

Linguistics 405: Discourse

Rice University

Fall 2015

Syllabus

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Class Meetings: MWF 2:00-2:50, Herring 125

Course Owlspace Site: <https://owlspace-ccm.rice.edu/portal/site/LING-405-F15>

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The study of discourse is essentially the study of language in its natural habitat. We use language in a variety of contexts, to fulfill a broad range of communicative and social goals. In this course we will examine how contexts and functions of use influence linguistic form. The course is divided into three broad sections. We will begin by examining the ‘macro-structure’ of discourse: the organization of different kinds (genres) of language, such as conversation, narrative, and institutional dialogue. We will analyze re-occurring patterns of structure and discuss how they are shaped and motivated by communicative and social functional goals. The next section of the course focuses on how speakers routinely perform social action through discourse, such as disclaimers, offers, refusals, and questions. We will discuss the role of Discourse Markers in structuring discourse. We will also investigate the relationship between discourse and identity, discourse and ideologies, and the social nature of common features of spoken language: ‘reported speech’, dialogicality, framing, and discourse norms. We will analyze how these contribute to discourse structure, and how they reflect, manage, and construct social interaction. We will conclude the course by examining ‘micro-structure’—the role of discourse and interaction in motivating and explaining grammar and meaning. We will discuss the way in which grammatical structures are functionally brought about by the communicative and social aspects of discourse.

The learning outcomes of this course are threefold. (1) Students will gain a broad overview of this subfield of linguistics, and an introduction to relevant literature. (2) Students will gain experience conducting hands-on analysis of spontaneous spoken language, and the ability to use this skill in their own research. (3) Students will gain an understanding of the implications of discourse research for analyzing language, and its consequences for linguistic theory.

* Note: Linguistics 300 (or equivalent) is a prerequisite for this class.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

van Dijk, Teun A. (ed). 2011. *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. ISBN 978-1-84860-649-4

* Note: This is a significantly revised edition. Please make sure you get the 2011 edition (do not get the 2-volume set from 1997).

Course Reading Packet of published articles, available online through the Fondren Library electronic course reserves Ares. Articles are listed in the bibliography of this syllabus.

Course Requirements and Grading

<input type="checkbox"/> Active participation in class discussion and data sessions	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Points (Course Blog)	15%
<input type="checkbox"/> Lead class discussion on one article from the reading list	15%
<input type="checkbox"/> Midterm group project and data presentation (recording and transcript)	30%
<input type="checkbox"/> Final project (term paper):	30%

*Note: This course has no homework assignments and no quizzes or exams. There are however **a lot** of readings, which you are expected to carefully read, thoroughly understand, and actively discuss in class.

PARTICIPATION (ABSENCE POLICIES): Because this is a seminar-style class, your involvement and attention is crucial! Students are required to attend class. If you know you will have to miss a class ahead of time, please let me know. More than two non-illness-related absences will lower your participation grade by 1 percentage point per occurrence. Students are also required to actively participate in and contribute to class discussion of readings and data. You should plan to have looked over the course blog before each class, and bring up questions or comments based on that.

DISCUSSION POINTS: Beginning Sept. 14, For each of the starred articles on the reading schedule, you are required to submit three discussion points: questions, quibbles, rants, notable quotations from or observations about the article, etc. When relevant, you can include illustrative examples of the discourse phenomenon being discussed on that day (from your own recording/transcript or something you've observed or overheard.) Submit your discussion points as an entry on the course Owlspace blog before noon on the day we will be discussing the reading. You are encouraged to read and comment on each other's blog entries if you wish to do so. Discussion points are worth 15% of your course grade. You have two freebees! But failure to submit discussion points for more than two articles this semester will lead to a deduction of 1 percentage point from your course grade for each day skipped. Blog entries are due by noon on the day of discussion. (The student in charge of presenting the article does not have to submit a blog entry for that reading.)

READING DISCUSSANT: Each student will be responsible for leading class discussion for one of the starred articles on the reading schedule. Discussion should take about half the class period (20-30 minutes), should briefly summarize the main points of the article, address any methodological/practical difficulties raised, and discuss the theoretical implications of the research.

