Instructor:  Erik Thomas  
Office:  203 Tompkins (ph. 513-7385)  
Lab:  204 Tompkins (ph. 515-3128)  
Office Hours:  MW 11:00-12:00, and by appointment; if I’m not in my office during office hours, I’ll probably be in the lab.  I’ll be glad to help you any other time that you catch me if time permits.  
E-mail:  erthomas@gw.ncsu.edu  
Cell:  880-7809  
It is recommended that students who wish to contact me remotely when I am not holding office hours use e-mail instead of telephoning my office.  

SYLLABUS  

COURSE OBJECTIVES  
By the end of this course, students should:  
Be able to examine language change using techniques and theories from experimental phonetics.  
Be able to apply a spectrograph, a speech synthesizer, and computerized plotting to problems in language change.  
Produce a paper on language change that is suitable for an academic conference.  

TEXTS  
Texts for this course consist of one book, Sociophonetics: An Introduction ($32), available at the bookstore, and a series of articles and chapters from books that are available on electronic reserve at http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/reserves/.  

REQUIREMENTS  
The most important requirement for this course is the major paper.  Papers may investigate change and/or variation, either historical or contemporary, on any aspect of language covered in this course.  It should involve some sort of instrumental phonetic analysis.  Projects may involve fieldwork, but they do not have to.  
Other requirements include a) a short, informal, preliminary oral presentation on plans for the major paper; b) a twenty-minute formal oral presentation of the major paper, with a question-and-answer period afterward, on the last day of class; c) weekly summaries of the assigned readings, which may be typed or handwritten, with approximately half a page per article or chapter, due at the beginning of the first class during which we discuss them; and d) completion of four exercises that are designed to help students learn to use equipment.  Weekly summaries will not be accepted after the class in which they are due unless a proper excuse is provided.  Credit may be subtracted if the major paper or the exercises are late.  Guests will be invited to hear the oral presentations and are welcome during other classes.  
Attendance at all classes is expected and is essential to learning the material that we will cover.  
The breakdown of grades is as follows:
ENG 528: Language Change Research Seminar  
Fall 2011  
Tompkins G115, Monday, 6:00-8:45

Major Paper: 60%  
Weekly Summaries: 14%  
Exercises: 16%  
Informal Oral Presentation: 1%  
Formal Oral Presentation: 9%  

Final grades are assigned so that, e.g., 86.7-89.9=B+, 90.0-93.3=A-.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:  
Assignments in this class are intended to assess your individual knowledge and understanding of the subject material addressed in this class. Therefore, cheating or plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. The work you present must be your own. All individuals involved in an act of academic dishonesty will fail the assignment and/or the course. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic integrity, please refer to the Honor Code in the Code of Student Conduct at the following URL:  
http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php

INCOMPLETEs  
In this course, an incomplete grade will be assigned in accordance with the official university grading policy, which can be found at  
http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/pols_regs/REG205.00.13.php

OPEN LEARNING ENVIRONMENT  
The intention and structure of university level courses are to provide open, thoughtful fora for a wide variety of topics. While discussing these topics, students should not discriminate on the basis of “race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability or veteran status” as outlined in the University’s Unlawful Harassment Policy Statement (http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/campus_environ/non_discrimination/REG04.25.4.php). If you have a concern in this regard, please contact the Equal Opportunity Office at 515-3148, or see or email the instructor.

DISABILITY STATEMENT  
Physical or Learning Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653, and present the instructor with a letter indicating what types of accommodations will be required. See NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities: http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss. For more information see:  
http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.1.php
TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE (All dates on this list are subject to change).

8/22: Introduction to the course; review of phonetics; introduction to the spectrograph.
READ: Thomas, Sociophonetics: An Introduction, chapter 1.

8/29: Understanding sound; measuring formants and F₀; practice with the spectrograph.
READ: Thomas, Sociophonetics: An Introduction, chapter 2.

9/5: Labor Day. No classes.

9/12: Perception experiments; use of a speech synthesizer.
READ: Thomas, Sociophonetics: An Introduction, chapter 3. Also recommended: Strand, “Uncovering the role of gender stereotypes in speech perception;” Janson and Schulman, “Non-distinctive features and their use.”

9/19: Acoustics of consonants.
READ: Thomas, Sociophonetics: An Introduction, chapter 4.
DUE: Vowel formant exercise # 1 (measuring your own voice, normal and yawning).

9/26: Consonantal variation, a factor that American sociophoneticians have mostly ignored; language contact and consonantal variation.

10/3: Acoustics of vowels; vowel normalization.
DUE: Vowel synthesis exercise.

10/10: Effects of duration on speech production and sound change; plotting data with Origin.
READ: Lindblom, “Spectrographic study of vowel reduction” (don’t worry about the mathematical formulas); pp. 50-55 of Thomas, An Acoustic Analysis of Vowel Variation in New World English.

10/17: Rhythm; Intonation.
DUE: Proposals for major papers.
10/24: Intonation; pitch tracking.
   DUE: Vowel formant exercise #2 (plotting duration vs. formant values).
10/31: Finish intonation if necessary; voice quality.

11/7: Progress reports on major papers (prepare a 5-10 minute informal presentation); phonetics and phonology.

11/14: Finish phonetics and phonology; vowel space and its relationship with vowel change; perception vs. production as sources of sound change.
   DUE: Intonation exercise.

11/21: Labovian approaches to sound change; social aspects of linguistic change.

12/28: Social aspects of linguistic change; the lateral transfer model.
   READ: *Sociophonetics: An Introduction*, chapter 12; Thomas, “Sociolinguistic variables and cognition;” Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog, “Empirical foundations for a theory of language change” (pay particular attention to the earlier sections, especially pp. 101-02; later sections can be skimmed).
12/12 (Monday): Formal oral presentations.
   DUE: Major paper.