

The Pronunciation of English

Spring 2026

Code

BBNAN11700

Value, type

3-credit seminar

Host

Institute of English and American Studies (IEAS)

Instructor

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Course description

This course will discuss the phoneme system of (British) English, along with the phonetic properties of the sound segments, and some of the most important phonological rules of the language. We will be practicing phonemic transcription, using the Gimsonian system. Special emphasis will be placed on letter-to-sound rules so that the spelling of English words will become a more reliable guide in guessing their pronunciation. This is planned to be a practical course with a lot of exercises for you to gain an in-depth knowledge of the material. Therefore, everybody will be encouraged to actively participate in the class work and required to regularly do their home assignments.

Course material and communication

The syllabus, the course materials, the home assignments and your results will be made available in a Google Drive folder, and announcements will be posted on the platform of the course (in a Microsoft Teams group); it is your responsibility to check them for updates on a regular basis.

Readings

The main textbook of the seminar will be

Katalin Balogné Bérces and Szilárd Szentgyörgyi. 2006. Az angol nyelv kiejtése – The pronunciation of English. Budapest: Bölcsész Konzorcium. Available at <https://www.mek.oszk.hu/04900/04910/>

Assessment

Assessment will be based on a midterm test (40%) and an end-term test (60%), which will be modified by the weekly assignments submitted and potentially by your in-class participation. There will be about 10 assignments during the semester, each of which will contribute 0.5% to your final score in the following way: 0 assignments: -2.5%, 1 assignment: -2% ... 5 assignments: +0% ... 10 assignments: +2.5%.

Grading policy:

0–49.99% → 1; 50–59.99% → 2; 60–74.99% → 3; 75–89.99% → 4; 90–100% → 5

Attendance

Regular attendance is necessary; a maximum of three absences can be tolerated.

Syllabus*

	Introduction
Feb. 11	
Feb. 12	1. Phonetics vs. phonology; phonetic classification of RP vowels (1): short monophthongs
Feb. 18	2. Phonemic transcription: IPA symbols and the Gimsonian system;
Feb. 19	phonetic classification of RP vowels (2): long monophthongs and diphthongs; vowel contrasts (1): /æ/ vs. /e/, /əʊ/ vs. /ɔ:/
Feb. 25	3. n and ŋ ; articulation of vowels; phonetics of RP vowels
Feb. 26	
Mar. 4	4. Distribution of /r/ in RP; R-influence on vowels
Mar. 5	
Mar. 11	5. Vowel contrasts (2): /ʌ/ vs. /ɒ/ vs. /ɑ:/;
Mar. 12	phonological classification of RP vowels: lax and tense, broad-lax and broken-tense vowels
Mar. 18	MIDTERM TEST
Mar. 19	6. Vowels in unstressed syllables, weak forms of function words
Mar. 25	7. Tense–lax vowel alternations; letter-to-sound rules, graphic positions
Mar. 26	
Apr. 1	<i>No class (Easter break)</i>
Apr. 2	
Apr. 8	<i>No class (Easter break)</i>
Apr. 9	
Apr. 15	8. Laxing and tensing rules
Apr. 16	
Apr. 22	9. Articulation and categorization of consonants; phonotactics: geminates and nasal+plosive clusters
Apr. 23	
Apr. 29	10. Allophonic variations: flapping, L-darkening and aspiration
Apr. 30	
May 6	11. Morpho-phonological alternations: allomorphs of -s and -ed
May 7	Revision
May 13	END-TERM TEST
May 14	

* The syllabus is subject to change; please check it regularly for updates.