History of the English Language

Where did English come from? How have its structures and its lexicon changed over time? Why has it changed so much? What is special or peculiar about English?

We explore diachronic language variation (language change) in general, but particularly that of English. Topics include:

- The genesis of English and its internal linguistic history
- The external (social) history of English
- Contact between English and other languages
- “Genetic” relationships between English & other languages
- Linguistic typology
- Theories of language change

Unlike the Spring 2007 section, this section is targeted at graduate students; advanced undergraduates should consult with the instructor before enrolling. In-service and future English teachers are encouraged to take the course.

English is a story of who we are.  
— Nikki Giovanni (1943-)