

Language, Power and Social Interaction

Linguistics 4100, Section 001 – Perspectives on Language

Fall 2004, Adam Hodges

LING 4100 (3), Section 001 – Perspectives on Language: Language, Power, and Social Interaction

The objective of this course is to critically examine the role of language in articulating, maintaining, and subverting relations of power in society. We will ground our study by first looking at basic ideas on linguistic relativity, the idea that one adjusts to reality in large part through language. Then, we will explore the many dimensions of power in society and the role that language plays in this diagram of power. We will focus specifically on media language and political language; and critically analyze examples of discourse in an attempt to understand the power relations that undergird social interactions. This course will give you an opportunity to engage in critical thinking about the role of language in society, and leave you with important analytical tools as you move into the world beyond college.

Prerequisites: *Junior or senior standing*

Approved for arts and sciences core curriculum: *Critical thinking*

CLASS TIME: MWF 2:00 – 2:50, August 23 – December 8, 2004 in Humanities 1B90

INSTRUCTOR: Adam Hodges

EMAIL: Adam.Hodges@Colorado.edu

DROP-IN OFFICE HOURS: MWF 1:00 – 1:45 in **Hellems 295** (second floor, SE corner of Hellems)

ADDITIONAL AVAILABILITY: Also available for meetings after class, or at other times by appointment. Please set these up in advance. Feel free to stop by my primary office in **Hellems 162** at any time (first floor in the center of Hellems, across from ALTEC foreign language lab) to catch me outside of scheduled office hours.

COURSE WEBSITE: The full syllabus is posted on the course website. The entire course website *plus* links to additional course readings that you will need to access online, access to the discussion board and access to your grades can be found by simply logging on to Web CT. Please refer to the course website weekly for notices and updates, and feel free to post to the discussion board.

External site: <http://ucsu.colorado.edu/~hodgesaw/courses/fall2004/ling4100/>

Web CT login: <https://webct.colorado.edu/>

READINGS: In addition to readings from the textbooks listed below, additional readings listed in the syllabus are linked from WebCT for downloading and/or printing.

Required Textbooks

Language and Power in the Modern World – Mary Talbot, Karen Atkinson, and David Atkinson, 2003 – Alabama University Press (ISBN: 0 7486 1538 5)

*abbreviated LP in syllabus

Discourse as Social Interaction (Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Vol 2) – Teun Van Dijk (editor), 1997 – Sage (ISBN: 0 8039 7847 2)

*abbreviated DSI in syllabus

Media Discourse – Norman Fairclough, 1995 – Edward Arnold (ISBN: 0 3405 8889 6)

*abbreviated MD in syllabus

Additional readings – Available in PDF format on Web CT

Optional Textbooks

Selected readings are taken from the following books. These readings are all available on the course website, but you may choose to consult other parts of these texts depending upon your interests and final paper topic. These texts can either be found in the library or ordered online and through local bookstores.

Rethinking Linguistic Relativity – John J. Gumperz and Stephen C. Levinson (eds.), 1996 – Cambridge University Press (ISBN: 0 521 44890 5)

Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach – Teun van Dijk, 2000 – Sage (ISBN: 0 7619 5655 7)

Analysing Political Discourse – Paul Chilton, 2004 – Routledge (ISBN: 0 415 31472 0)

Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader – Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor and Simeon J. Yates (eds.), 2002 – Sage (ISBN: 0 7619 7156 4)

Language and Power – Norman Fairclough, 2001 – Pearson ESL (ISBN: 0 5824 1483 0)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

Short Essays (10 essays @ 10 points each for 100 points): Commentary/analysis of class discussions/readings—specific topics for each week’s essay will be discussed in class on Mondays and Wednesdays. Essays are due at beginning of class on Fridays on dates indicated in syllabus—one page, *typed* (e.g. 200 – 300 words...NB 500 words maximum). Note, these are not summaries of class notes nor research papers, but should represent your own creative, critical, and succinct (i.e. well organized around a point) thoughts on the course material each week. These essays will be assessed according to the following rubric (NB essays not turned on time are assigned 0 points):

Excellent (10): Well organized and articulated; shows a clear understanding and critical engagement with course material.

