

COMM423 Discourse & Rhetoric

Spring 2014

Instructor: Michael Schandorf
Email: schandorf@gmail.com
Office: BSB 1160C
Office Hours: After class (9:30-10:30) and by appointment

Class Time: 8:00 – 9:15, Tuesday & Thursday
Class Location: BSB 4105
Class Blog: www.persuasioning.wordpress.com/

Course Overview

Discourse & Rhetoric explores the relationships among how we talk about the world, how we interact with one another, and how we understand and live in the world together. Does language, for example, simply reflect the world “out there,” as it “is,” or do the ways we communicate with one another and think about the world (using language as a means of structuring our thoughts) have an effect on the world(s) we inhabit and the communities of which we are members? How does language relate to “reality”? As implied in the term “discourse,” the inescapably social character of language, and of thought itself, will be a central theme of the course, both in the readings and in class interactions. The course will explore a variety of theoretical perspectives on the character, functions and power of language, and communication more generally, from a variety of academic disciplinary orientations, including perspectives of gender, race/ethnicity, community, and nationality.

Texts

Almost all of the course readings are available on Blackboard but one book, listed below, is also required. It is available in the UIC Bookstore and as an electronic book (eg, in Kindle format or as e-book rentals) from several retailers.

Lakoff G & Johnson M (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Requirements and Grades

Your grade for this course will be based largely upon your participation and contribution to the class. This is because your engagement and contribution will have a decisive impact on the success of the course as a whole. This means two things: 1) you must attend class, and 2) you must be prepared to participate. Individual grades will be computed as follows:

In-class Participation: 15%
Online Participation: 10%
Weekly Reading Responses: 20%
Primary Reading Reviews/Outlines: 10%
Online Discussion Lead: 10%
Reading Presentation: 15%
Final: 20%

Grades will **not** be available on Blackboard. Your grades will be returned to you with comments on your weekly reading responses. You can keep up with your progress using the grade distribution above.

Reading (and reading, and reading...)

We will be reading a lot this semester. A lot. The schedule of weekly readings is divided into two parts for each week: primary readings and presentation readings. **You are expected and required to read and respond to all of the *primary readings every week*.** The presentation reading options provide further information and broader perspectives on the primary readings. Those leading discussions (online or off) or giving in-class presentations are strongly encouraged to make use of the presentation readings as well as the required primary readings. I do not expect you to

read all of the materials provided for the course. I would be astonished if that were even possible. I *do* expect you to demonstrate an effort at understanding, which means at least in part, exploring the readings assigned and provided and making connections among them, including material from earlier weeks as we move through the semester, as well as with other material you find on your own and your previous knowledge and experience. It also, of course, means demonstrating a familiarity with the ideas in the readings in discussions (both in class and online). This material in this class is difficult. The dictionary and Wikipedia will be your friends. Use them.

Participation—in class & online (25%)

Discourse & Rhetoric is a seminar-style class. There is nothing to memorize. There are no quizzes. There are no tests: no midterm, no final exam. Your performance will not be evaluated, and your grade in this course will not be based, on your ability to regurgitate arbitrary facts or definitions from the course materials and lectures. There will be very little “lecturing,” in any case. Your grade will ultimately be based on the effort you demonstrate in engaging with the ideas we will be confronting this semester. Your engagement will be demonstrated most directly by your participation in class discussions, both in class and online. In order to do this, you will need to read the assigned material (at the very least the primary readings, ideally the presentation readings as well) very carefully and work to incorporate what will, no doubt, at times be very strange ideas and entirely new perspectives into your own experience and understanding. You are not required to “believe” the material. You are not expected to agree with everything we read or talk about in the course (I certainly hope not!). You are not expected to agree with each other. You are not required or expected to agree with *me*. You *are* expected to work toward understanding these ideas, concepts and perspectives and to at least begin to make up your own mind. Your engagement and effort will be demonstrated in class discussions, both during weekly class meetings and online by commenting on your classmates’ posts and contributing to the class notes and outlines on the Blackboard wiki. In order to participate in class discussions, you must attend class. **Absences and tardiness will negatively and significantly affect your participation grade.** Sitting quietly in class and hoping others do the talking is not an option. **Silence and reticence will negatively affect your participation grade.** Do not be afraid to say something “dumb.” We are going to be reading materials that will sometimes be entirely alien, and will more often than not be very difficult. The only way to get a grip on them will be to confront them openly together as a class. Go ahead and say something “dumb” – it probably won’t be as dumb as you think (and you’ll probably find that you’re not the only one thinking it), and at the very least it may bring up interesting questions. At the same time, do not assume that you “get it.” If it seems easy or simple, you’re probably missing something. Try to figure out what you’re missing. Talk to each other. Ask questions.

