This is a 10-week course and will take place on Mondays from March 28 through June 6, 2016, from 7:00 pm to 8:50 pm.

Course Grading:
You have three options:
- No Grade Requested (this is the default option)
- If you elect Credit/No Credit, attendance will determine your grade
- If you elect to obtain a Letter Grade, it will be determined by attendance and a short paper (due last class, June 6, 2016)

Course Materials and Resources:
• Required Reading:
• Suggested readings:

Other readings will be made available on class website and will include:
  ➢ relevant postings from the instructor’s Languages of the World blog
  ➢ additional short readings where appropriate
Weekly Outline:

- **Week 1 - March 28:** How do we know that languages change, and how do we feel about it?
- **Week 2 - April 4:** In what ways do languages change? A brief history of English. Changes in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.
- **Week 3 - April 11:** Debunking some myths about language change: racial, climatic, and cultural explanations for language change.
- **Week 4 - April 18:** “Laziness” and other causes of sound change: “weakening” of sounds, compensatory sound changes, and the Great Vowel Shift (or why English vowels are written differently from the way they are pronounced?).
- **Week 5 - April 25:** What role do expressiveness, clarity, politeness, group identity, prestige, and pretentiousness play in language change? “You are what you speak!”
- **Week 6 - May 2:** How do mistakes made by children learning a language or adults speaking it create language change? Folk etymology, analogy, reanalysis, and grammaticalization explored.
- **Week 7 - May 9:** Language contact as a source of language change: Why and how languages borrow words and sounds.
- **Week 8 - May 16:** Languages borrow more than just words and sounds; grammatical traits can be borrowed too. How Celts bastardized English. The influence of Vikings on English and Russian. The story of the “lost middle Finns.”
- **Week 9 - May 23:** A case study in language change: from Latin to Romance languages. How French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and other Romance tongues become so different from Latin and from each other?
- **No class Monday, May 30 - Memorial Day!**
- **Week 10 - June 6:** A few more questions answered: Do languages develop to become more complex and sophisticated, or do they get simplified? What is the oldest language? How old is the oldest human language, Proto-Human? Do languages develop in a certain direction after all? Will there be just one language? Summary and last thoughts.