

ENGLISH 295/395: SEMINAR IN GENDER AND DISCOURSE
[cross-listed with COMM and WS]

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Office Hours
Thursday: 1:00-2:30
Friday: 1:00-2:00
and by appointment

Course Description

The course focuses on two different—but mutually entailed—aspects of the relationship between gender and discourse. One direction engages questions about the ways in which cultural conceptions of gender guide the development and regulation of registers of discourse to create *gendered discourses* that distinguish and are associated with the division of people into “female” and “male.” The other direction engages questions about how discourse in its cultural context shapes the meaning of both gender and sex through the *discourse of gender*. *Gendered discourses* and *discourses of gender* form a deeply political aspect of all social life, with cultural practices not only differing from culture to culture but also existing in relationship to one another in ways implying both status and privilege. Our work over the semester will be aimed at interrupting the everyday, taken-for-granted discourse codes that constitute gender in order to develop a critical understanding of how gender marks discourse and encodes power. Critical understanding will be facilitated by considering several different theories and conceptual frameworks, as well as the methods used to investigate gender and discourse. Through student-designed projects, we will examine the implication of attitudes about gender and discourse and engage in discovery about the codes for gendered discourse.

For Communication and Culture majors, the course fulfills the Senior Capstone requirement. For English majors, the course fulfills the theory requirement.

Required Texts and Readings

Eckert, Penelope & McConnell-Ginet, Sally. (2003). *Language and gender*.
New York: Cambridge University Press. [E&M-G]

Holmes, Janet & Meyerhoff, Miriam (Eds.). (2005). *The handbook of language and gender*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. [H&M]

Reading Packet, available at cost through the English department (**RP** in syllabus)

Readings posted on the Blackboard for the course (**BB** in syllabus)

Recommended Texts

Deborah Cameron & Don Kulick. (2003). *Language and sexuality*. New York:
Cambridge University Press.

Graduate Students: Butler, Judith. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York: Routledge.

Course Format

We will engage in a seminar mode of discourse throughout the semester, which means that each session will be largely co-constructed by the class participants. Methodologies and methods for inquiry will be considered throughout the semester in the context of analyzing research studies. Students will be responsible for completing all assigned readings and other assignments in advance of the class session for which they are listed and will be expected to engage in the discussion. To facilitate discussion, several pedagogic devices will be used throughout the semester, including “response papers,” “probing questions,” “mini-projects,” and “application exercises.”

Requirements

1. attendance (2 absences will result in a full letter grade reduction (e.g., B+ to C+), and more than 2 in an automatic failure)
2. assigned exercises
3. short response papers (1-2 pages) on readings as assigned
4. 2 précis/critique papers and presentations as assigned (3 pages)
5. term project
 - a. paper focused on review of relevant scholarship (5-7 pages)
 - b. final project paper (including revision of scholarship review)

**Graduate students will receive separate guidelines for papers and the term project and will likely conduct one “teaching module” during the semester.

Grading

Seminar participation: 25% [based on preparation and quality of participation]
Response papers and exercises (aggregate grade): 20%
Précis/critique papers: 10% each (20% total)
Term project: 35%

Guidelines for Papers

- Papers will be graded for both content and style. All papers should reflect careful applications of course materials and thorough editing and proofreading. I will provide no comments on carelessly written papers.
- Late papers will receive a grade reduction: within one week of due date, two step reduction (e.g., B+ to B-); more than one week after due date, full letter grade reduction (e.g., A to B). No late papers will be accepted after the last day of classes.

Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for Clark University’s policy on “Academic Integrity” concerning cheating and plagiarism, and related matters. If you are not familiar with this policy, see www.clarku.edu/offices/aac and follow the link to the Blue Book section on Academic Integrity (p. 24). All cases of suspected or confirmed academic dishonesty will be reported to the College Board immediately. The consequences are serious.

COURSE OUTLINE

- Aug 31 Course Introduction and Overview; Relation of Theory and Research
History of Gender Analysis of Language
In-class position paper: “It is important to understand the relationship
between gender and language because....”
- Sept 7 Folklinguistics of Gendered Discourse: **Questionnaire Reports**
Early work in Language and Gender
Radical and Liberal Controversies:
The Cases of Robin Lakoff , Dale Spender, and Deborah Tannen
Reading
1. E&M-G:
▪ Introduction, p1-8.
▪ 1: Constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing gender, p51.
▪ 2: Linking the linguistic to the social, p52-90.
2. H&M
▪ Holmes & Meyerhoff, Different voices, different views, p1-17.
▪ 1: McElhinny, Theorizing gender, p21-42.
▪ 4: Romaine, Variation in language and gender, p98-118.
3. **RP** Robin Lakoff, Extract from *Language and woman’s place*.
4. **RP** Dale Spender, Extract from *Man made language*.
5. **RP** Deborah Tannen, Extract from *You just don’t understand*.
- Sept 14 Orientation to Research Methods with Case Examples
Reading
1. Interviewing and Focus Groups
▪ **RP** Mimi Nichter, excerpt from *Fat talk*.
2. Discourse Analysis/Transcript Analysis
▪ In H&M, 2: Bucholtz, Theories of discourse as theories of gender, p43-68.
▪ In H&M, 8: Tannen, Gender and family interaction, p179-201.
3. Ethnographic Field Research
▪ In H&M, 10: Goodwin, The relevance of ethnicity, class, and gender in children’s peer negotiations, p229-251.
▪ In H&M, 14: Sidnell, Constructing and managing male exclusivity, p327-352.
4. Content Analysis; Questionnaires
▪ In H&M, 24: Pauwels, Linguistic sexism and feminist linguistic activism, p550-570.
▪ **BB** Marjorie Jaasma & Randall Koper, Out-of-class communication between female and male students and faculty. [2002 *Women’s Studies in Communication*, 25, 121-137]
5. Narrative Analysis
▪ **RP** Elinor Ochs & Carolyn Taylor, The “Father Knows Best” Dynamic in Dinnertime Narratives.

