

Discourse  
Fall 2011  
Kara Becker

Linguistics 326  
T/TH 2:40 – 4pm  
Eliot 216

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Office Hours: M/T/W 11-12  
and by appointment (Vollum 306)

Course Description

This course is an investigation into linguistic units above the level of the sentence, and how these units are used by speakers in social interaction. Our investigation will be equal parts theoretical (in particular, surveying the historical trajectories and theoretical motivations for a variety of types of discourse analysis) and empirical (recording, transcribing, and analyzing discourse). We will ask *what is discourse* (a question with no short answer), *why is discourse a valuable object of study*, as well as *how is discourse analysis situated within the field of linguistics* and *what does discourse analysis buy us*. Students will read and critically engage with scholarly works each week; in addition, they will **do** discourse analysis. Part of each week's class time will be devoted to lab work, whether collaborating on transcription conventions, critiquing a specific discourse analysis, practicing field techniques, etc. Students will complete weekly recording and transcription/analysis assignments, and submit a final project that is a discourse analysis of their choosing. Conference.

Text

Jaworski, Adam and Nikolas Coupland (eds.). 2006. *The Discourse Reader* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). London: Routledge. (Referred to here as DR).

+Supplementary Readings, provided in PDF on Moodle.

Course Requirements

**Participation. 30%**

Participation in conference is, as always, critical to the success of the course. Come prepared with thoughts, questions, and comments about our readings, and be an active participant in the work we do, both in discussing readings and in working in-class on data analysis.

1. **Leading Discussion:** Each of you will serve as a discussion leader for some reading or topic, most probably in pairs. A successful discussion leader will come prepared to lead us through the material and to present critical questions to the class for discussion. A handout is strongly encouraged. Focus specifically on two aspects of the material
  - a) The take-away: what is crucial that we all understand, digest, and take away from the material? And
  - b) How does the material relate to the larger class, how does it fit in, extend, or amend what we're doing? Discussion Leaders will be responsible as well for posting any materials and updating the glossary on our course blog (see 2 below).

2. **Blog.** This course has a blog, one that starts empty at the beginning of the course.

You can find it at:

<http://blogs.reed.edu/ling326/>

Your job is to add content throughout the semester, so that we have a central location for our discussions and a way to compile information over the course of the class. You will be evaluated on the extent to which you make weekly contributions to the site. Our starting point for pages:

Glossary. A place for us to document the terms and concepts we discuss in class and in the readings. The discussion leader will be responsible for updating the glossary in the few days after discussion is led; the rest of the class should feel free to edit, update, and add to this glossary each week.

Discussion Forum. A place for questions, thoughts, writings, and the uploading of artifacts. Crucially, you should not only post here, but engage with the posts of others.

Discourse Analyses. A list of types of DA and their fundamental tenets.

Tools/Variables. A list of variables or other ways to approach the doing of DA.

People. Important figures in DA.

### **Weekly Recording/Transcription/Description. 40%**

Each week, you will submit some form of data and data analysis to me. Generally, this work should have three parts:

- 1) A recording of some naturally occurring speech, gathered by you, for use as text/data.
- 2) A transcription of the text in question.
- 3) A description/analysis/write-up.

The details of this work will vary from week to week, so be prepared to adapt to the nuances of this weekly exercise. Regardless of the details, expect each week to hand in a document with the above 3 sections. #3 can be (again, depending on the task at hand) a description of the process of transcription, a short discourse analysis, or a critical reaction linking the text to a reading from class. Regardless, it should not exceed 3 pages.

\*Note. You will upload weekly to the AFS website. Location: [afs/reed.edu/courses/Linguistics/Discourse](http://afs.reed.edu/courses/Linguistics/Discourse). We will make folders with each of your names. Here you will upload, as relevant – sound files of your field recordings, transcripts, and your weekly assignments. No hard copies are necessary in this class.

### **Final Project. 30%**

For your final project, you will do a discourse analysis of some text. You must

- 1) select an approach (a type of DA) with which to interact with your text (and you may decide to choose more than one approach)
- 2) Use original data from naturally occurring conversation, so speech gathered by you, transcribed by you, and analyzed by you
- 3) Include the full text somewhere, transcribed, with conventions (this can be in text if the text is short, or in an appendix if it is longer)
- 4) Cite in-text and include a bibliography
- 5) Not exceed a strictly enforced page limit of 15 pages. Due Tuesday of Finals Week, December 13, 5pm, in your AFS folder.

