**CRS 384: DISCOURSE AND SOCIETY**

**Fall 2022**

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| Instructor: Dr. Sylvia Sierra  Office: Sims 115  Office Hours: On Zoom (link on Blackboard); Monday 1-3pm; otherwise send me 3-4 times you are available  Email: ssierra@syr.edu |

“Language lives in society, and so must we” --John Rickford and Sharese King, 2016

Course Description: In this course, we will examine discourse (broadly understood as “language in use,” “language in context,” or “situated interaction”) and its role in constructing our various social identities. The primary perspective taken is discourse analysis, a key qualitative approach in communication to examining how people create social worlds through language. We will also use insights from sociolinguistics and social psychology to examine accents, dialects, languages, and the social attitudes speakers hold toward how language is (or should be) used.

Course readings, lectures, and other materials will address questions related to discourse and identity (how identities are reflected, created, negotiated, and repaired through talk), discourse and relationships (such as how people negotiate hierarchy and equality in interaction), discourse and meaning (how meanings are jointly created or not understood), discourse and social action (such as how speakers use language to criticize and apologize), discourse and culture (the interrelationship between language use and culture), discourse and technology (such as how text-messaging is – and is not – changing discourse), and discourse and social problems (e.g., racial and gender discrimination) and social issues (such as the role of the English language in the U.S.).

Class Format: This course uses a combination lecture/discussion format. Students will regularly work in small groups.

Course Objectives:

1. To learn about how discourse is structured at various levels and used to accomplish various social goals.

2. To learn to analyze aspects of human interaction using the framework of discourse analysis, with insights from related approaches to language and communication.

3. To consider the role of linguistic/discursive devices and strategies in the creation of meanings, identities, personal relationships, social groups, and power structures.

4. To investigate important societal issues related to discourse, such as stereotyping and discrimination, intercultural miscommunication, language controversies, and how new technologies are changing the ways we communicate.

5. To investigate the application of theoretical concepts to everyday experiences.

6. To develop critical thinking abilities and awareness of the role that discourse plays in mediating social relations and fostering social change.

7. To discover connections between communication and other academic and professional interests, e.g., journalism and media studies, creative writing, teaching, business, and social life.

Required Materials:

Tracy, Karen and Robles, Jessica. *Everyday Talk*: *Building and Reflecting Identities* (Second Edition). Guilford Press, 2013. (available at the bookstore)

Other course readings and materials will be made available on Blackboard (Bb) or are available elsewhere online.

A recording device for recording and transcribing a conversation (with permission!), e.g., a tape recorder, digital recorder, cell phone with a recording option, or camcorder.

Course Requirements:

In order to successfully complete the course, students must:

* Read all assigned material
* Participate in classroom discussions and activities
* Successfully complete reading response activities, record and transcribe 3 minutes of conversation, lead discussion of an assigned article, complete 1 mid-term presentation based on the transcript and 1 final presentation

*Attendance and participation*

This class relies on lively discussion and group work in class and attendance is required; active note-taking in class and active participation in class discussions based on required readings and analysis of texts is expected. Arrive to class on time; I will take attendance at the beginning of every class and will not stop class to update the attendance or to fill you in on what is happening if you arrive late. **Chronic tardiness or leaving class early WILL negatively affect your attendance grade.** **If you are randomly going to be absent/miss class, I request that you DO NOT email me about it with an excuse. In my classes there are no excused or unexcused absences—you are simply absent.** In such cases I will notice you are absent and will mark you as such. **The only exception is if you know or if it becomes apparent that you will be absent for more than 2 days—then you should let me know. Every student is permitted to miss 2 days of class – generally any more days missed WILL negatively affect your attendance grade. However in the ongoing pandemic context, if you have to quarantine or are ill, exceptions will be made.** In the case of an unavoidable absence, it is **your responsibility** to keep up with coursework, get notes from classmates, etc. **There is no make-up work for attendance points/reading response activities**. (Note: If you are a student-athlete and must miss class for a university-sanctioned event, let me know in advance. Assignment deadlines are generally the same for student-athletes as for other students, even if the student misses class on a day when work is due.)