Great (9): Shows a clear understanding and engagement with course material.

Good (8): Engages with topic.

Satisfactory (7): Provides commentary on topic, but arguments need strengthening.

Presentation (100 points): At the beginning of the semester, you will sign up for one of 9 Friday slots to present a topic in a group of two or three students. Your group will be responsible for giving a 15-25 minute presentation, followed by facilitation of class discussion over the material. You are strongly encouraged to bring in actual examples of discourse, whether from assigned readings or from the media, to illustrate your points. The goal is for you to explore an aspect of the course in more depth and share that knowledge with the class. In order to receive your grade, please turn in a one page (very general) outline of your presentation with the names of the group members and a few words on how the duties were divided in the group. Please talk to me (office hours, email, etc.) in advance of your presentation date for ideas, clarifications, etc. Presentations will be graded out of 100 points based on evidence of preparation, knowledge of material, and creativity.

Final Paper (100 points): By the first week of November, you should have a good idea of a final paper topic you want to pursue. The topic should deal with some aspect of the course material, but is not limited to specific topics covered in readings and classes. The main criteria are that you choose something of interest to you, use course material as a starting point for further exploration, and demonstrate a critical analysis in your paper. You are encouraged to engage in a critical analysis of an actual piece of discourse*,

* NB Due to Human Resource Committee guidelines, the use of live human subjects in experiments, observations or audio/video recording is strictly controlled and not allowed for this class. Moreover, the audio/video taping of people in everyday situations involves many ethical issues. Thus, any data you use should come from the public domain, secondary sources, previously approved projects or the media. Please see me about any questions/concerns regarding data you are interested in using.

but this is not required. Another option is to engage in a critical review of theoretical ideas from the semester. Please see me by the first week of November to talk about potential ideas and/or approval of your chosen project. The paper length should be about 10-15 pages (i.e. 3,000 – 5,000 words). Please use in-text citations and provide a list of references at the end of the paper, i.e. follow APA or MLA formatting (see links on website for style guides.) The paper must be *typed* and *stapled*, and turned in as a hard copy in person (*no* email attachments) on the last day of class (Wed, Dec 8).

Participation (100 points): These points will be awarded at the end of the semester based on attendance and class participation (e.g. turning in the introductory essay and taking part in paper discussions the last week of class are also included here). NB Attendance is a *necessary*, but not a *sufficient* condition for doing well. Just as crucial is completing assigned readings on time, and taking responsibility for making sure you understand the key points. This means jotting down your thoughts and questions while reading, bringing those to class, asking questions and engaging with classmates as we discuss ideas. Remember, this is a senior level *critical thinking* class, and as such requires full engagement with all aspects of the class requirements throughout the semester. This will inevitably pay off in what you take away from the class at the end.

Final grade is out of 400 points. Final letter grades will be assigned using the following scale.

A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F	<60%

NB Assignments must be typed and handed in as hard copies at the beginning of class on their due dates. Email attachments and late assignments will NOT receive grades!

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

- Mon, Aug 23 Introduction to course
- Wed, Aug 25 Language studies in the 21st century
 - DSI pgs 1-35 “Discourse as Interaction in Society” by Teun van Dijk
- Frid, Aug 27 Language, thought, and culture
 - “Introduction: Linguistic relativity re-examined” by Gumperz and Levinson (1-12 in *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*)
 - “Introduction to part I” by John Gumperz and Stephen Levinson (21-36 in *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*)
 DUE: INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

WEEK 2

- Mon, Aug 30 Meaning construction
 - “Language Form and Communicative Practices” by William Hanks (232-240 in *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*)
 - “Communities, Commonalities, and Communication” by Herbert Clark (324-335 in *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*)
- Wed, Sept 1 Cognitive and cultural frames
 - “Representation” by Paul Chilton (48-65 in *Analysing Political Discourse*)
- Frid, Sept 3 Conversational inference

- “The Linguistic and Cultural Relativity of Conversational Inference” by John Gumperz (374-403 in *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*)
- DUE: ESSAY # 1

WEEK 3

Mon, Sept 6 NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Wed, Sept 8 Social constructionism
 - “Linguistic Resources for Socializing Humanity” by Elinor Ochs (407-432 in *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*)

Frid, Sept 10 Indexicality and identity
 DUE: ESSAY #2
 Group presentation by...

