

Language, Culture, and Power

(ANTH 3005)

Department of Anthropology, University of Minnesota

Fall 2009

Syllabus: http://www.geocities.com/davidvalentine2002/syllabi/LCP_F2009.PDF

E-Reserve: <http://eres.lib.umn.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=191>

Password: b69zwux

Instructor: David Valentine

Class Times: M/W/F, 8:05-8:55am

Office: 364 HHH Center

Office Hours: Mon. 10-11am, Wed. 9-11am

Class Location: Anderson 230

Class Dates: 9/9/09-12/16/09

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Course Description:

The "English Only" movement in the U.S. has been attempting for years to have English recognized as the nation's official language.... On a daily basis, people with non-standard accents are asked where they come from.... Speakers of African American Vernacular English are derided for speaking "broken English" even as white teenagers adopt AAVE in their daily talk... People claim that they can "tell" if someone is gay or straight by the way they speak. While language is a universal feature of human culture, and a vital resource for humans' ability to describe and relate to the world around them, language is also deeply political in nature.

Language, Culture, and Power approaches language as a central aspect of human meaning-making, and argues that close attention to language-in-use on a daily basis provides social scientists with key insights into human experience and behavior, and enables us to address the politics of language. *Language, Culture, and Power* is a Social Science Core Course. Core Courses such as this one are designed to explicitly help students understand what liberal education is, how the content and the substance of this course enhance a liberal education, and what this means for you as students and as citizens. This course brings students -- through practical exercises and reading in the literature -- to a key recognition in the social sciences that the daily work involved in speaking, even the most mundane social act of speaking among friends, is deeply enmeshed in relationships of social power. The class highlights the centrality of daily talk in how humans go about making meaning about themselves, others, and the world around them, and thus highlights the role of ordinary daily talk in the maintenance and transformation of much larger social structures. The course aims at a practical level to train students in discourse analysis of transcripts, but simultaneously to look at how that analysis allows for a recognition of how individual social acts, such as speaking, are embedded in larger socio-political and cultural structures of meaning.

Using key texts from the field of linguistic anthropology, and related fields of linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, critical discourse analysis, and rhetoric, students will be encouraged to assess a variety of ways in which language has been viewed by anthropologists and other scholars, with the goal of highlighting the importance of an anthropological focus on language-

in-use rather than simply language as a structured set of rules. Students will explore this through a practical exercise, the taping and subsequent transcription of a stretch of conversation among intimates early in the semester. Transcripts will be developed and refined in small group settings during recitation periods, and students will work with one another to identify and analyze the discourse strategies, language ideologies, discourse features of each other's transcripts. This work will form the basis for two written papers and will be a major task in the class.

Because this class argues that every instance of language use is political in nature, a key element of this class is to help us think about cultural diversity in the United States and how language and language attitudes affect, shape, and reproduce inequalities and social injustices in American social, political, and economic worlds. This course, by focusing on the intersection of language practices and social power, aims to bring you to think ethically about important challenges facing our society and world, how to reflect on the shared sense of responsibility we have as speakers and social actors to build and maintain community through talk, how to connect this knowledge with practice through your training in discourse analysis, and as such helping foster a stronger sense of your role -- and the role of other speakers -- as agents of change in day-to-day life. By focusing on everyday talk, we will consider timely contemporary issues -- gender roles, sexuality, race -- reflecting on the ethical implications of what people say and how they say it, and engage in respectful debates with one another about the role of language in these dynamics. This course offers a sustained opportunity to engage in difficult debates around moral and ethical issues that require critical inquiry from a variety of perspectives and to help cultivate independent thinking through rigorous training in linguistic anthropological methods and theories. As well as drawing on the texts we read for practical and methodological insights about the analysis of your transcripts, we will also read them for how the authors use their linguistic data to explain relationships of social power around themes such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, national identity, and age. The complex relationship between language, culture, and power raises important questions that we will address in this class: how does language shape our view of the world? What relations of power are produced in language use and beliefs about language? How is language used creatively to produce social worlds? What are the politics of using one variety of language over another? What are the politics of writing, and how do debates about spoken language carry over to the written word? Above all, we will be concerned with the relationships of power that are deeply enmeshed in everyday language use, and consequently, the major themes of this class revolve around the politics of language and language ideologies.