MIDTERM PROJECT AND PRESENTATION: During the first half of the semester, each student will record 45-60 minutes of natural spoken discourse and transcribe approximately six minutes of it. The recording and segment proposal is due September 28, and the transcript is due October 26. Students will work in pairs to check and reconcile the transcripts. We will pool these recordings and transcripts, and they will form a collective source of class data for researching topics covered during the semester. During the week after the transcripts are due, each student will do a short in-class presentation (around 10 minutes per student); students will briefly summarize their recordings for the class, and will show how some aspect of the recording is relevant to something we have looked at in the course so far.

FINAL PROJECT (TERM PAPER): Each student is expected to submit an original term paper related to the subject matter of this course. The paper should either be a macro-level analysis of a piece of discourse data, a close analysis of a social action pursued through talk, or a micro-level analysis of a grammatical phenomenon as observed in discourse. The data may be from any language, but must be naturally-occurring discourse (any genre, written or spoken). Students should meet with me sometime during the semester to discuss ideas for their projects. The final, written version of the paper is due by December 16 at 5pm (the last day of the final exam period), submitted on the Assignments section of the course Owlspace site.

Rice Honor Code

In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at <http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/>. This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

Cite all sources, and quote any material which is not your own work. Acknowledge the sources of corpora and other discourse data which you are using. The final term paper must consist of original work. Plagiarism is a violation of the Rice Honor code. Feel free to e-mail me or stop by office hours if you have any specific questions on what is or is not acceptable under the honor code in this class, or how best to cite your research sources for the paper.

Disability Support Services

If you have a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Support Services (Allen Center, Room 111 / adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

Course Outline

The following schedule may change slightly as the semester progresses. Any changes will be communicated in class and published in the Announcements section on the course Owlspace site.

- Readings followed by (t) are found in the Van Dijk textbook and are not available online. All other articles are available in PDF on Fondren Library's course reserves site Ares.
- Readings marked with an asterisk require a student discussion. Each student is required to present one of these articles.
- Readings marked with an asterisk additionally require each student to submit a posting on the course blog consisting of three discussion points by noon of the day the reading is assigned. (The student in charge of presenting the article does not have to submit a blog entry for that reading.)

WEEK 1

8/24	Introduction & Course Overview	None
8/26	Discourse/Genre	van Dijk intro, pp. 1-8
8/28	Discourse Transcription #1	(Skim) Du Bois et al. 1993

WEEK 2

8/31	Discourse Transcription #2	(Skim) Du Bois et al. 1993
9/2	Discourse Transcription #3	(Skim) Du Bois et al. 1993
9/4	Recording Spoken Discourse	None

WEEK 3

9/7	No Class (Labor Day)	
9/9	CA (Conversation Analysis)	None
9/11	CA #2	Pomerantz & Fehr (t)

WEEK 4

9/14	CA #3	*Good & Beach 2005
9/16	CA Data Session	None
9/18	Narrative	Ochs (t)

WEEK 5

9/21	Narrative Data Session	None
9/23	Recipes in Conversation	*Norrick 2011
9/25	Institutional Dialogue	Drew & Sorjonen (t)

WEEK 6

9/28	Crank Phone Calls Recordings are Due	*Seilhamer 2011
9/30	Disclaimers	*Overstreet & Yule 2001
10/2	Refusals	*Kitzinger & Frith 1999

WEEK 7		
10/5	Offers	*Curl 2006
10/7	Interview Questions	*Heritage 2002
10/9	Discourse & Cognitive Linguistics	*Lee 1997
WEEK 8		
10/12	No Class (Midterm Recess)	
10/14	Discourse Markers	None
10/16	Anyway	*Lenk 1998
WEEK 9		
10/19	'Like' #1	None
10/21	'Like' #2	*Blackwell & Fox Tree 2012
10/23	Mediated Action	*Tannen 2004
WEEK 10		
10/26	Intertextuality Data Session Transcripts are Due	None
10/28	Transposition and Replication	*Shoaps 1999
10/30	Dialogic Syntax	*Du Bois 2014
WEEK 11		
11/2	Midterm Presentations #1	None
11/4	Midterm Presentations #2	None
11/6	Discourse and Identity	De Fina (t)
WEEK 12		
11/9	CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis)	Fairclough et al. (t)
11/11	Discourse Ideologies and Racism	*Hodges 2015
11/13	Discourse, Interaction, & Grammar #1	Cumming et al. (t)
WEEK 13		
11/16	Discourse, Interaction, & Grammar #2	Cumming et al. (t)
11/18	'That'	*Thompson & Mulac 1991
11/20	Verb Argument-Structure	*Tao 2001
WEEK 14		
11/23	Preferred Argument Structure	*Du Bois 1987
11/25	TBA	None
11/27	No Class (Thanksgiving Break)	
WEEK 15		
11/30	Adjectives #1	None
12/2	Adjectives #2	None
12/4	Summary/Wrap-Up	None
12/16	Term Paper Due by 5pm	

List of Readings

Readings are listed in the order in which they are assigned. Those preceded by [Textbook] are found in the van Dijk (2011) textbook, and are not available online. All others are available in PDF on Fondren Library's course reserves site Ares.

