

ENGLISH 501: WRITING, LANGUAGE, AND PEDAGOGY
HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
(STÆR ENGLISCGEREORDES)

Instructor: Dr. Jenny Rytting
MW 4:30-5:45/Spring 2014

10th century

Modde word fræt. Mē þæt þuhte
Wrætlicu wyrd, þā ic þæt wundor gefrægn,
Þæt se wurm forswalg wera gied sumes,
þeof in þystro, þrymfæstne cwide
Ond þæs stranan stapol. Stælgieost ne wæs
Wihte þy glēawra, þē hē þām wordum swealg.

c. 1380

The lyf so short, the crafte so longe to lerne,
Th'assay so hard, so sharpe the conquerynge,
The dredeful joy, that alwey slyd so yerne,
Al this meene I be love, that my felynge
Astonyeth with his wonderful worchyng
So soore ywys, that whan I on hym thynke,
Nat wote I wel wher that I wake or wynke.

1598

O! neuer will I trust to speeches pen'd
Nor to the motion of a Schoole-boies tongue.
Nor neuer come in vizard to my friend,
Nor woo in rime like a blind-harpers songue,
Taffeta phrases, silken tearmes precise,
Three-pil'd Hyperboles, spruce affection;
Figures pedanticall, these summer flies,
Haue blowne me full of maggot ostentation.
I do forswear them, and I heere protest,
By this white Gloue (how white the hand God knows)
Henceforth my woing minde shall be exprest
In russet yeas, and honest kersie noes.

1751

All men, even the lowest, can speak their
Mother-Tongue. Yet how many of this
multitude can neither write, nor even read?
How many of those, who are thus far literate,
know nothing of that Grammar, which
respects the Genius of their own Language?
How few then must be those, who know
GRAMMAR UNIVERSAL, *that Grammar*, which
without regarding the several Idioms of
particular Languages, *only respects those*
Principles, that are essential to them all?

Hwæt segst þū? Wilt þū leornian stær Engliscgereordes? Ic cann tæcan hit þē.