*Reading Activities*

In lieu of quizzes or written reading responses, students are required to participate actively during in-class small group reading activities. I will assign small groups, which will rotate 4 times during the semester, about every 3 weeks. Prompts for discussion will be provided. You are required:

1. to read to assigned reading and *annotate* it (e.g., highlight/underline/take notes)
2. to use your annotated reading and/or notes to post to the online Discussion Board about the reading at least one hour before class. Consider the questions: What did the authors do, what did they find, why does it matter? What are some keywords--were there any new words or concepts for you? What questions do you have? If you don’t have any questions, what was most interesting to you? What connections did you make to your own life, or to current events? You can also choose to respond to Discussion Prompts posted by Student Discussion Leaders for that day, and/or you can respond to each other’s posts.
3. to attend class and have the annotated reading (whether the textbook or the article/book chapter) and/or your notes and participate actively in your group based on your annotated reading and/or notes.
4. to peer evaluate your group members at the end of each 3 week period (I will provide guidelines when we get there - you will evaluate your group members on the 3 items listed above – *evidence* that they *read comprehensively*, not on how well they can talk about the topic of the reading)

I will assign you a grade based on your reading activities at the end of each 3-week period.

*Conversational Transcript*

Students will record a casual conversation in which you take part with friends or family (with their permission) and will create a written transcript of a 3-minute segment of the conversation. I will provide you with further instructions on how to transcribe conversational data and the requirements for this transcript early on in the class.

*Projects*

Students will present two projects in which they synthesize the course readings and discussions and analyze aspects of conversations that they have recorded and transcribed. Students may opt to work with partners or in small groups but it is not required. The first project should be a discourse analysis based on your conversational transcript. The second project may be a presentation of an analysis, or a website, a portfolio, a workshop, a media project (e.g. a film). I encourage you to draw from your personal skills and interests and to be creative! Note on film option: your film cannot simply be interviews of your friends/family without any substantive analysis/commentary on what they say. I can show you an example of a good student film project toward the end of the semester.

*Discussion leading*

Each student will lead class discussion on an assigned article either individually or in a pair in during the semester. These discussions will be on the dates listed in the syllabus. Students will be able to sign up for their preferred article. You are expected to pose a series of 3-5 thoughtful, stimulating, and complex questions for your classmates to discuss. Avoid ‘pointed’ or ‘leading’ questions. You can also deepen our consideration by drawing a connection to something outside of the text (this might be your transcript, a contemporary event, a recent news story, something from your own research for your project, a comparison/contrast with something else we have read, etc). The primary goals of this assignment are to encourage you to think about the themes that emerge from each of our readings (and that cut across multiple readings) and to make sense of the readings in a more robust context relevant to your own lives. I urge you to read ahead and begin preparing well in advance for your discussion leading session; you are also always welcome to meet with me about your ideas.

*Evaluation*

The final grade will be calculated based on the following distribution of graded class assignments:

In-class Reading Response activities: 20% (graded every 3 weeks 4x; 5 pts per 3 weeks)

Conversational Transcript: 15%

Analysis Presentation 1: 21% (1% is peer presentation response)

Analysis Presentation 2: 21% (1% is peer presentation response)

Attendance/Participation: 13% (excluding 1st week and 2 absences)

Discussion leading: 10%

Grade Scale for the Class, g is the student’s final grade.

A 92.5000 ≤ g

A- 89.5000 ≤ g ≤ 92.4999

B+ 87.5000 ≤ g ≤ 89.4999

B 82.5000 ≤ g ≤ 87.4999

B- 79.5000 ≤ g ≤ 82.4999

C+ 77.5000 ≤ g ≤ 79.4999

C 69.5000 ≤ g ≤ 77.4999

D 59.5000 ≤ g ≤ 69.4999

F g < 59.5

**Grades are earned – they are not subject to negotiation, and I do not provide “extra credit” opportunities. It is your responsibility to keep up with assignments and to monitor your progress as well as grades on Blackboard. I generally do not accept late work.**

Grading criteria will be made explicit for all assignments. Assignment rubrics will generally be handed out at least one week before the assignment is due and when applicable I will post examples, or ‘exemplars’ of each assignment on Blackboard.