[Textbook] van Dijk, Teun A. 2011. "Introduction: the study of discourse" pp. 1-7.

Du Bois, John W., Stephan Schuetze-Coburn, Danae Paolino and Susanna Cumming. 1993. "Outline of discourse transcription." In Jane A. Edwards and Martin D. Lampert, eds. *Talking data: transcription and coding methods for language research*. 45-89. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

[Textbook] Pomerantz, Anita and B.J. Fehr. 2011. "Conversation Analysis: an approach to the analysis of social interaction." pp. 165-190.

Good, Jeffrey S. and Wayne A. Beach. 2005. "Opening up gift-openings: birthday parties as situated activity systems." *Text* 25: 565-593.

[Textbook] Ochs, Elinor. 2011. "Narrative in everyday life." pp. 64-84.

Norrick, Neal R., 2011. "Conversational recipe telling." *Journal of Pragmatics* 43: 2740-2761.

[Textbook] Drew, Paul and Marja-Leena Sorjonen. 2011. "Dialogue in institutional interactions." pp. 191-216.

Seilhamer, Mark Fifer. 2011. "On doing 'being a crank caller': a look into the crank call community of practice." *Journal of Pragmatics* 43: 677-690.

Overstreet, Maryann and George Yule. 2001. "Formulaic disclaimers." *Journal of Pragmatics* 33: 45-60.

Kitzinger, Celia, and Hannah Frith. 1999. "Just say no?: the use of Conversation Analysis in developing a feminist perspective on sexual refusal." *Discourse and Society* 10: 293-316.

Curl, Traci S. 2006. "Offers of assistance: constraints on syntactic design." *Journal of Pragmatics* 38: 1257-1280.

Heritage, John. 2002. "The limits of questioning: negative interrogatives and hostile question content." *Journal of Pragmatics* 34: 1427-1446.

Lee, David A. 1997. "Frame conflicts and competing construals in family argument." *Journal of Pragmatics* 27: 339-360.

Lenk, Uta. 1998. "Anyway." Ch. 3 (excerpts) in *Marking Discourse Coherence: Functions of Discourse Markers in Spoken English*, 53-85 and 99-100. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Blackwell, Natalia and Jean E. Fox Tree. 2012. "Social factors affect quotative choice." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44: 1150-1162.

- Tannen, Deborah. 2004. "Talking the dog: framing pets as interactional resources in family discourse." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 37: 399-420.
- Shoaps, Robin. 1999. "The many voices of Rush Limbaugh: the use of transposition in constructing a rhetoric of common sense." *Text* 19: 399-437.
- Du Bois, John W. 2014. "Towards a dialogic syntax." *Cognitive Linguistics* 25: 359-410.
- [Textbook] De Fina, Anna. 2011. "Discourse and identity." pp. 263-282.
- [Textbook] Fairclough, Norman, Jane Mulderrig, and Ruth Wodak. 2011. "Critical Discourse Analysis." pp. 357-378.
- Hodges, Adam. 2015. "Ideologies of language and race in US media discourse about the Trayvon Martin shooting." *Language in Society* 44: 401-423.
- [Textbook] Cumming, Susanna, Tsuyoshi Ono, and Ritva Laury. 2011. "Discourse, grammar and interaction." pp. 8-36.
- Thompson, Sandra A. and Anthony Mulac. 1991. "The discourse conditions for the use of the complementizer that in conversational English." *Journal of Pragmatics* 15: 237-251.
- Tao, Hongyin. 2001. "Discovering the usual with corpora: the case of remember." In Rita Simpson and John Swales, eds., *Corpus Linguistics in North America: Selections from the 1999 Symposium*, 116-144. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Du Bois, John W. 1987. "The discourse basis of ergativity." *Language* 63: 805-855.