

**HUMANITIES SEMINAR: WORD STUDY
ENGLISH 3501, 3502, 3511**

Dr. Carmen Acevedo Butcher

706.233.7252

Rome Hall 211

See office door for hours

cbutcher(at)shorter.edu

Course Description: A study of Modern English words, their stems, prefixes, and suffixes according to their sources in Greek, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, French, Chinese, Spanish, and other languages.

Required Print Textbooks:

Bryson, Bill. *The Mother Tongue: English and How It Got That Way*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990.

Crutchfield, Roger S. *English Vocabulary Quick Reference: A Comprehensive Dictionary Arranged by Word Roots*. Leesburg, VA: LexaDyne Publishing, Inc., 1997.

Hixson, Jerome C. and I. Colodny. *Word Ways*. New York: American Book Company, 1939.

A bound reprint of this out-of-print etymological classic will be in the SC bookstore.

Mish, Frederick C., Editor in Chief. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. Tenth Edition. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 2001.

Required Internet Resources:

REQUIRED INTERNET RESOURCES:

Oxford English Dictionary online. <http://www.oed.com/>. Free access is available through the Shorter College portal. We will discuss how to get there and what to do once there. Consider how the *OED* online differs from the print *OED*.

Check your professor's website regularly for updates and new handouts:
www.carmenbutcher.com

The Guide to Grammar and Writing, sponsored by the Capital Community College Foundation. <http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

The Grammar Slammer. <http://englishplus.com/grammar/>

Hughes, Anthony. The Online English Grammar.
<http://www.edufind.com/english/grammar/>

The University College London Internet Grammar of English.
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/home.htm>

Leicester University English Grammar Project. By Julie Coleman. A favorite.
<http://www.le.ac.uk/ee/jmc21/legp/index.html>

Linguistics Websites Lists. <http://web.indstate.edu/fll/websites-bsp.html>

Linguistics Resources Online. <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/linguist/Default.asp>

Dictionaries, thesauruses, and etymologies online:

<http://dictionary.reference.com/>
<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>
<http://www.m-w.com/>
<http://www.bartleby.com/61/>
<http://thesaurus.reference.com/>
<http://www.etymonline.com/>
and many more

Warning: Information on the Internet is not vetted; therefore, you get multiple opportunities to use your fine brains in assessing whether or not the information you are reading is cogent and reliable. If you're still not sure, ask a librarian, or come see me.

STRONGLY SUGGESTED BOOK (BUY IT OR VISIT THE LIBRARY):

John C. Hodges, et al. *The Harbrace College Handbook*. 15th edition. (with InfoTrac)
See website: http://www.newtexts.com/newtexts/book.cfm?book_id=1616

FINAL EXAMINATION: TBA

Course Requirements:

Readings: You will be expected to read the material assigned, take notes, look up unfamiliar vocabulary in a dictionary, and come to class prepared to ask questions and discuss the material.

Journal (personal research and in-class note-taking): You will keep a Journal in which exciting etymological findings are kept all the semester. In it you will record stems, prefixes, and suffixes, and other etymological information, with detailed definitions and explanations. This Journal should reflect your curiosity outside the classroom, as well as what you've learned in class. Whenever a word pricks your interest, you are expected to consult your *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th Edition, and record the word and its etymology in your journal. Also consult Crutchfield (see required texts above). Other linguistic gems should also be recorded in your Journal. This Journal will reinforce what you learn and help it stick in your mind, and your vocabulary will grow exponentially, too.

Presentation: You will be expected to give a presentation on an *OED* etymological topic. You will be given a letter, and you have the freedom to select a word from the *OED* that begins with that letter. Your talk will show that you know how to use the *OED* thoroughly. The time limit is 1-2 minutes, and it will be strictly adhered to. That means that presentations under or over the time limit will be docked points, and the final presentation grade for undisciplined presentations will be lower than is optimal. You must adhere to the 1-2 minute time limit. I will ring a bell at 1 minute, and I will ring it again at 2 minutes. Then you will have to sit down. No exceptions.