The overall goals of the class are thus: (a) to draw attention to the central role social scientists have argued language plays in the construction of selves, world views, and of others; (b) to give you an understanding of how to elicit and analyze linguistic data, and produce original research in the context of collaboration with other students; (c) to draw your attention to the relationships of social power embedded in daily talk, and to the larger social institutions and structures of meaning that are enacted through mundane daily talk; and (d) to mentor you in the techniques of drawing from the arguments and methodologies of an existing literature in formulating innovative and original research theses based on their own data.

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, you should expect to be able to:

1. **Identify, define, and solve problems** with regard to linguistic data elicited from socially-occurring talk. For example, you should be able to examine a transcript of recorded talk and identify how an argument emerges, how speakers maintain dominance in a conversation, or how speakers collaborate to agree upon a goal.
2. **Locate and critically evaluate information**, both by being able to identify methodological strategies used by authors in making their arguments in published texts as well as using those strategies to locate and evaluate information in recorded talk.
3. **To have acquired skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning.** Since a key element of this class is to argue that structures of inequality are produced in the context of daily talk itself, a key outcome of this class is to bring students to the realization that attention to talk -- and the things people say about other people's talk -- is a political act. By drawing your attention to this process, this course intends to equip you with the tools for attending to the political aspects of talk beyond the walls of the classroom, and to consider your and other people's roles in the maintenance of social structures, as well as giving you the language and analytic tools to contest inequalities in those structures.

Course Requirements

There will be no in-class exams for this course. This class fulfills a CLA writing intensive requirement, and so the writing projects for this class are extensive. Class work is due in class on the days noted in the syllabus below. Class work for the semester will consist of the following formal projects (due dates noted in syllabus below):

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|--|------------|
| 1. Transcript you will produce from a taped conversation, and <i>one relevant section of your transcript which you find interesting for class discussion</i> | 5% |
| 2. 4-5 page paper analyzing <i>Darmok</i> , which must be handed in first as a draft | 30% |
| 3. 5-7 page paper analyzing your transcript | 30% |
| 4. 5-7 page paper | 25% |
| 5. Transcription Work Groups participation and reports (5) | <u>10%</u> |
| | 100% |

Explanation of requirements

1. Instructions on the transcription will be given in class 3. You will require an audio recording device for this task; if you do not have a recorder, you may borrow one from Prof. Valentine. Upon completing the project in full and in a timely manner *and providing the excerpt via email*, you will automatically get a full 5% toward your final grade.
- 2-4. The three papers for the class are analytic papers, and each will be a response to a question set in advance. Paper one must be submitted as a draft by the deadline in the syllabus. It will be returned to you with comments, revised, and submitted by the paper deadline. You are encouraged to submit drafts of the other two papers, but your drafts must be submitted at least five days before the due date. Drafts may be emailed, but the actual assignment must be handed in during class as a hard copy. The papers are graded on an A-F basis.

5. Transcription Work Groups: the class will be divided into groups of four people during your first recitation section. Note the following:
- ▶ Each group will be responsible for working together during section periods and, if necessary, outside of class time.
 - ▶ *Group members must distribute their transcript to all of their Group members as soon as possible.* Please ensure you have each of your Group members' phone numbers and email addresses.
 - ▶ Specific tasks will be set ahead of time for each Group meeting. You will begin by reading each others' transcripts for clarity and to ensure the transcription makes sense; later on in the semester, you will help your Group members by helping identify key discourse features in the transcripts.
 - ▶ Group members are responsible for closely reading each of the other three transcripts and come to sections prepared to discuss and analyze each other's transcripts.
 - ▶ I recommend dividing the time for discussion equally among members and appointing one member as time-keeper.
 - ▶ After each section meeting, each student must fill out the "transcription working group evaluation form" which can be downloaded from the class's WebCT site. This is due in the Friday class of that week.
 - ▶ Each report will be graded on a 0-2 point range which corresponds to actual percentage points toward your final grade. Grading will be based on your report and group members' assessment of your contributions.