WEEK 4

Mon, Sept 13 Power, knowledge, and discourse
 - LP pgs. 1-8 “Introduction”
 - “Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse” by Stuart Hall (72-81 in *Discourse Theory and Practice*)

Wed, Sept 15 Ideology
 - “Ideology and society” and “Groups” by Teun van Dijk (135-160 in *Ideology*)

Frid, Sept 17 Ideologies and social interaction
 - “Group relations” by Teun van Dijk (161-171 in *Ideology*)
 DUE: ESSAY #3
 Group presentation by...

WEEK 5

Mon, Sept 20 Critical discourse studies
 - DSI pgs. 258-281 “Critical Discourse Analysis” by Fairclough and Wodak

Wed, Sept 22 Discourse pragmatics
 - DSI pgs. 38-60 “Discourse Pragmatics” by Shoshana Blum-Kulka

Frid, Sept 24 Linguistic interaction
 - “Interaction” by Paul Chilton (30-47 in *Analysing Political Discourse*)
 DUE: ESSAY #4
 Group presentation by...

WEEK 6

Mon, Sept 27 Credibility, legitimization
 - “Legitimation” by Teun van Dijk (255-262 in *Ideology*)

Wed, Sept 29 Rhetorical structures
 - LP pgs. 9-24 Intro to “Language and the Media”

Frid, Oct 1 NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

WEEK 7

Mon, Oct 4 Gender in discourse
 - DSI pgs. 119-143 “Gender in Discourse,” by West, Lazar, and Kramarae

Wed, Oct 6 Language, power and gender
 - LP pgs. 136-147 “Language and Gender”

- LP pgs. 162-173 Deborah Cameron's "Is there any ketchup, Vera?": Gender, power and pragmatics"
- Frid, Oct 8 Performing social roles
- LP pgs. 174-184 Ochs and Taylor's "The 'Father Knows Best' dynamic in dinnertime narratives"
- DUE: ESSAY #5
Group presentation by...
- WEEK 8**
- Mon, Oct 11 Justifying violence
- LP pgs. 184-199 Adams, Towns and Gavey's "Dominance and entitlement: The rhetoric men use to discuss their violence towards women"
- Wed, Oct 13 Coercing consent
- "Just Say No? The Use of Conversation Analysis in Developing a Feminist Perspective on Sexual Refusal" by Kitzinger and Frith (167-185 in *Discourse Theory and Practice*)
- Frid, Oct 15 DUE: ESSAY #6
Group presentation by...
- WEEK 9**
- Mon, Oct 18 Discourse and ethnicity
- DSI pgs. 144-148, 164-175 van Dijk's "Discourse, Ethnicity, Culture and Racism"
- Wed, Oct 20 Racism in the news
- LP pgs. 34-48 Teo's "Racism in the News"
- Frid, Oct 22 Resisting and subverting power
- LP pgs. 224-238 Fordham's "Speaking standard English from nine to three: Language as guerilla warfare at Capital High" and Back's "Parodying racism and subverting racial meanings"
- DUE: ESSAY #7
Group presentation by...
- WEEK 10**
- Mon, Oct 25 Identities and power
- LP pgs. 238-254 Back's "'White identities' and dominant definitions" and Bucholtz's "The whiteness of nerds: Superstandard English and racial markedness"
- Wed, Oct 27 Language and politics
- DSI pgs. 206-226 Chilton and Schaffner's "Discourse and Politics"
- Frid, Oct 29 Organization of talk
- LP pgs. 49-60 Ian Hutchby's "The organisation of talk on radio" and "Confrontation talk: Arguments, asymmetries and power on talk radio"
- DUE: ESSAY #8
Group presentation by...
- WEEK 11**
- Mon, Nov 1 Media language
- MD pgs. 1-19 "Media and language: Setting an agenda"
- Wed, Nov 3 Media in society
- MD pgs. 35-52 "Communication in the mass media"

