

# Language, Power & Politics

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Hours: TBA

Linguistics 153  
Fall Quarter 2009  
Tues/Thurs 10-11:30  
Encina Hall West 101

**Language, Power & Politics (LING 153):** In this course, we will examine the integral role language plays in politics; and, more generally, how power operates in linguistic practices and political interaction. As we critically examine how language is used to articulate, maintain and subvert relations of power in society, emphasis will be placed on language in the media, the political rhetoric associated with war, and the construction of 'truth' in politics. We will also consider the role of ethnographic analysis in aiding sociolinguistic understandings of how social actors use and (re)interpret political language. The course will provide you with a foundation for understanding how language shapes contemporary political interaction and an opportunity to hone your critical thinking and analytic skills.

## Books and Readings

### Required

- Readings posted online
- Julie Lindquist. 2002. *A Place to Stand: Politics and Persuasion in a Working-class Bar*. Oxford University Press (ISBN 0 19 514038 9).

### Optional

- Adam Hodges and Chad Nilep (eds.). 2007. *Discourse, War and Terrorism*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing. (ISBN 978 90 272 0624 4).

## Course Requirements

- 20% Seminar participation, which includes presenting/starting discussion of one or more assigned readings (as well as coming to class prepared and contributing to discussions)
- 20% Weekly journal entries (1-3 pgs per week over 8 weeks)
- 30% Midterm essay (2-4 pgs) and class report (5 min)
- 30% Final paper (8-12 pgs) and class report (5 min)

**Presenting/starting discussion of a course reading:** Each student will be expected to present and start discussion on at least one assigned reading during the quarter. Although this will necessitate providing an overview of the article and its key points (you are encouraged to bring a handout or other type of visual aid), think of your task more as an instigator and facilitator of discussion. It is recommended that you meet with me during office hours prior to your presentation to coordinate for class.

**Weekly Journal Entries:** One of the most effective ways to think through ideas and organize thoughts is to write. The journal you are required to keep for the course is a place to "think out loud on paper." It is a place to identify questions you are particularly interested in exploring further, work through difficult passages of readings, and reflect on ideas brought up in class discussions. Ideally, you will write down reflections as they arise while doing the readings and jot down ideas as they come to you throughout the week.

The journal is *not* intended to be a polished, well-edited manuscript. Rather, it is more like stream of consciousness writing where you place your fingers on the keyboard and write what you're thinking without regard to correct punctuation/grammar or consistent style. That is, write without hesitation or pausing to recollect thoughts and without immediately re-reading or editing what you put down on paper.

Through your journaling during the semester, you should be able to build upon and organize particular ideas that interest you for the final paper. Consistent and effective journal writing will also allow you to participate more fully in class discussions because you will have thought through the readings and reflected on their links with previous discussions.

You will turn in your journal every other week – thus, they should be typed and dated (e.g. Week 1, Week 2, etc.). Reading your journals allows me to see what you are thinking about the material as well as to dialogue with you. Journals will be assessed on the amount of entries as well as the depth of the reflections you have made.

**Midterm Essay and Class Report:** For the midterm, you will write a 2-4 page essay in which you will explain and discuss one or two key terms/concepts covered through week 5 of the course (e.g. presupposition, implicature, plausible deniability, language ideology, euphemism, metaphor, regime of truth) and how it relates to language use in politics. You will need to illustrate your explanation with one or more examples (ideally from current political events). The essay will be due in class on Thursday, October 22 where you will provide an informal 5 minute summary of your findings to the class.

**Final Paper and Class Report:** For the final paper, you should choose some aspect of the course material that particularly interests you. With this material as a starting point, you may then do one of two things: (1) provide a theoretical discussion of two or more key ideas brought up in course readings and discuss how these ideas add to our understanding of language use in politics, or (2) analyze an actual piece of political or media discourse using ideas from course readings. In either case, you are expected to engage with course concepts and authors to demonstrate your understanding of the material. Additional sources may be used but are not required. Please talk to me about potential ideas and get approval of your chosen project by week 8 or week 9. The paper length should be 8-12 pages (double spaced, 12-point standard font). Please use in-text citations and provide a list of references at the end, i.e. follow APA or MLA formatting. On the last day of class – Thursday, December 3 – you will provide an informal summary of your topic/paper in progress to the class. The paper is due by Thursday, December 10 at 11:30 am.