Extensions

I do not grant extensions other than for exceptional circumstances. If you believe you are embroiled in such a circumstance, I expect you to request an extension at least a day before the paper is due; DO NOT come to class without completed work unless I have granted you an extension. We will not accept emailed versions of your papers or assignments except by prior arrangement.

Policy on Lateness and Attendance

Please pay particular attention to the following: you are, naturally, expected to attend all classes and all of your Transcription Work Group meetings. It is expected that if you have to miss a class for a valid reason (such as illness or family emergency), you will inform me prior to the class, or as soon thereafter as is possible. If you have an emergency that requires you to miss a recitation section, you must inform your group members as soon as possible and provide your input on your colleagues' transcripts in some other format. Your absence from a recitation will be treated as an absence from class. I will take attendance in the first ten minutes of class. If you arrive late for class, you will not have the opportunity to sign the attendance sheet, and this will be noted as an absence. ***Please note the attendance policy: every three unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your grade by one grade point (e.g. from A- to B+).*** I will take a particularly dim view of absences in the Wednesday class before the Thanksgiving break.

Plagiarism and Grading

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, will result in a failing grade, and will be reported to the Student Conduct Committee. The university policy on plagiarism is available at:

<http://writing.umn.edu/tww/plagiarism/definitions.html>

The university grading policies can be found at:

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/policies/gradingpolicy.html>

Assigned Texts:

The following books are required for the course and are available at the university bookstore.

Basso, Keith (1996). *Wisdom sits in places: landscape and language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press

Kulick, Don (1992). *Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self, and syncretism in a Papua New Guinean village*. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lindquist, Julie (2002). *A place to stand: politics and persuasion in a working-class bar*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Assigned books will be on reserve. The other course readings listed below will be available via E-reserve at the link at the head of this syllabus. I will provide you with the password.

Course Outline

Part 1: Language as an Object of Anthropological Investigation

Week 1

1. Introduction to the course (9/9/09)

No readings

2. Language as an Object of Anthropological Investigation I (9/11/09)

Saussure, Ferdinand de

1985 [1916] The linguistic sign. *In Semiotics: an introductory anthology.* Robert E. Innis (ed.) pp28-46.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Week 2

3. Language as an Object of Anthropological Investigation II (9/14/09)

Boas, Franz

1889 On alternating sounds. *American Anthropologist* 2 (3): 47-53.

4. Nuts and Bolts: How Anthropologists Transcribe Talk ("They sure work like daws...") (9/16/09)

****Begin Transcription project this weekend****

Jefferson, Gail

2004 A sketch of some orderly aspects of overlap in natural conversation. *In Conversation analysis: studies from the first generation.* Gene H. Lerner (ed.) pp. 43-59.

Atkinson, J.M. and J. Heritage (eds.)

1989 Transcript notation. *In Structures of social action: studies in conversation analysis.* pp. ix-xiii. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edwards, Jane A.

1989 Transcription in discourse. *In Oxford International Encyclopedia of Linguistics.* W. Bright (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

5. Language as an Object of Anthropological Investigation III (9/18/09)

Maynard, Douglas W.

1980. Placement of Topic Changes in Conversation. *Semiotica* 30:263-290.

Week 3

6. Communicative Competence (9/21/09)

Hymes, Dell

1972 On Communicative competence. *In Sociolinguistic aspects of language learning and teaching.* J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds). Pp. 269-93. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Part 2: Language and World View

7. The Whorfian Hypothesis and Habitual Thought I (9/23/09)

Whorf, Benjamin Lee

1964 [1939] The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language. *In* Language, thought, and reality: selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. J.B. Carroll (ed.) Pp. 134-59.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs and Mary Louise Pratt

1980 The Whorfian hypothesis. *In* Linguistics for students of literature. pp. 106-110. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Orwell, George

1983 [1949] Appendix: the principles of Newspeak. *In* 1984. Pp. 257-268. New York: Penguin.