Lurking online or ignoring others’ reading responses and comments are also not options. **Lack of online interaction will significantly and negatively affect your participation grade.** Do not expect to whip up a flurry of comments and activity in the last or two week of the semester in order to “make your points.” Similarly, the online discussions should be an ongoing process of engagement rather than a weekly burst of activity at the beginning of the week. Try not to think of the in-class and online discussions as separate events. Let them reference and engage with one another in an ongoing dialogue. When someone comments on one of your posts, *reply to them*. **Your participation, both in class and online, will be evaluated in terms of activity, depth, and consistency.** You will also be given credit for adding or integrating your class notes onto the wiki, and for editing reading outlines on the wiki—so adding your class notes is an easy way to earn credit and help everyone out at the same time.

Though I expect to see each student contributing online on a weekly basis, there are no hard-and-fast quantifiable measures that I am looking for: no minimum/maximum number of expected posts or comments, no checklist of who speaks and who doesn’t in each class, no minimum number of absences. That’s too easy. This class is not a game, not a competition. There is no score. Your job is to read, think, engage, and learn. *Do that*, and your grade will take care of itself.

Weekly Reading Responses (20%)

Each week you will be expected to post a response to the primary readings on our class blog (at www.persuasioning.wordpress.com/). This is the same blog that was used for COM323 last semester, so if you were in that class you know what do. If not, you will need to sign up for a Wordpress account, if you don’t have one already.

Send me the email you used to sign in to Wordpress, and I will add you as an Author to our class blog. There is no minimum length required or expected for your responses. **Each week's reading response should do four things:**

- 1) Demonstrate that you've done all of the reading (not *Tuesday's* readings, *all* the week's readings),
- 2) Demonstrate that you've thought about the reading,
- 3) Make connections among the ideas in the present week's readings and among previous weeks' material, and
- 4) Reference at least one other classmate's post.

Your responses should make connections among the primary readings (and ideally, the presentation readings as well). As we move through the semester, your responses should make connections among readings, ideas, and discussions from previous weeks. Your engagement with the material will be demonstrated by your active efforts to make connections and to question the ideas presented in the readings and class discussions (both in class and online). Your understanding of the material will be demonstrated in your application of the ideas presented to your own previous knowledge and experience. Remember that everyone in the class will be reading the primary readings: **your reading response should NOT be a summary of the primary readings**. A summary tells us (at most) that you read; it doesn't tell us anything about what you *think* or that you've *thought* about what you read. Your reading response should be a well-considered, (loosely) essay-style discussion of the week's readings. You are not required or expected to read **all** of the weekly responses by **all** of your classmates – you have enough to read. You are, however, expected to pay attention to what your classmates are thinking and to engage with one another, questioning, answering, and/or reinforcing each other's ideas and concerns on a regular basis throughout the week. **Reading responses are expected to be posted by Monday** (no specific time). **Online discussion leader posts** (see below) **are due Sunday**. Your weekly response can (but doesn't necessarily have to) be a direct response to the discussion leaders' prompts. Keep in mind the purposes requirements of the reading responses as described above.

Primary Reading Review & Outline (10%)

During the first week of the semester, each student will sign up for **2 separate weeks** in which you'll be responsible for introducing one (or more) of the primary readings during class and providing an outline of that reading on the Blackboard wiki. **Each primary reading will be introduced to the class in a brief (5-7-minute), general, and informal overview** that

- 1) identifies the author(s)
- 2) identifies the main argument and points of the article,
- 2) attempts to position the reading in relation to the other readings of that week, and
- 3) provides a couple of initial discussion questions.

