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 the best 10 out of 12 quizzes that will be taken from selected chapters. These quizzes will always precede discussion of the chapters in class. **NOTE: there will be no make-ups for the quizzes** (see below for more information on quizzes). Students will also undertake a mini dialect-project based on the chapter ‘The reality of dialects.’ This will be conducted after week 1 and presented in week 2. Students will also interact with African English speakers from African 3 countries (Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania). They will be expected to identify distinct features in the speech of the speakers. Students are further required (in groups of 3) to prepare and give a 15-minute presentation. Fellow students will grade each presentation (10 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:

- Reading quizzes (5-question quizzes on each topic’s reading material) 20%
- Dialect project 5%
- Identifying features of African varieties of English 15
- Professor grading of group project 10
- Student grading of group project presentation 10
- Points for grading classroom presentation 5%
- Final exams 35%

Week 1. Aug 25-29 (Introduction)
**Mon.** ‘The Beginnings,’ by Robert D. King. In *The handbook of world Englishes*
**Fri.** Variation in English. In *World Englishes* Pp 10-41

Week 2. Sept 1–5 (Dialect project)
**Mon.** Labor Day
**Week 3. Sept 8 – 12. (English in Africa)**

**Mon.** ‘Language forms.’ In *English in Africa, an introduction* by Josef Schmied. Pp 46-98 (Quiz 2)


**Fri.** ‘On please in English in Ghana’, by Mary Keleve. In *New directions in Ghanaian linguistics.* Pp 321-337 (Quiz 3)

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**Week 4. Sept 15 – 19 (English in Africa)**

**Mon.** Ghanaian film and conversation with a Ghanaian


**Fri.** Nigerian film and conversation with a Nigerian

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**Week 5. Sept 22 – 26 (English in Africa)**

**Mon.** ‘East African Englishes’ by Josef Schmied. In *The handbook of world Englishes.* Pp 188-202 (available at e-learning site) (Quiz 5)

**Wed.** East African movie

**Fri.** Conversation with a Tanzanian

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**Mon.** ‘Pidgins and creoles: Introduction.’ In *Modern Englishes.* pp 1-34 (Quiz 6)

**Wed.** ‘The structure of NP.’ In *Nigerian Pidgin* by Ben Elugbe Pp 75-112

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

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**Week 7. Oct 6 – 10 (Carribean English)**

**Mon.** ‘Barbadian lects: Beyond Meso,’ by Gerard Van Herk. In *Contact Englishes of the*
Eastern Caribbean, edited by Aceto and Williams Pp 241 – 264 (Quiz 7)

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

**Fri.** **Movie:** Love knows

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**Week 8. Oct 13 – 17 (Sranan)**

**Mon.** ‘The context of creole formation in Surinam.’ In *Creole formation as language contact.* Pp 27-35 (Quiz 8)


**Fri.** Homecoming

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**Mon.** African influence on Sranan (class notes)


**Fri.** ‘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 (Quiz 9)

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


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

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**Week 11. Nov 3 – 7 (Ebonics)**

**Mon.** The original Oakland Resolution on Ebonics

(https://linguistlist.org/topics/ebonics/ebonics-res1.html)


**Wed.** Ebonics: hearing before a subcommittee of the committee on appropriations. United States Senate. Pages 1-9 and 52-53 (available at e-learning site)


Week 12. Nov 10 – 14 (African-American English)


Week 13. Nov 17 – 21 (Project work)

Mon. Group project

Wed. Group project

Fri. Group project


Mon. Group project

Wed. Thanksgiving

Fri. Thanksgiving

Week 15. Dec 1 – 5 (Project Report)

Mon. Group presentations

Wed. Group presentations

Fri. Group presentations
Week 16, Dec 8 – 10 (Project Report)

Mon.  Group presentations

Wed.  Review

Thursday December 18 (7:30 – 9:30)

FINAL EXAMS

Reading Quizzes (20 points)
There will be 5-question quizzes on selected chapters (I have placed “quiz” by these chapters). The quizzes will be held during the first 10 minutes in class. Most of the quizzes, but not all, will be multiple-choice questions. After each quiz we shall discuss the questions. THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES!

Final Exams (35 pts)
There will be ONLY ONE written examination on Thursday December 18, 7:30 am – 9:30 am. This will involve questions requiring short answers. However, unlike the quizzes, there will be no multiple-choice questions. NOTE: I will not be in a position to arrange special exams for anyone who needs to leave sooner for Christmas vacation.

Dialect project (5 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). The distribution of the points is as follows
Interview (as evidenced by recording) 2
Sticking to the 3 minute time allotted 1
Determining correctly whether a response falls into the category of a myth 2

**Group Project (20 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 which should be provided at the end. The presentation should be sent to me before or on the day of presentation. Note that they will be checked for plagiarism so students should strive to do original work.

Students are expected to send an email to the professor after each presentation in which they award 6 points for content and 4 points for clarity (this excludes students’ own presentation). The professor will award the remaining points for content (5), clarity (3), and references cited in the work (2).

**Identifying features of African varieties of English (15 pts)**

Students will interact with three speakers of three African varieties of English. They will be awarded 5 points for identifying 5 features of African English in each of the varieties.

**Student Evaluation of project presentation (5 pts)**

Students receive 5 points for evaluating project presentations and awarding 10 points for each presentation as explained above. They need to give proper explanations for why they award the 10 points. Simply stating that a presentation is clear will not suffice for a point.


**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](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.