

**Ethnographic Analysis of Speaking:
Writing Culture
ANTH 162, ANTH 162(W)
Spring 2008
Joel Kuipers
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11.10-12.25 pm
CRN: 54087, 54088(W)**

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This course adopts an *ethno-graphic* (literally ‘writing culture’) approach to the description of the structure, variation, and use in the organization of speaking practices. Starting with the assumption that conversational interaction is a central locus of culture, students will conduct original research projects investigating the structure and variation in these communicative activities. The first half of the course will be devoted to examining the features of discourse as a human activity. As we examine these features, students will be expected to be thinking about possible paper topics. By the second half of the course, we will begin to focus on the development and refinement of the research projects for the final papers.

The textbook for the course will be Discourse Analysis, 2nd edition by Barbara Johnstone. We will be going through each chapter of the book systematically. At the end of each week, I will choose from one of the questions she poses in the *Discussion* sections of the chapter, and ask you to take 10-15 minutes at the end of class and write a one-page essay. Although I expect you to complete every one of these in-class essays, I will choose **two** of these at random from weeks one through eight and grade them. These in-class class essays will represent 20% of your grade.

You will also write a final research paper. The paper will be a detailed, thorough and careful analysis of a discursive activity of your choosing. You may choose to analyze a single event (e.g. a politician’s gaffe in a speech, a TV show, a historically important moment such as a trial), a collection of moments (e.g. a classroom activity, a rap battle, a type of religious sermon), or a general type or style or feature of discursive activity (e.g. the use of “I’m like” in everyday storytelling). The paper itself will be first submitted in draft, it will receive comments from me and other students and then it will be revised before its final form.

The comments from me and from other students should result in revisions and re-writing of your earlier draft. Although [Donald Murray \(1982\)](#) argues that writing is rewriting, students sometimes see revision not as an opportunity to develop and improve a piece of writing but as an indication that they have failed to do it right the first time. We need to move past the idea that “revision” means “correction.” This attitude is attributable partly to textbooks, in which revision is often defined as the act of "cleaning up" or "polishing" prose, and partly to instructional practices that treat revision as cosmetic changes rather than as rethinking one’s work. Revision, however, is the heart of the writing process--the means by which ideas emerge and evolve and meanings are clarified.

Prerequisite: Anth 4 or equivalent.

* = posted on Blackboard under “electronic reserves”

Part I: Components of Discourse Analysis

1). September 2, 4. Speaking as a central feature of human activity: Introduction to Discourse Analysis

Read: “Introduction” in Johnstone Discourse Analysis, 2nd Edition. (hereafter: “Johnstone”)

2) September 9, 11: Culture, Ideology and Discourse

Read: 1) “Discourse and World” in Johnstone 2) “Social Semiotics, Style and Ideology” in Coupland Sociolinguistics: A reader. (hereafter: “Coupland”) 3) “De-Mythologizing sociolinguistics” by Cameron in Coupland. 4) “Communicative Competence” by Gumperz, in Coupland. 5) Lakoff , George “Metaphor, Morality and Politics”* (1995).

3) September 16, 18. The Structure of Discourse: Chunking of Information

Read: a) “Discourse Structure: Parts and Sequences” in b) Speech Events and Natural Speech by *Nessa Wolfson* c) The Ethnographic Analysis of Communicative Events by *Muriel Saville-Troike* d) Ethics, Advocacy and Empowerment in Researching Language by *Deborah Cameron, Elizabeth Frazer, Penelope Harvey "et al."*

Paper proposals due: September 18: 2-3 pages: In this paper, choose three topics to research and write approximately 200 word abstracts. They may be related topics. Each abstract should contain: 1) title 2) description of the data you plan to use (how you will gather it, what shape it is in) 3) a preliminary *claim* you wish to make about this data 4) a brief description of how your claim fits into relevant background literature (cite at least 3 sources for each abstract).

4) September 23, 25 Structure of Discourse: Narrative

Read: a) What no Bedtime Story Means by *Shirley Brice Heath** b) *Schiffrin*, Deborah The Transformation of Experience, Identity, and Context in Gregory Guy, ed. Towards a Social Science of Language, v. II. [note: your in-class essay question will be chosen from Johnstone, chapter 3]

5) September 30, October 2nd. Participants and identities

Read: Johnstone, "Participants in Discourse"

6) October 7, 9. Interdiscursivity, Intertextuality

Read: Johnstone "Prior Texts, Prior Discourses"

7) October 14, 16 Discourse and Mediation

Read: Johnstone "Discourse and Medium"

Sign up for Paper presentations on October 30th, November 4th and 6th.

8) October 21, 23 Intentionality and Framing

Read: Johnstone "Intention and Interpretation"

MIDTERM: October 28 ID and Essay.

9) October 30th: Preliminary Paper presentations. 5-10 minutes each.

Draft paper due: October 30. Post your papers on Blackboard. All students are required to choose 5 other papers and comment on them on in Blackboard. Approximately 10 pages.

In this paper, you should present 1) Revised thesis statement and revised literature review; 2) statement of methods (including how you selected the data you're using), how you're analyzing it. 3) classification of the types of data you'll bring to bear on your argument and why you've used that scheme 4) examples of each type of data (usually in text or transcript form). Each snippet of text that you provide should be preceded by an explanation of the overall context of what is going on that makes the utterances make sense; it should be followed by a discussion of why this particular example is important and fits into the general classification scheme that you have laid out. 10 pages in addition to your literature review.

10) November 4th and 6th: Paper presentations

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11) November 11, 13 Tools for research and writing

Read: Visit to the library. How to use Refworks

Possible Visit to Library of Congress.

12) November 18. Types of ethnographic writing (no class November 20 due to AAA meetings) Catherine Allen will present a guest lecture on ethnographic writing.

Read: TBA

13) November 25. Types of ethnographic writing, 2: (November 27 Thanksgiving)

Read: Geertz “Being There” in Works and Lives*

14) December 2, 4 Using Discourse Analysis in the “real world”

Read: “Applied discourse analysis” Britt-Louise Gunnarsson* In Teun Van Dijk, ed. Discourse as Social Interaction

Final papers due: December 9th .

Required books for the course

Sociolinguistics: A Reader by Nikolas Coupland, ed.
Discourse analysis 2nd edition by Barbara Johnstone

Assessment:

In-class essays	20%
Midterm	20%
Class participation (including paper comments)	20%
Final paper	
Proposal	
First draft	
Final draft	40%

General expectations: Students must attend all classes. If you must be absent for a medical reason or family emergency, you must provide written documentation. Rules of academic integrity must be followed. Papers will be evaluated for strength and originality of your claim, the way in which your data supports the claim, the way in which your claim relates to (e.g. supporting or refuting) other claims in the literature, the coherence of the paper as a whole, and the validity of the findings.