Presentation advice: The best advice is to practice and to time yourself IN FRONT OF A MIRROR WITHOUT YOUR ROOMMATE(S) AROUND. Practice several times in front of a mirror—not just once. Use a watch or a clock with a second hand. A 20-minute refereed academic presentation is a 10-page, TYPED, double-spaced paper. One to two minutes of talking, then, is about 1 single, solitary page of typed, double-spaced information, *depending on how slow or fast you talk*. That is why you must practice your style of delivery. Type up your talk, go over it until you are familiar with your material and with the gestures you will make during your talk. Writing on the board, for example, takes time. You will be required to use PowerPoint or to at least write on the board or use an aural or a visual aid (a poster, music, a video, etc.); you must practice these extra motions and factor in the extra time they will take. You may need to make your talk physically shorter. Then make note cards from your talk, and in front of a mirror practice giving your presentation. Practice making eye contact with your audience, and practice speaking up. Don't mumble! Throw out "Ummm!" Speak up! Look up! Smile! DON'T READ YOUR PRESENTATION WORD FOR WORD. That is just so dead boring, don't you think? This assignment is designed to give you practice at public speaking, and it is designed to help you focus on your term paper. Think. Your talk must be about 1 page only of typed, double-spaced material, depending on your speed of delivery and what aural/visual aids you use.

Here are more guidelines to help you do your best on this *OED* presentation:

Review of OED Presentation Requirements And Helpful Presentation Hints

Your OED PRESENTATION has a strict time limit of 1-2 minutes. That's 2 minutes MAX. I will be timing with the help of a clock's second hand. The time limit exists because time limits exist, and we all have to learn to live by them. More specifically, time limits exist routinely for presentations, and they must be observed. A lower grade will result the longer a presentation goes over the time limit.

How to keep within the time limit:

- Organize your thoughts. Disorganized talks always go short or long.
- Type them, DOUBLE-SPACED, onto one normally formatted page (1" margins, Times New Roman). The catch is—you still have to practice because your delivery speed determines whether you need more or less material. (Or maybe it is just right. You need to know that, too, ahead of time.)
- Hit the high points of your word's entry in the OED:
 - Mention something about its history spelling-wise.

- Mention something about interesting facts about its entry: length of pages it requires in the OED, etc.
- Mention its etymology (some etymologies are interesting; some are not).
- Mention its various meanings and when, historically, they occurred.
- Present some of the examples of your word's earliest use(s).
Avoid quoting exceedingly long examples. Condense.
- PRACTICE before a mirror. (I say again.) This practicing before a mirror cannot be overemphasized. It is the only way to become familiar with the medium that is presentation. Mirror practice has several benefits. It breaks down your natural reluctance to do something unfamiliar—standing in front of a mirror feels odd at first, but the more you do it, the more familiar it becomes. A mirror is a good reflection (pun intended) of the presence of an audience. It helps you know what your audience will be seeing. Time yourself as you stand in front of the mirror because this simulation will let you know how long your writing words on the board will take, how long looking up and down will take, how long playing that music or video will take, how long switching PowerPoint slides will take, etc.

What I am looking for in a good presentation:

- Good, clear organization.
- An unrushed presentation.
- Good eye contact throughout. (DO NOT READ ONLY.)
- Good voice quality. Strong. Do not mumble. Do not whisper.
- Specifics balanced against a strong organizational framework.
- Adherence to the time limit.
- Avoidance of nervous-energy foot-tapping or verbal tics (“umm” and “err” and “gee”).
- We will make a trip to the library to see the print *OED*, and we will make a trip to a library computer to look at accessing and using the electronic *OED* (which is anyhow the most up-to-date version). In both instances, I will show you the basics of using the *OED*; however, you will have to make solo trips to finesse that information and to really learn how to use the *OED* yourself. Your presentation must show that you are thoroughly familiar with using the *OED*. Presentation grades will reflect how well you prove this lexicographical skill.

Also cyberspace over to www.carmenbutcher.com, and look under Word Study Handouts, for a handout giving a sample 2-minute presentation. This example has also been pasted in below for your convenience.

Sponge

Sponge has a long history, and to record this history requires two-and-a-half pages of the 16th volume (“Soot-Styx”) of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd edition, 1989). In the Old English period (up until the year 1100), *sponge* was often spelled as it is today. In successive centuries, it has had the following different spellings: *spunge* in the 12th

century, *spounge* in the 14th-17th centuries, *spoungge* and *spwnge* in the 15th century, *spownge* in the 15th and 16th centuries, *spoung* in the 16th century, *spounge* in the 16th and 19th centuries, and *spundge* in the 17th century. The Old English word, *sponge*, derives from the Latin word, *spongia*, which derives from the Greek for *sponge*.