Your overview, in other words, should simply introduce the main points and arguments of the reading and position it in relation to the other readings in order to facilitate class discussion. Remember that your classmates will have read the material themselves. (**Do not** just read your outline.) **An outline of the reading(s) is to be posted on the Blackboard wiki before class**. The outlines should be complete enough to function as study guides. In composing the outline, pay attention to the organization and structure of the argument being presented and try to present the main points of that argument succinctly. **No students should have more than one class responsibility each week** (ie, primary reading introduction, online discussion leader, or reading presentation). Students introducing and outlining primary readings are encouraged to work together, both with the students introducing the week's other primary materials and with online discussion leaders and presenters: read the discussion leaders' posts, read your fellow students' reading responses, and ask questions of your classmates to help you develop your introduction and outline. This will make your introduction and outline better, will encourage discussion and interaction, and will give others opportunities to participate. (Remember that the outlines are on a wiki: anyone can contribute, emend, or improve once the initial responsibility of posting the outline has been completed. Such contributions will count toward your online participation grade.) Work together. Have fun. This is not a competition.

Online Discussion Leaders (10%)

During the first week of the semester, you will sign up for a week to lead online discussions with (typically) one partner. While class reading responses are due Monday, **discussion leader responses are to be posted no later than Sunday evening**. Discussion leader responses have the same requirements as regular reading responses with the added responsibility of setting the tone for the discussion of the material in the coming week. Discussion leaders should also identify new ideas, problems, and difficulties from/with the week's readings and generate questions to guide the rest of the class's approach to the material. Online discussion leaders are expected to keep up with responses from their fellow classmates, and to stimulate and guide further discussion throughout the week. **I expect daily activity on the class blog. As discussion leader, it is your responsibility to see that that happens during the entirety of your week.** Online discussion leaders are strongly encouraged to read the presentation readings available for their week and to work with the students introducing primary materials that week. Working as a team (of online discussion leaders and primary reading outliners and presenters) will make everyone's work much easier and will help you and ultimately everyone else to understand the course material much better. Work together. Play with these ideas together. Play nice. Have fun.

Reading Presentation (15%)

During the first week of the semester, you will sign up for a week to present one of the supplemental readings in class. There are no tests or midterms in this class. Instead, consider this presentation to be the equivalent of a "midterm." For your chosen week, you will choose one of the supplemental readings (in the far right column in the reading schedule) to present to the class. These readings are not required of the class; therefore, unlike with the primary readings, you cannot expect others in the class to have read them: **your job is to teach your chosen reading to the class.** In informal presentations of no more than 15 minutes and an outline posted on the Blackboard wiki (same requirements as for primary reading outlines), you will be expected to:

- 1) identify the author(s),
- 2) succinctly present the main argument and points of the reading, and
- 3) position the reading in relation to the week's other materials as well as to previous ideas and perspectives covered in class.

Do not just read your outline. Presenters are strongly encouraged to work with online discussion leaders and primary reading presenters in developing their presentations. Presenters are also encouraged to bring their readings into online discussions and supplement continuing discussion with the additional ideas and material.

Final Paper/Group Discussion (20%)

You have two options for the final:

Midterm Option 1: A final paper/project of your own design (subject to my prior approval). You will be required to submit a proposal for your final paper/project in week 11 (April 8). The proposal is not a binding contract; it is a place for you and I to begin discussing your ideas. However, that discussion is very important: **I will not accept final papers/projects that I do not approve beforehand.** I will provide more information as the end of the semester approaches.

Midterm Option 2: In a group of 4-5, carry out a dialogue on the Blackboard Discussion Board concerning one or more interrelated themes of the course. Your group will have one week (from Friday, May 2 through Thursday, May 8 – Finals Week) to carry out your discussion. We'll decide together beforehand on the topic(s) of discussion and the requirements and criteria of a "good" dialogue, according to which each group member will be graded. I will provide more information as the end of the semester approaches.

Academic Integrity

You are responsible for reading and abiding by the University Principles Regarding Academic Integrity (available online: www.uic.edu/ucats/catalog/GR.shtml#0). Be sure to document all of your work and acknowledge the ideas and the work of others.

