps some more severe problems with the analysis, and/or more severe problems in presentation.	No effect on final score
✓- Marginal; incorrect analysis and/or minimal presentation.	Subtract 1%
- Minimal effort or incomplete	Subtract 2%

Late homework will be accepted up to a week after the due date, but will not receive a grade higher than ✓-.

As can be seen, the homework can have a significant effect on the final grade. For example, if someone received 8 +s, the final score would be increased by 16% (up to 100%). Thus, even a 74% (C) average on the exams would result in a course grade of A-. Conversely, someone who did no homework would not receive better than a B for the course, even if their exams averaged 100%. In practice, of course, those who do the homework consistently tend to do better on the exams.