Sept 21 Doing Gender/Doing Difference: The Social Constructivist Perspective

Reading

1. E&M-G, 3: Organizing talk, p91-128.
2. E&M-G, 8: Working the market: Use of varieties, p266-304.
3. **BB** Candace West & Sarah Fenstermaker, Doing difference. [1995 *Gender and Society*, 9, 8-37]
4. **BB** Candace West & Sarah Fenstermaker, Accountability in action: The accomplishment of gender, race and class... [2002 *Discourse & Society*, 13, 537-563]
5. **RP** Heather Blair, Genderlects: Girl talk and boy talk....

Sept 28 Masculinities and Femininities in Discourse

Reading

1. E&M-G, 5: Positioning ideas and subjects, p157-191.
2. In H&M, 22: Kiesling, Prestige, cultural models, and other ways of talking about underlying norms and gender, p509-527.
3. In H&M, 25: Holmes & Stubbe, "Feminine" workplaces: Stereotypes and reality, p573-599.
4. **RP** Michael Kimmel, "Masculinity as homophobia."
5. **RP** Jennifer Coates, One-at-a time: The organization of men's talk.

Oct 5 Gendered Identities in Communities of Practice

Reading

1. **BB** From special issue of *Language in society* (1999), 28
 - Janet Holmes & Miriam Meyerhoff, The community of practice...
 - Penelope Eckert & Sally McConnell-Ginet, New generalizations and explanations in language and gender research
 - Mary Bucholtz, "Why be normal?" Language...of nerd girls.
2. **BB** Ana Cristina Ostermann, Communities of practice at work... [2003 *Discourse & Society*, 14, 473-505]
3. E&M-G, 9: Fashioning selves, p305-332.

Oct 12 Gender as Performance
Critical Discourse Analysis

Reading

1. **RP** Judith Butler, *Gender trouble*, Ch 1 Subjects of sex/gender/desire.
2. **RP** Rusty Barrett, Indexing polyphonous identity in the speech of African American drag queens.
3. **RP** Kira Hall, Lip service on the fantasy lines.
4. **RP** Deborah Cameron, Performing gender identity...heterosexual masculinity.

Oct 19 Sexuality and Desire
Queer Linguistics

View Paris Is Burning

Reading

1. H&M, 5: Kulick, Language and desire, p119-141.
2. H&M, 12: Besnier, Crossing genders, mixing languages... Transgenderism in Tonga, p279-301.
3. **BB** Mary Bucholtz & Kira Hall, Theorizing identity in language and sexuality research. [2004 *Language in Society*, 33, 469-515]
4. **RP** E. Patrick Johnson, Mother knows best: Black gay vernacular and transgressive domestic space.

Oct 26 Issues in African American Discourse and Gender

Reading

1. E&M-G, 6: Saying and implying.
2. **RP** Marcyliena Morgan, "I'm Every Woman"—Black women's (dis)placement in women's language.
3. **RP** Patricia Hill Collins, Very necessary: Redefining black gender ideology.
4. **RP** Norma Mendoza-Denton, Pregnant Pauses: Silence and Authority in the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas Hearings.
5. **BB** Karla Scott, Crossing cultural borders: "Girl" and "look" as markers of identity in black women's language use. [2000 *Discourse & Society*, 11, 237-248]

Nov 2 Cultural Patterns and Transgressions in Gender and Discourse

1. **RP** Shigeko Okamoto, "Tasteless" Japanese: Less "feminine" speech among young Japanese women.
2. **RP** Fatima Sadiqi, Women and linguistic space in Morocco.
3. **RP** Radha Hegde, Sons and M(others): Framing the maternal body ...in a South Indian context.
4. **BB** Janet Chernela, "The ideal speech moment": Women and narrative performance in the Brazilian Amazon. [1997 *Feminist Studies*, 23, 73-108]

Nov 9 Gender Semantics and Discursive Constructions

Reading

1. E&M-G, 7: Mapping the world, p228-265.
2. In H&M, 3: McConnell-Ginet, "What's in a name?" p69-97.
3. **RP**: Fern Johnson, Ideological Undercurrents in the Semantic Notion of "Working Mothers"

Nov 16 Broadcasting Gendered Language: Mass Media Examples

Reading

1. **RP** Fern Johnson & Karren Young, Gendered voices in children's television advertising.
2. **RP** David Theo Goldberg, Call and Response: Sports, Talk Radio, and the Death of Democracy.
3. **BB** Kathleen Battles & Wendy Hilton-Morrow, Gay characters in conventional spaces: *Will and Grace...* [2002 *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19, 87-105]

Thanksgiving Break

Nov 30 Project Presentations

Dec 6 Project Presentations