Course outline:
Rationale, goals, and objectives for individual units

Unit 1: Introductory

Rationale: Students and instructors need to know where the other is beginning, and what expectations each has. In addition, the learning context needs to be set.

Goal: Students will know the instructor's expectations, and will begin to appreciate their position in society.

Objectives:Students will be able to (begin to) answer the questions:
What kind of person are you? What kind of man or woman are you?
What is gender to you? What is the significance of gender in your life?
What communities are you a member of?

Unit 2: Constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing gender

Rationale: In studying language and gender, we must understand what we think gender actually is.

Goal: Students will understand that gender is primarily a social construction, created in performances and perceived through ideologies and discourses.

Objectives: Students will be able to observe gender practice and explain how the practice is gendered. Students will be able to explain how gender ideologies or discourses have structured a particular, observed gender practice.

Students will have an awareness of their own ideologies, and how they structure their responses to others.

Unit 3: Linking the linguistic to the social

Rationale: We must have a basic understand of language and how it creates social meaning.

Goal: Students will know the various 'levels' of language, and how speakers use these levels to create social meanings.

Objectives: Given a short contextualized example, students will be able to identify the different levels of language (linguistic resources) used, and write hypotheses about how each of the linguistic resources is creating social meaning in the situation. Students will make an effort to notice the variety of ways of speaking among others, and their own way of speaking, and begin to think about how that affects how they see people and how people see them.

Unit 4: Organizing Talk 1

Rationale: Gender affects and is affected by the way talk is organized, in terms of who gets to talk and when, and what situations one talks in.

Goal: Students will understand that talk is not random, but is structured: Different people talk more in different communities, situations, activities, genres, and speech events, and are allowed to talk more or less in such situations.

Objectives: Given a short example, students will be able to explain how the community, speech event, activity, or genre is gendered. Students will be sensitive to the kinds of activities and speech events they engage in, and their roles in these, and how these are affected by and help to create their personal styles.

Through casual observations of their own interactions (including and especially classroom interactions), students will be able to explain how speakers participate differently in these conversations.

Unit 5: Organizing Talk 2

Rationale: We need to understand how conversations are structured and the role gender plays in this structuring.

Goal: Students will know how conversations are organized, and how conversational organization can be gendered, both ideologically and 'objectively.'

Objectives: Given a short example, will be able to identify how the conversation is organized, and how that organization is gendered. Students will be sensitive to the kinds of conversational organizations they understand to be norms, and how these norms are affected by and help to create their personal styles. Through casual observations of their own interactions (including and especially classroom interactions), students will be able to explain how speakers participate differently in these conversations.

Unit 6: Making Social Moves

Rationale: How speech acts are performed, and expected to be performed, is an important way that gender is created through language.

Goal: Students will understand that the choice of how and whether to perform a speech act (or social move) helps to create their personal styles, and that the expectation of how to do these acts is gendered, as is the actual performance of them.

Objectives: Students will observe how they and their friends, family, and acquaintances perform certain speech acts such as compliments, requests, and apologies, and how these choices are patterned by the speaker's social identity. Students will be aware of how they and others perform certain acts, and discuss how that affects their perception of the people they talk to, and how they think their way of doing things with words affects people's perceptions of them.

Unit 7: Positioning Ideas and Subjects

Rationale: One of the main ways gender is performed is by taking and assigning positions in talk.

Goal: Students will understand how linguistic resources are used in interactions to take positions or stances, and how these positions and stances help create a personal style.

Objectives: Given a short example, students will be able to explain how at least one linguistic resource positions one of the speakers in the interaction. Students will observe and reflect on the kinds of positions they and their interlocutors take, and how they are positioned. Students will notice how different kinds of people (genders, races, classes, and other positions such as students and teachers) use language to position themselves, and what kinds of stances people in these positions typically take.

Unit 8: Saying and implying

Rationale: The words used in speech often implicate gender stereotypes in order for them to be understood.

Goal: Students will understand how meaning is more than a dictionary definition, and how these expanded meanings depend upon and help create gender ideologies and discourses. Students will also understand how metaphors structure, and are structured by, the way we think about gender.

Objectives: Students will be able to explain how several important words, concepts, and metaphors have gendered meaning. They will be able to encounter a word or metaphor and analyze its wider social and ideological meanings through examples of use. Through written observations, students will show an awareness of the ideological nature of their own use of words and metaphors, and those they encounter in the world.

Unit 9: Mapping the world

Rationale: One of the ways that gender emerges from language is the ways that the words of a language are organized, both in the lexicon and the grammar.

Goal: Students will understand that language, mainly through words, organizes the world in a particular way that is not necessarily 'natural' or inevitable.

Objectives: Students will be able to list several examples of words or grammatical categories and explain how they organize the world ideologically. Given a new set of words, students will be able to list alternate possibilities for the set and explain how the set organizes the world. Students will be able to suggest ways that the use of these words may further bolster the ideologies they encode. Based on this knowledge, students will be able to argue whether or not they believe individuals should 'police' their language so as not to offend.

Unit 10: Working the market – use of varieties

Rationale: How we use varieties of language is one of the most salient ways that gender is performed in language.

Goal: Students will understand that all varieties are valuable commodities, and that the use of varieties is implicated in men's and women's hierarchies in different ways.

Objectives: Given different kinds of pronunciations, students will be able to explain how speakers are perceived differently, and why, in terms of gender, race, and class.

Students will appreciate that a language variety is not an indicator for intelligence. They will be able to attend to the varieties of speakers they encounter, and reflect on how differences in pronunciation affect the positions they take up to that person.

Unit 11: Fashioning selves

Rationale: Real language, used by real people in interaction, draws on all of the linguistic resources together in contextualized communities of practice, not separately compartmentalized.

Goal: Students will understand how the different resources are used by speakers in interaction to perform gender (and identities more generally), and how this repeated use can change the way language is spoken.

Objectives: Given an example of a performance by a specific person known to them, students will be able to describe that person's style, and identify several features of the person's linguistic repertoire that help that person fashion the style. Finally, they will be able to explain how the resulting identity is not just a choice, but how such choices are restricted and received in the social ideologies of identity.

Students will have an awareness of how their reactions to individuals are affected by that person's personal style, and especially the ways in which that personal style fits into the dominant ideologies of identity for the social groups s/he belongs to.

Students will be able to more intricately describe the questions posed at the outset of the course:
What kind of person are you? What kind of man or woman are you?
What is gender to you? What is the significance of gender in your life?