By close looking at the world you can find things that we couldn’t, by imagination, assert were there.

(Sacks, 1992, *Lectures on Conversation*)

How do sentences do it? Don’t you know? For nothing is hidden.


At once metatheoretical framework and methodological praxis, discourse analysis (better yet, discourse studies) describes an interdisciplinary family of approaches to naturally occurring talk (and, secondarily, text). In communication, discourse analysis finds its home within language and social interaction. DA invites you to set aside what is hidden, such as psychological or inner constructs (e.g., “mind,” or “intention”) or deterministic ideas of communication (e.g., gender, structure, and agency) and instead explore how they are essentially visible as discursive accomplishments.

By “close looking” of the relationship between communication and social life, this course will show you how talk is (and talk and text are):

1. connected as matrices of social action
2. constitutive of social relationships, consequential to their outcome, and multiply embedded in institutions
3. always a matter of empirical analysis – that is, you do not know what something means before you analyze it

This is an introductory course, where you will be introduced to important EMPIRICAL approaches within discourse studies. Though theoretical issues raised by these approaches go hand in hand with methodological issues, my emphasis will remain with teaching you the basics of analyzing talk (and text): transcribing your data, identifying discourse strategies, arguing for what is most interesting, and arriving at a persuasive analysis of discourse dynamics. I encourage ongoing projects and questions on health, education, personal narrative, gender, psychological realities, the law, disability and much, much more!

As discourse scholars, I ask that you follow two ground rules:

1. Be open.
2. Do not ask questions to which you already know the answers.
Class organization

“Discourse analysis means doing analysis” (Antaki et al. 2003)*. Because it is in the doing that we improve as analysts, this class is as much a workshop, where we will share data with others, as a seminar, where we will read and discuss what the readings mean to our ongoing work. Be ready to collaborate with each other on all aspects of the class. Though I have set aside specific class time for the purposes of workshop, you are welcome to bring in your own transcribed recordings of talk or institutional texts to class so that we can brainstorm about them together. Starting on week 4, we will allot the last half hour of each class to students’ data sample, so please e-mail me ahead of time to let me know that you’d like me to reserve the time for you. These mini data sessions will help your own work as you generate ideas and insights for your final paper, as much as they will ensure the success of the class for the rest of us.

The semester will proceed in two parts: the first part will be devoted to methodological type readings, and the second part to empirical readings and data workshops.

Assignments and Evaluation

Research journal

At the end of the semester, you will turn in a Research journal for a grade.

Your journal will be comprised of:

Weekly entries: you will record your impressions about readings, class discussions, things going on around you, your data and analyses, and, really, anything you wish that has to do with the class. I cannot overestimate the importance of writing these entries to your learning process.

Your assignments, both formal and informal

Informal assignments: Worksheets and the transcription exercise. Hold on to everything, and put them in the journal.

Formal assignments

There will be 2 formal assignments in this class (instructions for each on BB) on which I will give written feedback. You will present your work on each assignment to the class, and open your analysis to class discussion:

(1) A transcription and analysis of an interview segment. (5-7pp, plus transcript)
(2) An analysis of a discourse sample. For the semester project, you will obtain a sample of discourse (consisting of talk and/or text/or online exchange) and produce a mini discourse analysis (12-15pp), comparable to one of the pieces we will read over the semester. Due to time constraints and understandable issues of access, I encourage you to use a pre-existing sample of data, as data you have already collected for an ongoing project, or data from a corpus. (40% of your grade)

We will discuss/clear our topics for this assignment on September 14.
Participation

I will ask you to be responsible to synthesize readings in **brief** 5-10 minute in-class presentations.

**You will need**

A digital audio or video recorder that can connect to your computer, and allow you to create digital voice or video files.

VoiceWalker. A free download that will assist you in transcribing:


A caveat (VoiceWalker is for Windows only).

**Readings**

You can buy these (used, I hope) at *Gray’s College Bookstore*, 2836 E. Fletcher Ave 813.971.2665:


**OPTIONAL RESOURCE:**


All other readings are on our BB site. Should you have problems with opening a reading on BB, you can do one of two things: 1. Download it from the journal directly or 2. Email me so I can send it to you.

You will notice that I have posted more readings on BB that are listed as due on the syllabus. Simply open them and read the abstracts, or ask me about them at any time; they are for you to enjoy, model, and to use to generate ideas for your own work 😊.
Schedule

*There is an article that will be useful to you throughout this class:

http://extra.shu.ac.uk/daol/articles/v1/n1/a1/antaki2002002-paper.html

I suggest that you read it by week 4, at your own pace, and to re-read it as many times as is necessary and useful. Class discussions about what counts as an analysis will proceed from its tenets. You should, of course, feel free to raise questions/issues about it in class or to me, in my office hours.

**Part one: Discourse**

**Week 1: August 24: Discourse: What is it?**

Class introduction, what is discourse?

Introduction **DR**, pp. 8-11.

Extra on BB:


**Week 2: August 31: Organization of talk: Turns, openings, closings**

Sacks & Schegloff in **DR**


Extra AND RECOMMENDED on BB:

Note: This is a very easy companion text for the Sacks and Schegloff readings!

**Week 3: September 7: Meaning in talk: Speech acts, implicature, and discourse markers**

Austin in **DR** (I have also posted Tracy “Speech acts” on BB if Austin is too dense for you).


Grice in **DR**
Week 4: September 14: Recontextualizing discourse: Transcription


Ochs in DR

In class transcription exercise.

** Discussion of final paper topic**

Week 5: September 21: Interview discourse


** Assign interview analysis**

Week 6: September 28: Culture in action: Membership categorization analysis


Week 7: October 5: Face, facework and politeness

Guest speaker: Professor Kristine L. Munoz, University of Iowa

http://www.uiowa.edu/~commstud/people/faculty/fitch/fitch.shtml

Goffman in DR

Brown & Levinson in DR

Holmes in DR
** Last hour: interview analysis ** (If we run out of time we will finish 10/12)

** Week 8: October 12: Narrative **


Labov in DR


*(I will hand out this reading in class)*


** Part two: Analysis **

** Week 9: October 19: Identity as discursive accomplishment **

*First half of class: Data session: What do I need help with? What am I working on?*


** Week 10: October 26: Organizations and institutions **


Extra on BB:


**Week 11: November 2: Doing social problems**


Check out: http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/identities/findings/Stokoe.pdf


**Week 12: November 9: Little d-Big D discourse analysis**


** November 16 No class: I am away at NCA **

**Week 13: November 23: The dynamics of diagnosis**

Mehan in DR


Extra on BB:


**Week 14: November 30: Workshop -- Presentations**

**December 3: Turn in your Research Journals by 12 noon**

**Resources:**

*Journals*

Discourse & Society
Discourse Studies
Text and Talk
Research on Language and Social Interaction
Journal of Pragmatics
Discourse and Communication
Communication & Medicine
Journal of Applied Communication Research
Language
Language in Society
Journal of Sociolinguistics

*Discourse corpora*

For recordings of talk in interaction, you can go to Talkbank. Their archives contain good samples of classroom, meeting, and professional-novice exchanges, which you can obtain without joining.

*In the USF Library:*

The Otis R. Anthony African Americans in Florida oral history project. This is a collection of digital files AND transcripts from interviews with African Americans in Tampa about their experiences growing up in the 30s, 40s, 50s. This collection offers great potential for papers in narrative analysis and more.

There are other digital collections, so explore.