### **General Policies**

**Course Format and Expectations:** This course will be run as a seminar with a primary focus on class discussion. Students are expected to read the assigned material prior to class and come prepared to discuss it. To prepare, you will want to jot down notes and questions that you think of while reading. It is up to you to make a personal commitment to your learning and make the most of all aspects of the class, including readings, class discussions, lectures, peer feedback, etc. A strong commitment to your learning will inevitably pay off in the knowledge you take away from the class at the end of the semester – and of course, also result in higher grades.

**What you can expect from me:** Timely feedback on your work; interest in you, your ideas and your contributions to the course. Please take advantage of my office hours to meet with me outside of class to get feedback on assignments, clarify questions or to further discuss topics of interest to you. I am here to help you make the most of your learning experience in this course!

**Critical Thinking, Reading, Writing and Discussion:** Scholarly inquiry requires stepping outside our usual frames of reference to examine issues from various angles. In order to critically evaluate ideas, we must first understand those ideas as laid out by authors and classmates. You are encouraged to try on ideas and examine topics from different angles, to challenge ideas and rethink your own positions throughout the semester as we engage in a collaborative process of scholarly inquiry.

**Class Ambience and Academic Respect:** Academic courses are a place for intellectual challenges and interactive discussions. Everyone benefits from an atmosphere of creativity, diversity, and expressive freedom as we negotiate new understandings of concepts, and explore ideas from different angles. Practice the art of thoughtfully challenging a person's ideas while respecting the person, so we can create a supportive atmosphere where everyone can build on each other's knowledge and experience, and learn from each other.

**Students with documented disabilities:** Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066; [www.stanford.edu/group/DRC/](http://www.stanford.edu/group/DRC/)).

**Academic Integrity:** Cheating and/or plagiarism on any assignment/exam will result in a forfeited grade and could also result in an F for the course. Each student is expected to know and adhere to the Stanford Honor Code and follow the policy laid out therein. Violations of this policy include plagiarism and representing as one's own work the work of another. More information can be found at [www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm](http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm).

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

<b>Week 1</b>	
<b>Tues Sept 22</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>Thurs Sept 24</b>	<p><b>Language, power and politics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Introduction” from <i>Language &amp; Power in the Modern World</i> (8 pgs)</li> <li>▪ “Language and Politics” from <i>Language, Society and Power</i> (17 pgs)</li> </ul> <p>* Complete journal entry #1 by end of week</p>
<b>Week 2</b>	
<b>Tues Sept 29</b>	<p><b>Language ideology and ‘truth’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hill (2000), “Read My Article” (27 pgs)</li> </ul>
<b>Thurs Oct 1</b>	<p><b>The politics of representation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bucholtz (2000), “The Politics of Transcription” (24 pgs) <i>Discussion led by _____</i></li> </ul> <p>* Complete journal entry #2 by end of week</p>
<b>Week 3</b>	
<b>Tues Oct 6</b>	<p><b>Power/knowledge and discourse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hall (1997), “Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse” (8 pgs)</li> </ul> <p>DUE: Journals collected from Group #1</p>
<b>Thurs Oct 8</b>	<p><b>Contested meaning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Goodwin (1994), “Professional Vision” (23 pgs) <i>Discussion led by _____</i></li> </ul> <p>* Complete journal entry #3 by end of week</p>
<b>Week 4</b>	
<b>Tues Oct 13</b>	<p><b>The language of nuclear war</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cohn (1987), “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals” (31 pgs) <i>Discussion led by _____</i></li> </ul> <p>DUE: Journals collected from Group #2</p>
<b>Thurs Oct 15</b>	<p><b>Power in talk show interaction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hutchby (1996), “Power in Discourse: The Case of Arguments on a British Talk Radio Show” (16 pgs) <i>Discussion led by _____</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Optional:</i> Hodges (2007), “The Political Economy of ‘Truth’ in the ‘War on Terror’ Discourse” (15 pgs)</li> </ul> <p>* Complete journal entry #4 by end of week</p>