\*Please note that if you would like to receive written feedback on your final paper, you must indicate this on your paper itself, and provide your box number.

### **Links**

Blog: <http://blogs.reed.edu/ling326/>

AFS site:

<https://files.reed.edu/?path=%2Fafs%2Freed.edu%2Fcourses%2FLinguistics%2FDiscourse>

ELAN: <http://www.lat-mpi.eu/tools/elan/elan-description>

Praat: <http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/>

**Recordings.** You will be making a corpus of naturally occurring speech over the course of the semester. Recordings can be made using various types of equipment (see below), but should be saved always as .wav files (not mp3s) and uploaded to your AFS folder. In addition, if you want to discuss a clip from a recording you made, you can create the clip in Praat and upload it our blog to share.

Resources for recording equipment:

- 1) If you own a laptop, you can use its internal mic to make recordings. Ideally you will download and use Praat to make recordings.
- 2) The IMC has on site recording equipment if you'd like to take someone there to record. They also have video recorders for check-out.
- 3) The Reed AV department has a few handheld recorders (the Zoom H2, see below), but they are in demand cross-campus, so you may not always have access to them.
- 4) Check out recording equipment from the Linguistics Department. We have, at your disposal:
  - a. 2 Blu Snoball desktop microphones
  - b. A ZoomH2 handy recorder. This is a field recorder that uses its own external mic.
  - c. A ZoomH4 handy recorder. This is a field recorder that can take an external lavalier mic. You should use this if you think you may use your recordings for any kind of acoustic analysis (and you want to record in the field, i.e. not on your laptop).
  - d. Various other handheld recorders of lesser quality.

\*You can check out our recording equipment for a 24-hour period. Check-out times are during my office hours, M/T/W 11-12 (or potentially in class, as discussed).

## COURSE OUTLINE

### **Week 1. Aug 30/Sep 1. *Introduction***

Aug 30.

Sep 1. **READ: DR, Intro;** Assignments: Group transcription, Record a speech event

### **Week 2. Sep 6/8. *Background***

Sep 6. **Read: DR Chapters 1-6, and Intro to Part 1: 41-107.**

Sep 8. Lab: ELAN

### **Week 3. Sep 13/15. *Transcription***

Sep 13. **READ: DR Chapters 10, 11. Bucholtz, Mary: The Politics of Transcription**

Sep 15. Lab: Develop transcription conventions; in-class group transcription.

### **Week 4. Sep 20/22. *Big D Discourse and Power 1***

Sep 20. **READ: DR Chapters 8, 9, 32, 33**

### **Week 5. Sep 27/29. *Big D Discourse and Power 2***

Sep 27. **READ: DR Chapters 34, 35, 36, 37**

### **Week 6. Oct 4/6. *Texts and Entextualization.***

Oct 4. **Read: DR Chapter 13. Urban, Greg: Entextualization, Replication, and Power.**

### **Week 7. Oct 11/13. *Narratives , Structure, Conversation Analysis.***

Oct 11. **READ: DR Chapters 14-19.**

Week 8. Fall Break Oct 18/20

### **Week 9. Oct 25/27. *Swing Week***

### **Week 10. Nov 1/3. *Phatic Communication***

Nov 1. **READ: DR Chapters 20-25**

### **Week 11. Nov 8/10. *Social Categories.***

Nov 8. **READ: DR Chapters 27-31.**

### **Week 12 Nov 15/17. *Prosody.***

Nov 15. **READ: Szczyteck Reed, Beatrice. Pages 1-77 in Analyzing Conversation: An Introduction to Prosody.**

### **Week 13. Nov 22. (24: Thanksgiving). *Genre.***

Nov 22. **Read from Bax, Stephen. Discourse and Genre.**

### **Week 14: Nov 29/Dec 1. *Swing Week.***

### **Week 15: Dec 6. Last Day of Class; Presentations**

**Tuesday, December 13: Final Project Due, 5pm.**