

**SOCB 118L**  
**SOCIOLOGY OF LANGUAGE**

Winter 2008  
U413  
MWF 10:00 – 10:50

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Office Hrs:  
Mon 11:30-12:30/Fri 11-12

**Introduction**

This course explores how the understanding of language can guide and inform sociological inquiries. More specifically, the course intends to examine the intimate yet complex relations between language and several key sociological concepts, including power, hegemony, identification, and legitimacy. It also offers an overview of key sociological approaches to language, including sociolinguistics, conversation analysis, discourse analysis. The course is not designed to be a linguistics course. The emphasis on exploring language from sociological and anthropological points of view makes this class quite different from the perspective of modern linguistics.

The course is divided into two parts:

- We begin (Part One) with a survey of how language is understood in various major sociological/anthropological traditions, emphasizing how the relation between language and society is conceptualized.
- Next, in Part Two, we turn to the actual processes of how power, identities, authority, and legitimacy are played out in language. The emphasis here is to explore how language plays a socially constitutive role in everyday life.

**Readings**

All course readings are on **e-reserves** (<http://reserves.ucsd.edu/>).

**Course Requirements**

Your grade for the quarter will be calculated on the basis of the following four **course requirements**:

1. Five short responses to the course readings (no more than 2 pages long, due on the Fridays of Wk 2, 4, 6, 8, 10) (10%).
2. A close-book, in-class short-answer mid-term exam on February 8 (20 %).
3. A take-home essay assignment, due in Week 7 (30 %). The essay questions will be distributed on February 15. This assignment may involve collection and analysis of primary data. I will not accept papers submitted by e-mail: so all papers must be submitted in typed hard-copy.

4. A close-book, in-class final exam (40 %), covering the entire course, on March 21 (Friday). I strongly discourage make-up exams. Normally, serious illness is the only acceptable rationale. Please do not enroll if you know now you are not available to take the final exam on March 21.

5. Late submissions will be marked down unless a written doctor's note is presented.

6. Students should be familiar with the University's regulations concerning **plagiarism and integrity of scholarship**. If you have any questions about how it applies to this course, please ask the instructor.

7. Although attendance is not mandatory per se, it is impossible for you to get full participation if you are not in class. Additionally, since many of the exam questions will be generated from material that comes directly from the lectures and is *not* contained in your assigned readings it is highly recommended that you attend class regularly.

### **Contacting the Instructor**

1. I hold drop in office hours on Mondays from 11:30 to 12:30 and on Fridays from 11:00 to 12:00 in my office in Room 491 of Social Science Building (south of RIMAC). I am also available by appointment.

2. I try, within the limit of my free time, to respond to students' emails; but please keep your email inquiries brief and specific. Email is not the medium for long discussions or detailed clarifications on the topics of the course. That should be done during office hours.

### **Course Outline**

#### **PART I: LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE**

##### **Wk1 January 7, 9, 11: *Introduction***

Lakoff, Robin Tolmach, 1990, "Talking about Language," in *Talking Power* (New York: BasicBooks), 24-39 (Chapter 2).

Film: *Discovering the Human Language* 1995.

##### **Wk 2 January 14, 16, 18: *Speech Act Theory***

Austin, J. L., 1962, *How to do things with words?* (Excerpt) in *The Discourse Reader*, ed. Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland. New York: Routledge, 63-75 (Chapter 2).

Grice, H. P., 1975, "Logic and Conversation" (Excerpt) in *The Discourse Reader*, ed. Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland. New York: Routledge, 76-88 (Chapter 3).

##### **Wk 3 January 23, 25: *Variationist Sociolinguistics***

William Labov, 1973, "The Social Stratification of (r) in New York City Department Stores," in *Sociolinguistic Patterns* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 43-69.

William Labov, 1973, "Hypercorrection by the Lower Middle Class as a Factor in Linguistic Change." in *Sociolinguistic Patterns* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 122-142.

