

Dr. Ulrich Miethaner, Proseminar 'African American English'

Teenagers all over the planet are being exposed to African American English (AAE), formerly known as Black English, through the medium of rap and house music. The prestige of this variety in the music scene becomes apparent in the dissemination of AAE terms to various languages.

This development is surprising when we consider the fact that until half a century ago AAE was believed by most Americans to be 'broken language'. This seminar intends to outline the history of and current developments in AAE. Three main aspects will be focussed upon:

- 1, The synchronic status of AAE, i.e. its structural 'distance' to other varieties of American English.
- 2, The diachronic status of AAE, i.e. interpretative models of its genesis and development.
- 3, The educational, social and political implications of AAE.

Parts of our analyses will be based on the *BLUR* (Blues Lyrics Collected at the University of Regensburg) corpus, a computerized collection of early blues texts.

To obtain a *Schein* you will be asked to give a presentation in class, to do a written test and to complete several reading/research assignments.