Everyone knows what a *sponge* is—“the soft, light, porous...framework...much used in bathing,...etc.,” but few may know that the earliest available print example listed for this most common definition is from around AD 1000 and comes from the *Anglo-Saxon Gospels*, from a translation of Matthew 27:48: “Ða hrædlice arn an heora & genam ane spongean & fylde hig mid ecede” [Then immediately one of them ran & took a sponge & filled it with vinegar].

Other interesting examples abound. In 1622, poet John Donne wrote in his sermon XVI, at line 159, “Every man is but a sponge, and but a sponge filled with teare.” Another definition from 1671 has a potential currency in popular culture today. I wonder if the crabby-patty fry cook and sponge, Sponge Bob Square Pants, could be an allusion to the definition, “a type of something of small value,” quoted as having been used by John Milton in 1671 in *Paradise Regained* (IV.329): “collecting toys, And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge.” Other definitions include: “to throw in the sponge,” meaning “to abandon a struggle”; the zoological definition of *sponge*, “an aquatic marine animal”; its use to signify “an immoderate drinker”; and then the highly specialized one, “a kind of mop or swab for cleansing a cannon-bore after firing.”

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Grades: Journal: 33.3%, Mid-Term Exam (Presentation): 33.3%, Final Exam: 33.3%
(Class participation, in-class work, and pop tests may help students with borderline grades.)

Grading Scale:

Late Papers: Late assignments of any kind will be docked ten points for every day that they are late. Assignments over a week late will not be accepted.

Make-up Work: Students are expected to be present for all essays and/or examinations. Students who provide a valid, written excuse will be allowed to make up tests and/or essays. These students are expected to contact the instructor about the make-up work as soon as they return to school. If they fail to contact the instructor within one week of their return, they will not be allowed to make up the work.

Attendance: Students who miss more than one third of the classes in this class will be withdrawn from the class. See the *Shorter College Academic Catalog*. **Being late three times constitutes an absence. Be on time.**

Academic Dishonesty: See *Shorter College Academic Catalog*, page 33; Student Handbook, page A58. Students will be punished in accordance with the rules found in the current *Student Handbook*.

Classroom Behavior: Students will be treated with respect, kindness, and the expectation that they will conduct themselves as the professional students they are. Students who disrupt class and obstruct the learning process will be asked to leave and/or drop the course. This course is a learning community; people who make it impossible for others to learn will not be welcome members of that community.

**Do not bring any kind of food or drink to class.
Do not bring your cell phone to class.**

WARNING!

Academic Dishonesty: It is your responsibility to carefully read page 33 of the Shorter College General Catalog, as well as page A58 of the Shorter College Student Handbook. Students committing academic dishonesty will be punished according to these rules.

Any dishonest work (plagiarism, use of unauthorized assistance, or other dishonest work) will be given the grade of 0 (zero). Plagiarism involves presenting another person's work (whether taken from another student, from a printed source, or from an electronic source of any kind) as your own work, without giving credit to the author or source. Proper credit should always be given both for direct quotations **and** for ideas or information used from another source. Unauthorized assistance is defined as taking a test and using another student's paper, one's notes, prepared answers, cell phones, or other electronic devices for answers. Deliberately providing another student with unauthorized assistance is also considered academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility to be aware of what constitutes "proper credit" and "unauthorized assistance." Read the rules, know them, and follow them.

It is the student's responsibility to be thoroughly familiar with the complete Academic Integrity Policy listed for your ease of reference at www.carmenbutcher.com under "Handouts," classified alphabetically under "Honesty."

SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY: If you have accessibility questions for which you may need accommodations, you are encouraged to contact the Director of Educational Support in FSU at 219.233.7323 as early as possible in order to discuss these needs.

Course Objectives:

- Students will be immersed in the etymological bases for our marvelous, diverse, and ever-changing modern English language. (Educational Principles I and II, D2 and D3, TPP I-1, 3, 4, 5, 6)
- Students will write clear, concise, and effective Journal entries. (Educational Principle III, D1, TPP I-1, 4, 5, 6)
- Students will reach new levels of skill in written and oral communication as their linguistic foundation broadens and deepens. (Educational Principle III, D1, TPP I-1, 3, 4, 5, 6)
- Students will develop critical thinking skills by studying the etymologies of words and by analyzing paragraphs for the roots of the words therein. (Educational Principles I and II, D2 and D3, TPP I-1, 3, 4, 5, 6)