



University of Massachusetts
History of the English Language

Midterm Paper

Please give a summary of facts, arguments, and conclusions. Try to be as objective and charitable as possible towards the author. At the end of your paper, you are welcome to inject your own judgments, backing them up with argument or evidence. Due 25 October, 4:00pm by email. Five to seven pages (1500 words).

All the readings are available through the library (<https://www.library.umass.edu>). If the link doesn't work, try pasting into your browser. If that doesn't work, then search for the book.

1. The Comparative Method

Read Rankin, "Comparative Method" in Joseph and Janda, *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*, part II, chapter 1; and in the same book, Harrison, "Limits"
[<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uma/detail.action?docID=242454>]

Summarize the major arguments

Use your own examples from the Germanic family of languages.

2. Poetic Traditions

Read Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon*, the chapter on Comparative Poetics
[<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uma/detail.action?docID=271621>]

Summarize his major arguments.

Give your own examples from English or American literature.

3. Wool and wagons

Read David Anthony, *The Horse the Wheel, and Language*, chapter 4
[<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uma/detail.action?docID=475849>]

Summarize it.

Follow up on an archeological item that illustrates a wheeled wagon. What do archaeologists say about it?

4. Dragons

Find words for *dragon* in Indo-European languages (1400 BC to 1200 AD)

What do they tell us about how writers pictured dragons?

Find examples in ancient, classical, and medieval texts.