Penny Eckert, 1989, "Adolescent social structure and the spread of linguistic change." *Language and Society* 17: 183-207.

Film: *Do you Speak American?* 2004 (segments)

**Wk 4 January 28, 30, February 1: *Conversation Analysis***

Deirdre Boden, 1994, *The Business of Talk* (London: Polity Press), 53-107 (Chapter 3-4).

Emanuel Schegloff, 1992, "On Talk and its Institutional Occasions." in *Talk at Work*, ed. Paul Drew and John Heritage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 101-134.

**Wk 5 February 4, 6, 8: *Frame Analysis***

Erving Goffman. 1981. "Footing," in *Forms of Talk* (UPenn Press). 124-159.

Deborah Tannen and Cynthia Wallat. 1987. "Interaction Frames and Knowledge Schemas in Interaction: Examples from a Medical Examination/Interview." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 50: 205-217.

**Mid-Term Exam! February 8**

**Wk 6 February 11, 13, 15: *Language as Symbolic Power***

Dell Hymes, "On Communicative Competence," in *Sociolinguistics: Selected Readings*, ed. J. B. Pride & J. Holmes, (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1972).

Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 43-89 (Ch. 1-2).

John Conley and William M. O'Barr, 1990, *Rules versus Relationships: The Ethnography of Legal Discourse*, (Chicago: U of Chicago Press) Ch 4 (58-81).

Recommended: Francesca Polletta, 2006, "Ways of Knowing and Stories Worth Telling: Why Casting Oneself as a Victim Sometimes Hurts the Cause." In *It was Like a Fever* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press): 109 – 140.

**Essay Assignment Distributed February 15**

**PART II: LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY**

**Wk 7 February 20, 22: *Language and Identity I***

Jan-Petter Blom and John J. Gumperz, 1972, "Social Meaning in Linguistic Structure: Code-Switching in Norway," in *Directions in Sociolinguistics*, ed. John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston), 407-434.

Bonnie Urciuoli, 1998, *Exposing Prejudice* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press), Ch. 3 (73-105).

Amy Tan. 1995. "Mother Tongue," in *Under Western Eyes: Personal Essays from Asian America*, ed. by Garrett Hongo. New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday. 313-320.

**Essay Assignment Due February 22**

**Wk 8 February 25, 27, 29: *Language and Authority***

William O'Barr and Bowman Atkins, 1980, "'Women's Language' or 'Powerless Language?'" in *Language and Gender: A Reader*, ed. Jennifer Coates (Oxford: Blackwell): 377-387.

Candace West, 1984. "When the doctor is a lady." in *Language and Gender: A Reader*, ed. Jennifer Coates (Oxford: Blackwell): 396-412.

James Milroy and Leslie Milroy, 1999, *Authority in Language* (New York: Routledge), Ch 1 (1-23).

**Wk 9 March 3, 5, 7: *Language and Politics***

George Orwell, 1945 "Politics and the English Language." Stable URL:  
<http://www.k-1.com/Orwell/index.cgi/work/essays/language.html>

George Lakoff. 2004. "Framing 101: How to Take Back Public Discourse" in *Don't Think of an Elephant!* (White River Junction: Chelsea Green Publishing), 3-34.

Joshua Green. 2005. "It isn't the Message, Stupid!" *Atlantic Monthly*. Stable URL:  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200505/green>.

Film: *How Democrats and Progressives Can Win: Solutions from George Lakoff* 2004

**Wk 10, March 10, 12, 14: *Language and Hegemony/ Counterhegemony: English as a World Language***

Alastair Pennycook, 1996, *English and the Discourses of Colonialism* (London: Routledge), Ch 6 & 7 (160-218).

James Stanlaw, 2003, *Japanese English: Language and Cultural Contact* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press) Ch 6 (127-142); 12 (279-300).

Film: Zhang Yuan, 2000, *Crazy English* (if time allows)

**Final Exam: March 21, 8- 11am**