<b>Week 5</b>	
<b>Tues Oct 20</b>	<p><b>Power and gender</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hall (1995), “Lip Service on the Fantasy Lines” (27 pgs) <i>Discussion led by _____</i></li> </ul> <p>DUE: Journals collected from Group #1</p>
<b>Thurs Oct 22</b>	<p><b>DUE: Midterm Essay</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal student reports to class</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	
<b>Tues Oct 27</b>	<p><b>Dialogism and the media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maybin (2001), “Language, Struggle and Voice: The Bakhtin/Voloshinov Writings” (7 pgs)</li> <li>Schulthies and Boum (2007), “‘Martyrs and Terrorists, Resistance and Insurgency’: Contextualizing the Exchange of Terrorism Discourses on Al-Jazeera” (15 pgs) <i>Discussion led by _____</i></li> </ul> <p>DUE: Journals collected from Group #2</p>
<b>Thurs Oct 29</b>	<p><b>Intertextuality and political discourse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hodges (2008), “The Dialogic Emergence of ‘Truth’ in Politics” (10 pgs)</li> <li><i>Optional:</i> Hodges (2008), “The Politics of Recontextualization” (19 pgs)</li> </ul> <p>* Complete journal entry #5 by end of week</p>
<b>Week 7</b>	
<b>Tues Nov 3</b>	<p><b>Appropriation of prior discourse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volcic and Erjavec (2007), “Discourse of War and Terrorism in Serbia: ‘We were fighting the terrorists already in Bosnia...’” (16 pgs) <i>Discussion led by _____</i></li> </ul> <p>DUE: Journals collected from Group #1</p>
<b>Thurs Nov 5</b>	<p><b>Audience design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duranti (2001), “The Voice of the Audience in Contemporary American Political Discourse” (19 pgs) <i>Discussion led by _____</i></li> </ul> <p>* Complete journal entry #6 by end of week</p>
<b>Week 8</b>	
<b>Tues Nov 10</b>	<p><b>Narrating the political self</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duranti (2006), “Narrating the Political Self in a Campaign for the U.S. Congress” (25 pgs) <i>Discussion led by _____</i></li> </ul> <p>DUE: Journals collected from Group #2</p>
<b>Thurs Nov 12</b>	<p><b>Language and identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stoltz (2007), “Arabs in the Morning Paper: A Case of Shifting Identity” (15 pgs) <i>Discussion led by _____</i></li> </ul> <p>* Complete journal entry #7 by end of week</p>

<b>Week 9</b>	
<b>Tues Nov 17</b>	<p><b>Ethnography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lindquist (2002), <i>A Place to Stand: Politics and Persuasion in a Working Class Bar</i>, chaps. 1-3 (56 pgs)</li> </ul> <p>DUE: Journals collected from Group #1</p>
<b>Thurs Nov 19</b>	<p><b>Ethnography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lindquist (2002), <i>A Place to Stand: Politics and Persuasion in a Working Class Bar</i>, chaps. 4-5 (61 pgs)</li> </ul> <p>* Complete journal entry #8 by end of week</p>
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	No classes Nov 23-27
<b>Week 10</b>	
<b>Tues Dec 1</b>	<p><b>Ethnography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lindquist (2002), <i>A Place to Stand: Politics and Persuasion in a Working Class Bar</i>, chaps. 6-7 (59 pgs)</li> </ul> <p>DUE: Journals collected from Group #2</p>
<b>Thurs Dec 3</b>	<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Final paper reports and course wrap-up</li> </ul>
<b>Final Paper</b>	DUE by Thurs, Dec 10 at 11:30 am