8. The Whorfian Hypothesis and Habitual Thought II (9/25/09)

Film: Darmok

No Readings

****Transcription Project Due in Class****

Week 4

9. The Whorfian Hypothesis and Habitual Thought III (9/28/09)

Reddy, Michael J.

1979 The conduit metaphor: a case of frame conflict in our language about language. *In* Metaphor and thought. Andrew Ortony (ed.) pp.284-324. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

10. The Whorfian Hypothesis and Habitual Thought IV (9/30/09)

Basso, Keith

1996 Speaking with Names (chapter 3). *In* Wisdom sits in places: landscape and language among the Western Apache. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Part 3: Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities

11. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities I: Arguments in a Bar (10/2/09)

Lindquist, Julie

2002 A place to stand: politics and persuasion in a working-class bar. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. (chapters 1 and 2)

Week 5

12. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities I: Arguments in a Bar (10/5/09)

Lindquist (chapters 3 and 4)

13. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities I: Arguments in a Bar (10/7/09)

Lindquist, (chapters 5 and 6)

14. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities I: Arguments in a Bar (10/9/09)

Lindquist (chapter 7)

****Draft of Darmok Paper Due****

Week 6

15. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities IV: Jokes, Gossip, and Narrative (10/12/09)

Read one of the following articles, depending on the features most evident in your own transcript:

Sacks, Harvey

1974 An analysis of the course of a joke's telling in conversation. *In* Explorations in the ethnography of speaking. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (eds.) pp. 337-353. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goodwin, Marjorie Harness

1982 "Instigating": storytelling as social process. *American Ethnologist* 9(4):799-812.

16. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities V: Discourse Markers (10/14/09)

For the next two classes, read two of the following, depending on the discourse markers most evident in your own transcript:

Kleiner, Brian

1998 Whatever - Its use in 'pseudo-argument'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 30:589-613.

Kiesling, Scott F.

2004 Dude. *American Speech* 79(3):281-305.

Tagliamonte, Sali

2005 So who? Like how? Just what? Discourse markers in the conversations of Young Canadians. *Journal of Pragmatics* 37:1896-1915

Tree, Jean E. Fox and Josef C. Schrock

2002 Basic meanings of *you know* and *I mean*. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34:727-747

Jones, Graham M. and Bambi B. Schieffelin

2007 Enquoting voices, accomplishing talk: Uses of be + like in Instant Messaging. *Language & Communication* In Press.

17. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities V: Discourse Markers (10/16/09)

See class 16

Part 4: Language, Identity, and Power

Week 7

18. Language as a Site of Social Power I (10/19/09)

Goffman, Erving

1967 On facework. *In* Interaction ritual: essays on face-to-face behavior. Garden City: Anchor/Doubleday.

19. Language as a Site of Social Power II (10/21/09)

Morgenthaler, Lynelle

1990 A study of group process: Who's got what floor? *Journal of Pragmatics* 14(4):537-557.

20. Language as a Site of Social Power III (10/23/09)

Collins, John and Ross Glover (eds.)

2002 Evil (Laura J. Rediehs), Freedom (Andrew D. van Alstyne) Terrorism (John Collins). *In* Collateral language: a user's guide to America's new war. New York: New York University Press.

Week 8

21. Language and Gender I (10/26/09)

Tannen, Deborah

**** Darmok Paper Due in Class ****

1990 You just don't understand: women and men in conversation. New York: Morrow.(selections)

O'Barr, William M. and Bowman K. Atkins

1980 "Women's language" or "powerless language"? *in* Women and language in literature and society. Sally McConnell-Ginet et al (eds). pp 93-110. New York: Praeger.