Course Schedule

PRIMARY READINGS	PRESENTATION READINGS
<p>WEEK 1, Jan 14 (no readings) & 16: INTRO Fish, "Rhetoric" (1989) Sawyer, "Discourse on discourse" (2002)</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>WEEK 2, Jan 21 & 23: ANCHORS Burke, "Definition of Man" (1966) Gadamer, "Man & Language" (1966) Foucault, "Discourse on Language" (1970) Scott, "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" (1989)</p>	<p>McGee, "A Materialist's Conception of Rhetoric" (1982) McGee, "The Ideograph" (1980) Ricouer, "Rhetoric – Poetics – Hermeneutics" (1980)</p>
<p>WEEK 3, Jan 28 & 30: LANGUAGE, MEDIATION, UNDERSTANDING Williams, "Intro to <i>Keywords</i>" (1976) Hall, "Encoding/Decoding" (1990) Reddy, "The conduit metaphor" (1969) Garner, "Language rules & language ecology" (2014)</p>	<p>D'Angelo, "The rhetoric of intertextuality" (2009) Ephratt, "The function of silences" (2008) Mailloux, "Articulation & Understanding" (1997) Thibault, "Using language to think interpersonally" (1993)</p>
<p>WEEK 4, Feb 4 & 6: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE & INFERENCE Sperber & Wilson, <i>Relevance</i>, chpt 1 (1986)</p>	<p>Floridi, "Understanding Epistemic Relevance" (2008) Kulick, "The Importance of What Gets Left Out" (2005) Watson-Gegeo, "Mind, Language & Epistemology" (2004) Wilson, "Relevance & Understanding" (1994)</p>
<p>WEEK 5, Feb 11 & 13: METAPHOR I Lakoff & Johnson, <i>Metaphors We Live By</i> (1980)</p>	<p>Chiang & Duann, "Conceptual metaphors for SARS" (2007) Charteris-Black, "Britain as a container" (2006) Cox, "Politics in motion" (2012) Ferrari, "Metaphor at work in the analysis of political discourse" (2007) Musolff & al-Zuweiri, "The milestone metaphor" (2011) Sopory & Dillard, "The Persuasive Effects of Metaphor" (2006)</p>
<p>WEEK 6, Feb 18 & 20: METAPHOR II Hofstadter & Sanders, <i>Surfaces & Essences</i>, Prologue (2013) Sford, "Metaphors as generators of new discourses," from <i>Thinking as Communicating</i> (2009)</p>	<p>Argent, "Health & body metaphors in Russian media discourse about foreignisms" (2013) Ding, "The Handles & Sides of Metaphor" (2007) Fauconnier & Turner, "Rethinking Metaphor" (2008) Lakoff, "The Neural Theory of Metaphor" (2009)</p>

<p>WEEK 7, Feb 25 & 27: SPEECH ACTS & INTERACTION Malinowski, "On phatic communion" (1923) Austin, "How to do things with words" (1962) Goffman, "On Face-work" (1955) Hodges, "Righting language" (2014)</p>	<p>Arundale, "Conceptualizing Interpersonal Pragmatics" (2013) Bays, "Framing & face in internet exchanges" (1998) Coupland, etal, "Negotiating Phatic Communion" (1992) Dresner & Herring, "Functions of the Nonverbal in Computer Mediated Communication" (2010) Goriunova, "New Media Idiocy" (2013) Lim et al, "Facework on Facebook" (2012) Zegarac & Clark, "Phatic Interpretations & Phatic Communication" (1999)</p>
<p>WEEK 8, March 4 & 6: NARRATIVE Turner, <i>The Literary Mind</i>, chpt 8 (1996) Herman, "How stories make us smarter" (2003) Fisher, "Narration as a human communication paradigm" (1989)</p>	<p>Fornaciari, "Language of the technoself" (2013) Hayati & Maniati, "Beggars are sometimes the choosers" (2010) Labov, "Uncovering the event structure of narrative" (2001) R. Lakoff, "Narrative in the construction of social & political identity" (2001) Lindemann, "Live(s) online" (2005) Michaels, "Sharing time" (1981) Millerand et al, "Storytelling practices in a scientific community" (2013) Vivienne & Burgess, "The digital storyteller's stage" (2012)</p>
<p>WEEK 9, March 11 & 13: TECHNOLOGY, LANGUAGE, & DISCOURSE Walther, "Computer-mediated communication" (1996) Miller, "New media, networking & phatic culture" (2008) DeLuca & Peeple's, "From public sphere to public screen" (2002)</p>	<p>Brock, "Twitter as cultural conversation" (2012) Hughey & Daniels, "Racist comments on online news sites" (2013) Jacobson, "Impression formation in cyberspace" (1999) Jones, "Problem of context in CMC" (2004) Jones, "Sites of engagement as sites of attention" (2005) Quan-Haase, "Text-based communication over IM" (2009) Rowe, "Whatchanada?" (2011) Walther, "Interaction through technological lenses" (2012) Wyss, "From bridal letter to online flirting" (2008) Zappavigna, "Ambient affiliation" (2011)</p>
<p>WEEK 10, March 18 & 21: DISCOURSE STRUCTURES I Voloshinov, "Marxism & the philosophy of language" (1929) Bakhtin, "The Problem of speech genres" (1986)</p>	<p>Carter, "Hermeneutics of frames & framing" (2013) Cicourel, "Text & discourse" (1985) Hanks, "Discourse genres in a theory of practice" (1987) Stormer, "Articulation" (2004)</p>
<p><i>Spring Break</i></p>	
<p>WEEK 11, April 1 & 3: DISCOURSE STRUCTURES II Burke, "Terministic screens" (1966) Garfinkel, "Studies in the routine grounds of everyday activity" (1967)</p>	<p>Ceccarelli, "Manufactured scientific controversy" (2011) Gunn & Treat, "Zombie trouble" (2005) Karasawa & Maas, "The role of language in the perception of persons & groups" (2008) Lemon, "Touching the gap" (2013) Li, "Intertextuality & national identity" (2009) Livingstone, "Science, text & space" (2006)</p>

