

Linguistics 2100, Introduction to Language Change: syllabus, spring 2023.

- 1.a. Fundamental problems of historical linguistics and how we get around them.
- 1.b. A fortunate surprise: sound change is overwhelmingly regular!
- 2.a. Basic articulatory phonetics: segmental sounds of human languages.
- 2.b. Basic articulatory phonetics: stress, pitch, tone, intonation.
- 3.a. The phonemic principle.
Homework: problems in phonemicization.
- 3.b. Typical phonemic systems of natural human languages.
Homework: problems in phonemicization.
- 4.a. The regularity of sound change in phonemic terms: splits and mergers.
Homework: problems in analyzing sound changes.
- 4.b. Exploiting the regularity of sound change: comparative reconstruction.
Homework: problem in comparative reconstruction.
- 5.a. Complications encountered in comparative reconstruction.
Homework: problem in comparative reconstruction.
- 5.b. The cycle of language replication and the source of linguistic changes.
Homework: problem in comparative reconstruction.
- 6.a. How a change moves through a speech community.
- 6.b. Borrowing of changes across dialect boundaries.
- 7.a. Contact phenomena: borrowing vs. interference.
- 7.b. English and Norse in medieval England.
- 8.a. Phonetic motivations for sound changes.
- 8.b. Non-phonetic motivations for sound changes.
- 9.a. Sound change and phonology: the addition of rules to the phonology.
- 9.b. Sound change and phonology: covert phonemes and their historical consequences.
- 10.a. The evolution of phonological rules.
- 10.b. The evolution of phonological rules, continued.
- 11.a. Morphological change.
- 11.b. Morphological change, continued.
- 12.a. Principles of subgrouping.

- 12.b. Computational approaches to subgrouping.
- 13.a. Proof of linguistic relationships: the problem.
- 13.b. Proof of linguistic relationships: discrete probability theory.
- 14.a. Archaeology, linguistics, and DNA analysis: the Indo-European “homeland” question.
- 14.b. The uniformitarian principle and “deep” prehistory: the linguistic diversity of aboriginal Europe.