22. Language and Gender II (10/28/09)

Cameron, Deborah

1997 Performing gender identity: young men's talk and the construction of heterosexual masculinity. *In* Language and masculinity. Sally Johnson and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof (eds). pp.47-64. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

23. Language and Gender III (10/30/09)

Review Tannen, O'Barr and Atkins, and Cameron

Week 9

24. Language, Race, and Identity I (11/2/09)

Mitchell-Kernan, Claudia

1972 Signifying and Marking: Two Afro-American Speech Acts. *In* Directions in sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication. J.J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (eds.) New York: Basil Blackwell.

25. Language, Race, and Identity II (11/4/09)

Bailey, Benjamin

2001 The Language of Multiple Identities among Dominican Americans. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 10(2):190-223.

26. Language, Race, and Identity III (11/6/09)

Cutler, Cecilia

2003 "Keepin' It Real": White Hip-Hoppers' Discourses of Language, Race, and Authenticity. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 13(2):211-233.

Week 10

27. Transcript Paper Lecture (11/9/09)

Basso, Keith

1996 Wisdom sits in places: landscape and language among the Western Apache. (preface, chapter 1).

28. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity I: Western Apache (11/11/09)

Basso (chapter 3).

29. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity II: Western Apache (11/13/09)

Basso (chapter 4, Epilogue).

Week 11

30. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity: Accents and Social Stereotypes

(11/16/09)

No Readings

****Paper 2 Due in Class****

Film: American Tongues

31. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity: Accents and Social Stereotypes

(11/18/09)

Lippi-Green, Rosina

1994 Accent, standard language, language ideology, and the discriminatory pretext in the courts. *Language in Society* 23:163-198.

32. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity: Accents and Social Stereotypes

(11/20/09)

Rubin, Donald L.

1992 Nonlanguage Factors Affecting Undergraduates' Judgments of Nonnative English-speaking Teaching Assistants. *Research in Higher Education* 33(4):511-531.

Week 12

33. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity: English Only? (11/23/09)

Crawford, James

1992 Guardians of English. *In Hold Your Tongue: Bilingualism and the Politics of English Only*. Addison-Wesley.

Graham, Laura et al

2007 Why Anthropologists Should Oppose English Only Legislation in the U.S. *Anthropology News* 48(1):32-33.

34. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity: English Only? (11/25/09)

Wiley, Terrence G.

1998 The imposition of World War I era English-only policies and the fate of German in North America. *In Language and politics in the United States and Canada: Myths and realities*. B. Burnaby (Ed.). 211-241. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

No Class (Thanksgiving) (11/27/09)

Part 5: Socialization, Literacy, and Social Change

Week 13

35. Language Socialization (11/30/09)

Ochs, Elinor and Bambi Schieffelin

1984 Language Acquisition and socialization: three developmental stories and their implications. *In Culture theory :essays on mind, self, and emotion*. R. Schweder and R. LeVine (eds.) Pp. 276-320. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

36. Language Socialization (12/2/09)

Philips, Susan U.

2001 Participant structures and communicative competence: Warm Springs children in community and classroom. *In* Linguistic anthropology: a reader. Alessandro Duranti (ed). pp. 302-317. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

37. Language Socialization and Language Shift I (12/4/09)

Kulick, Don

1992 Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self, and syncretism in a Papua New Guinean village. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 14

38. Language Socialization and Language Shift II (12/7/09)

Kulick, Don

1992 Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self, and syncretism in a Papua New Guinean village. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

39. Language Socialization and Language Shift III (12/9/09)

Kulick, Don

1992 Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self, and syncretism in a Papua New Guinean village. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

40. Language Socialization and Language Shift IV (12/11/09)

Kulick, Don

1992 Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self, and syncretism in a Papua New Guinean village. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 15

41. Language Socialization and Language Shift V (12/14/09)

Kulick, Don

1992 Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self, and syncretism in a Papua New Guinean village. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

42. Course Review (12/16/09)

****Final Paper Due in Class****