<p>WEEK 12, April 8 & 10: LANGUAGE & GENDER Spender, "Language & reality" (1980) McConnell-Ginet, "What's in a name?" (2003) Schulz, "The Semantic derogation of women" (1975) Butler, "From parody to politics" (1990)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Final Project Ideas Due (paper or discussion topics)</p>	<p>Attenborough, "Complicating the sexualization thesis" (2011) Bailey et al, "Negotiating with gender stereotypes on social networking sites" (2013) Besner, "Crossing genders, mixing languages" (2003) Bucholtz, "Theories of discourse as theories of gender" (2003) Coates, "The discursive production of everyday heterosexualities" (2013) Edley & Wetherell, "Jockeying for position" (1997) Hicks et al, "Does mother tongue make for women's work?" (2013) R Lakoff, "Language, gender & politics" (2003) Szyncer, "Strategies of self-presentation in the discourse of female tennis players" (2010) Weatherall & Gallois, "Gender & identity" (2003)</p>
<p>WEEK 13, April 15 & 17: LANGUAGE & POWER Bourdieu, "Language & symbolic power" (1991) Halliday, "Language & society" (2007)</p>	<p>Olson, "A common interpretive framework for impersonal violence" (2008) Reyes, "Strategies of legitimation in political discourse" (2011) Rickford & Price, "Girlz II women" (2013) Squires, "Limited bidirectionality in sociolinguistic perception" (2013) Subtirelu, "English... it's in our blood" (2013)</p>
<p>WEEK 14, April 22 & 24: DISCOURSE & POWER Butler, "Burning acts" (1987) Hall, "Whites of their eyes" (1981) van Dijk, "Discourse & denial of racism" (1992) Foster, "Defending whiteness indirectly" (2009)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Final Paper/Project Proposal Due</p>	<p>Atkinson et al, "Racial politics in an online community" (2013) Carter, "Shared spaces, shared structures" (2013) Chun, "Reading race beyond black & white" (2011) Josey, "Hate speech & identity" (2010) Nakamura, <i>Digitizing Race</i>, chpt 2 "Alloksame?" (2008) Nakamura, <i>Digitizing Race</i>, chpt 3 "The social optics of race" (2008) Perks, "Limited representation" (2008) Reyes, "Racist!" (2011)</p>
<p>WEEK 15, April 29 & May 1: RHETORIC & POWER Adorno & Horkheimer, "The culture industry" (1944) Rufo, "Rhetoric & power" (2003) McKerrow, "Critical rhetoric" (1989)</p>	<p>Jenkins, "Militarization of American professional sports" (2013) Kelly, "Popular culture, sport and the hero-ification of British militarism" (2013) Oddo, "War legitimation discourse" (2011) Paolucci, "Public discourse in the age of deception" (2009) Saeed, "News media, public diplomacy & the war on terror" (2011) van Dijk, "Discourse & manipulation" (2006)</p>

Final Paper/Project Due Monday, May 8