## E379S Lexicography

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W 1-2 & 3-4

How often have you heard people invoke authority by saying, "The dictionary defines ...."? In this class we will examine how dictionaries have established their authority in the English-speaking world over the past 400 years. We'll consider how dictionaries differ from other reference works, look at elements of dictionaries for various audiences, learn how lexicographers write definitions, and write definitions of our own. We will also examine how lexicographers, who view themselves as recorders of the vocabulary of languages, have dealt with tricky questions of usage, and we will look at how computerization has affected both the process of dictionary making and the finished products. We'll end the semester by discussing how dictionaries are made and consider legal and ethical issues in the making of dictionaries. I hope that you will learn that "the dictionary" comes in a variety of forms, is a complex product of culture, is the work of many people, and has a long and interesting history.

Since this course is a senior seminar, you are expected to write a twenty-page paper on some aspect of dictionaries. I will also consider a Web site of sufficient depth and complexity in lieu of the traditional paper. Although I will hand out some suggestions for possible topic areas broadly defined, the final choice for a paper topic is your own. I'll ask you to write a topic proposal outlining your project, though I expect your projects will evolve as you write and research. We will also have conferences to discuss rough drafts toward the end of the semester.

### **Text**

Readings Packet (available at Jenn's)

#### **Policies**

Attendance: Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken during each class. If you must miss class for a valid reason, get in touch with me as soon as possible.

I normally do not accept late assignments except by prior arrangement. If you are having problems completing an assignment, get in touch with me as soon as possible to make arrangements.

## Requirements and grading

Final paper	40%
Topic proposal	15%
Definition	25%
Presentation	10%
Class participation	10%

# What do grades represent in this class?

A Represents outstanding participation in all course activities; all assigned work is completed and of very high quality: The student exhibits an exemplary grasp of linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as demonstrated in the papers. Papers show careful thought, make connections that go beyond the readings, are generally insightful, and they often make original arguments or tackle original subjects. The writing is organized, coherent, intellectually sophisticated, and well-supported with appropriate evidence. The writing not only conforms to reasonable expectations for Standard Edited English, it is mature stylistically.

**B** Represents good participation in all course activities; all assigned work is completed, and of high quality: The student exhibits a solid grasp of linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as demonstrated in the papers. Papers show attention to thought, and they may make original connections that go beyond the readings, though those connections may not be as insightful or significant as those in an A paper. The writing is generally organized, coherent, and supported with appropriate evidence, though there may be some faults in coherence or support that, while not major, detract from the reader's ability to follow the writing. In general, the paper conforms to reasonable expectations for Standard Edited English. In thought and style the B paper may not be as mature as the A paper. Significant differences between A and B work include students' attention to detail, their intellectual sophistication, and the stylistic maturity of the writing.

**C** Represents adequate participation in all course activities; all assigned work is completed and of generally good to fair quality: The student exhibits an adequate grasp of linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as demonstrated in the papers, although there may be some significant misunderstandings. Papers show at least some attention to thought, though generally they don't make connections that go beyond the readings, and they usually provide little original insight. The writing is reasonably organized, coherent, and supported with appropriate evidence, though significant flaws in any of these areas tend to make it difficult for a reader to follow the writer's train of thought. In thought and style, the C paper may be immature. Mechanically, the writing may not always conform to reasonable expectations for Standard Edited English.

**D** Represents uneven participation in course activities; there are marked gaps in assigned work completed, and assignments turned in are of inconsistent or poor quality. The student exhibits a spotty grasp of linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as demonstrated in the papers. Writing shows little attention to thought, and it may contain significant amounts of regurgitation of ideas presented in the readings and in class discussions with little attempt at synthesis. The writing may lack organization, clarity and/or coherence, and support for ideas may be spotty or poorly informed. It may be obvious to a reader that the student hasn't read relevant material from the course packet or does not comprehend the assignment. Mechanics may not consistently conform to reasonable expectations for Standard Edited English.

**F** Represents minimal participation in course activities; serious gaps in assigned work completed, or very low quality in course work. The student exhibits a markedly deficient grasp of linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as demonstrated in the papers. Writing shows little or no attention to thought, and it contains significant amounts of regurgitation of ideas presented in the readings and in class discussions with virtually no attempt at synthesis. The writing lacks organization, clarity and/or coherence, and support for ideas is generally poorly informed or non-existent. It may be obvious to a reader that the student hasn't read relevant material from the course packet or does not comprehend the assignment. The mechanics may deviate significantly from reasonable expectations for Standard Edited English.