- Frid, Nov 5 Analyzing media
 - MD pgs. 53-74 “Critical analysis of media discourse”
 DUE: ESSAY # 9
 Group presentation by...
- WEEK 12**
- Mon, Nov 8 Intertextuality in discourse
 - “Language, Struggle and Voice: The Bakhtin/Volosinov Writings” by Janet Maybin
 (64-70 in *Discourse Theory and Practice*)
- Wed, Nov 10 Voices in the media
 - MD pgs. 75-102 “Intertextuality and the news”
- Frid, Nov 12 Linguistic analysis of media
 - MD pgs. 103-124 “Representations in documentary and news”
 DUE: ESSAY #10
 Group presentation by...
- WEEK 13**
- Mon, Nov 15 Representing the “other”
 - MD pgs. 125-128 “Identity and social relations in media texts”
- Wed, Nov 17 Identity and social relations
 - (MD pgs. 128-149 sample analyses in “Identity and social relations in media texts”)
- Frid, Nov 19 Individual research for final paper – no class meeting
 *Please note, there will be no drop-in office hours on this day. I will be at a conference through the end of the weekend, so please plan to meet with me by Wednesday if you’d like to discuss aspects of your paper before this time for research.
- WEEK 14**
- Mon, Nov 22 Political discourse in the media
 - MD pgs. 176-200 “Political discourse in the media”
- Wed, Nov 24 Case studies
 - (MD pgs. 150-175 sample analyses “Crimewatch UK”)
- Frid, Nov 26 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING
- WEEK 15**
- Mon, Nov 29 Critical media literacy
 - MD pgs. 201-205 “Critical media literacy”
 - <http://www.tandl.vt.edu/Foundations/mediaproject/>
- Wed, Dec 1 Language, power, and social interaction
 - Bring a piece of discourse to discuss
- Frid, Dec 3 Discuss papers
 - Student 5 minute paper talks (also next M/W)
- WEEK 16**
- Mon, Dec 6 Discuss papers, cont.
- Wed, Dec 8 Discuss papers / final class
 DUE: FINAL PAPER

GENERAL CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: Attendance is essential and required for successfully completing this class. Discussing class topics and readings with your classmates is an integral part of the learning process. Make the most of your class time—come prepared. Be ready to take notes, ask questions, and engage in discussions.

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 and perspectives. While we may disagree with ideas or intellectual arguments, we should nevertheless welcome their expression in an attempt to better understand our own notions. 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.

Assignment due dates: Assignments are due at the *beginning* of class on the due dates given in the syllabus. Assignments must be *typed* and *stapled* to receive full credit. Assignments must be turned in as hard copies, *NO* email attachments. Late assignments will not be graded.

Special accommodations: If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require reasonable accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to Disability Services in Willard 322, 303-492-8671.

Religious observances: The University of Colorado at Boulder has a legal and moral obligation to accommodate all students who must be absent from classes or miss scheduled exams in order to observe religious holidays. You will not be penalized for missing class due to a religious observance. You are responsible for notifying me of any conflicts prior to the missed class.

Academic integrity: Cheating and/or plagiarism on any assignment/exam will result in an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment/exam. Each student is expected to adhere to the new CU Student Honor Code and follow the policy laid out therein.

“On my honor as a University of Colorado at Boulder student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this work.”

Any of the following acts, when committed by a student at the University of Colorado at Boulder, shall constitute academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism: Portrayal of another's work or ideas as one's own;
- Cheating: Using unauthorized notes or study aids, allowing another party to do one's work/exam and turning in that work/exam as one's own; submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from the course instructors;
- Fabrication: Falsification or creation of data, research or resources, or altering a graded work without the prior consent of the course instructor;
- Aid of Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally facilitating plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication;
- Lying: Deliberate falsification with the intent to deceive in written or verbal form as it applies to an academic submission;
- Bribery: Providing, offering, or taking rewards in exchange for a grade, an assignment, or the aid of academic dishonesty;
- Threat: An attempt to intimidate a student, staff, or faculty member for the purpose of receiving an unearned grade or in an effort to prevent the reporting of an Honor Code violation.

More information on the CU Honor Code can be found at www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode