Sample Syllabus 2

Discourse
Linguistics 124
Linguistics Department

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I. Introduction

What linguistic strategies do people use when managing their personal and social identities? In this course, we will focus on how small group interaction is structured by socio-cultural forces such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, and regional/political affiliation. Discourse context in turn helps shape linguistic structure, and can lead to language change across populations. You will explore various contexts of interaction, from weblogs to political debates to casual chat, in audio, video and text form. The aim is to identify linguistic indicators of how speakers manage and negotiate personal identity, frame their views and stances, and 'use words to get things done.'

During this 6-week course we will have two main objectives:

> 1) To acquire the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study of talk-in-interaction and the principles of discourse and conversation analysis (these are the items labeled Theory in the schedule below). You will become familiar with the foundational concepts and thinkers in interactional sociolinguistics.

> 2) To write a mini research paper focusing on the application of these techniques to a domain of interest to the student (e.g., interaction in the medical, legal, educational fields, online forum conversations, political discourse, etc.). (These are the items labeled Application in the weekly schedule below).

The course is broken down as follows:
- The first three weeks will focus mainly on giving you the concepts and background (Theory and Application). There will be more lecturing during the first half of the course.
- Week 4 will be a review week, where we go over what we've learned so far in more detail.
- The last two weeks will focus more on practicing analysis techniques, doing close readings of published research papers (Case studies), and refining your own research paper. The second half of the course will place more emphasis on active participation, analytic skills, and critical thinking.

Please be sure to read and understand the expectations for a particular week <u>before that week begins.</u>

II. Readings

Required texbook: *Approaches to Discourse* (Deborah Schiffrin), available for purchase in the Cal bookstore and online at Amazon.com or other online bookstores.

Additional required readings (provided by instructor):

Acton, Eric K. & Christopher Potts (2014). That straight talk: Sarah Palin and the sociolinguistics of demonstratives. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 18(1). 3-31.

Bucholtz, Mary (1999). "Why be normal?": Language and identity practices in a community of nerd girls. *Language in Society*, 28(02), 203-223.

Eckert, Penelope (2012). Three waves of variation study: the emergence of meaning in the study of sociolinguistic variation. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 41, 87-100.

Graham, Sage Lambert (2007). Disagreeing to agree: Conflict, (im)politeness and identity in a computer-mediated community. Journal of Pragmatics 39: 742-759.

Gumperz, John J. (2008). Interactional sociolinguistics: A personal perspective. In Schiffrin, D., Tannen, D., & Hamilton, H. E. (Eds.). *The handbook of discourse analysis*. John Wiley & Sons.

Negrón, Rosalyn (2014). New York City's Latino ethnolinguistic repretoire and the negotiation of latinidad in conversation. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 18(1). 87-118.

Schegloff, E. A. (1987). Analyzing single episodes of interaction: An exercise in conversation analysis. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 101-114.

III. Assignments and grade structure

Attendance and participation:	10%
4 assignments (5% each):	20%
In-class midterm exam:	20%
In-class quiz:	10%
Final research paper:	40%

Your weekly assignments will be geared towards training you to complete the final research paper. Each assignment helps you hone in on some aspect of the methodology.

The final paper: The final paper will represent your unique research on data you identify, collect, and transcribe/organize/tag yourself. If the data is spoken, the conversation should be no more than 7 minutes long, and among no more than three speakers. If written, the data should be no longer than one page of normally-spaced 12-point font text (examples include a blog entry, online forum exchange, YouTube comments, political debate transcript, etc.). I will approve the chosen target data for each student in Weeks 1 and 2, to make sure the project is doable in the time allotted.

The paper should be between 10 and 15 pages long, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font with normal 1-inch margins all around. Formatting requirements are strict. The bibliography and all transcriptions of the text, in appendix form, may go beyond this page limit. You will be given an outline of the sections that must be included in the paper. You will be given precise instructions for the citation style we will use. All expectations about the content and format of the paper will be made clear.

The paper will be evaluated on the basis of how well you identified an appropriate and interesting topic of research, and how well you implemented the concepts, terminology, and methodologies introduced throughout the course.

In-class midterm: The midterm will be a 2-hour in-class short answer exam, testing your understanding of the concepts.

In-class quiz: The 1-hour quiz will represent a test of your ability to implement the practical methodologies learned so far on actual sets of data. You will be given a couple of scenarios, interactions or conversations and will be asked to analyze them, with specific questions guiding your analysis.

Weekly schedule

Week 1
Readings: Schiffrin Chapters 3 & 6; Gumperz (2008).

- Theory: Introduction: pragmatics, sociolinguistics and the importance of context.
  - Day 1: Introductory lecture: what is pragmatics and why study discourse? A description of the goals and themes of this course.
  - Day 2: Grice and Austin: Speech Act Theory and conversational implicature.
  - Day 3: Topic and information structure, discourse markers, hedging.
  - Day 4: Gumperz, Goffman, Hymes: interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of speaking.
  - Day 5: Discussion of research methods, good potential research topics, best practice as a researcher (ethics, consent, IRB, non-discrimination).

- Application:
  - Exploring research topics. I will provide a list for students to choose from, if they can't find a topic on their own. They will be asked to think about some ideas.
  - **ASSIGNMENT 1 (due Friday of Week 1)**: Initial 1-page research proposal due Friday. I will provide a set of guiding questions, to help students know what points to address in the proposal.

Week 2
Readings: Schiffrin Chapter 8 & 10. Eckert (2012).

- Theory: Types of data: written vs. spoken data; register and genre; domains and types of interaction. Sociolinguistic variables: age/gender/ethnicity, forms of identity, stance, speech communities, political affiliation.
    - Day 1: Overview of variationist sociolinguistics: from Labov to Eckert.
    - Day 2: Genre (news, academic discourse, websites and blogs, advertising,etc.) and register (politeness/impoliteness, prestige, jargon).
    - Day 3: Sources of data: corpora, online sources, TV sources, live interaction. An in-class demo of where to find free corpora, and how to search them.
    - Day 4: Spoken vs. written discourse; Trascription methodology.
    - Day 5: Week wrap-up: the variationist/intearctional split and the Third Wave of sociolinguistics. Consolidating quantitative with qualitative methods.

- Application:
    - Submit updated research proposal by Friday of Week 2, after you have received instructor feedback (last chance for topic change. Any student with no topic by this date get one assigned to them by the instructor).
    - ASSIGNMENT 2 (due Monday of Week 3): Carry out data collection:
        - set up observation if the data is gathered from live interlocutors; or, identify online or print sources of data (a blog, a news feed, etc.);
        - collect and record interaction (audio, online, from corpus, etc.);
        - broad transcription of spoken data, if applicable. Annotation should include relevant sociolinguistic variables and parameters of interest, and tie these in to the research question.

Week 3
Readings: Schiffrin Chapter 7. Schegloff (1987).

- Theory: Methods in Discourse Analysis (DA) and Conversation Analysis (CA)
    - Day 1: Introduction to Conversation Analysis. (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson; John Heritage)
    - Day 2: Methods in CA with examples and applications.
    - Day 3: DA and CA in political discourse, with a focus on framing.
    - Day 4: Gesture in multimodal interaction. (guest speaker)
    - Day 5: Overview and Practice. Group work with sets of data, and presentation of findings by groups.

- Application: Annotation, coding, introduction to use of specialized open-source discourse analysis software.
    - ASSIGNMENT 3 (due Friday of Week 3): narrow transcription and annotation of the data, in accordance with methods learned in Weeks 2 and 3. Transcription should include details: e.g., speaker turn taking and overlap; relevant gestural information; intonational peaks, etc.

Week 4
Readings: No new readings. Review of existing readings.

Review week.
- o Day 1: Review of Speech Act Theory, the maxims, and conversational implicature, with more examples. Discussion and in-class problem sets.
- o Day 2: Review of variationist vs. interactional sociolinguistics, with more examples. Discussion and in-class problem sets.
- o Day 3: Reviw of Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis. Discussion and in-class problem sets.
- o Day 4: Review and more examples of sociolinguistic variables, types of interaction, and genre/register. Discussion and in-class problem sets.
- o Day 5: MIDTERM.

- Application: Guidance on using online catalogues, Google Scholar, library resources, and references/indexes to look for relevant literature when doing a literature review for a paper.
  - o ASSIGNMENT 4 (due Friday of Week 4): A brief annotated bibliography of *at least 5 scholarly sources* that directly inform your research question (a total of no more than 3 double-spaced pages). Each source used should be summarized in one or two brief paragraphs, and discuss the main point of the article, the findings, and their direct relevance to the student's own paper.

Week 5
Readings: Bucholtz (1999). Negrón (2014).

Case studies part 1 - gender, ethnicity/race, identity. A carful reading of notable published papers, with in-class discussion.
- o Day 1: Presentation and discussion of Bucholtz (1999).
- o Day 2: Presentation and discussion of Bucholtz (1999), continued.
- o Day 3: Presentation and discussion of Negrón (2014).
- o Day 4: Presentation and discussion of Negrón (2014), continued.
- o Day 5: Discussion of term paper-related issues and Q&A, followed by in-class QUIZ.

Week 6
Readings: Graham (2007). Acton & Potts (2014).

Case studies part 2 - textual/online interaction, political discourse. A carful reading of notable published papers, with in-class discussion.
- o Day 1: Presentation and discussion of Graham (2007).
- o Day 2: Presentation and discussion of Graham (2007), continued.
- o Day 3: Presentation and discussion of Acton & Potts (2014).
- o Day 4: The social impact of studies of interaction: Labov's work in education reform; linguistic and dialectal awareness; examples from African American Vernacular English (John Rickford's work).

- o Day 5: Summary and conclusions. Survey of further applications of DA and CA methods (legal, medical, educational domains). Course evaluations. HAND IN TERM PAPERS.

IV. A Note on Participation

10% of your grade depends on your participation in section. <u>The 10% is not automatic based on attendance alone: you must actively participate in order to get the full points.</u> Given the wide variety of personalities and participation styles, this can be accomplished in a variety of ways. You may participate during lecture by answering/asking questions, doing active listening, and taking part in group activities. Or you may participate by coming to office hours and engaging in discussion with me, and with other students present during office hours.

Office hours are a great time to talk to me directly and get individual guidance on any aspect of the course and your research paper. Please take advantage of this opportunity and come by, even if you only have a small question.

V. Academic Integrity

The issue of academic integrity is of utmost importance.

The work you produce for this course will be all in the form of essays and short answers. All answers you hand in must be 100% your own work. You may form study groups and discuss the material, but the assignments turned in must be your own work. So please discuss in group, but write up individually.

The policy regarding plagiarism is very strict. Please be sure to cite all sources appropriately, even if you are not using direct quotes and are just paraphrasing (this includes ideas and unique phrasing you hear from your peers in the study groups you form or in class). The consequences for discovered copying or plagiarism will vary based on the degree of infraction, but will at the very least involve: disciplining by the Instructor, a report to the Office of Student Conduct (they will have a record of your name and the incident from then on), and a zero on that assignment or exam.

I strongly encourage you to take a moment to read through the definitions and guidelines on academic conduct found at this website: http://campuslife.berkeley.edu/conduct/ . If you have any questions or doubts as to what constitutes plagiarism or academic misconduct in general, please don't be afraid to ask me.