Other Course Policies:

Classroom conduct: Arrive on time and prepared to engage with the material and other people in a respectful manner. Do not engage in disruptive behavior such as chatting during a lecture. **Cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices are prohibited (except in cases of special permission from the instructor) in an effort to facilitate classroom interaction**. Violators of these policies will be marked absent for the class period; repeat offenders will lose additional participation and/or activity points.

Grades: Grades are not up for negotiation. However, if you feel a grading error has been made, or if you do not understand a written comment on your work, set up an appointment to discuss your concerns. **The policy of this class is not to discuss grades until 24 hours have elapsed since assignments are returned**; this gives students the opportunity to re-consider the assignment sheet, re-read their work, and consider the instructor’s written remarks prior to discussion.

Contacting your instructor by email: In the university context, email should be considered as a form of professional communication. Send emails from your syr.edu account. **The message subject line should include our course number, section, and your reason for emailing (e.g., CRS 384 section 1: Transcript question).** If you do not follow these requirements, you might not receive a response.

Syracuse University’s [Academic Integrity Policy](https://class.syr.edu/academic-integrity/policy/) reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit and for upholding course-specific, as well as university-wide, academic integrity expectations. The policy governs citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and truthfulness in all academic matters, including course attendance and participation. The policy also prohibits students from: 1) submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving advance written authorization from both instructors and, 2) using websites that charge fees or require uploading of course materials to obtain exam solutions or assignments completed by others and present the work as their own.  Under the policy, instructors who seek to penalize a student for a suspected violation must first report the violation to the Center for Learning and Student Success (CLASS). Students may not drop or withdraw from courses in which they face a suspected violation. Instructors must wait to assign a final course grade until a suspected violation is reviewed and upheld or overturned. Upholding Academic Integrity includes abiding by instructors’ individual course expectations, which may include the protection of their intellectual property. Students should not upload, distribute, or otherwise share instructors’ course materials without permission.  Students found in violation of the policy are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered, as described in the Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric. Students are required to read an online summary of the University’s academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice.

The Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric establishes recommended guidelines for the determination of grade penalties by faculty and instructors, while also giving them discretion to select the grade penalty they believe most suitable, including course failure, regardless of violation level. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

For more information about the policy, see <https://class.syr.edu/academic-integrity/>. If you have any questions about academic integrity, proper citation of sources, inappropriate collaboration, and so on, please communicate with me about it.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation.  There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course.  I invite any student to contact me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be essential to your success and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process. If you would like to discuss disability-accommodations or register with CDR, please visit [Center for Disability Resources](https://disabilityservices.syr.edu/). Please call (315) 443-4498 or email [disabilityresources@syr.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@syr.edu) for more detailed information. The CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.

Educational use of student work: I intend to use academic work that you complete this semester in this semester and subsequent semesters for educational and/or research purposes. Before using your work for that purpose, I will either get your written permission or render the work anonymous by removing identifying material. Please let me know if you do NOT want me to use your work for educational and/or research purposes.

Faith tradition observances: Syracuse University recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their traditions. Under the policy, students should have an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors no later than the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes and by the submission deadline for flexibility formatted classes. Student deadlines are posted in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

Discrimination or Harassment: The University prohibits harassment or discrimination related to any protected category including creed, ethnicity, citizenship, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, gender, pregnancy, disability, marital status, age, race, color, veteran status, military status, religion, sexual orientation, domestic violence status, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender. Any complaint of discrimination or harassment related to any of these protected bases should be reported to Sheila Johnson-Willis, the University’s Chief Equal Opportunity & Title IX Officer. She is responsible for coordinating compliance efforts under various laws including Titles VI, VII, IX and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. She can be contacted at Equal Opportunity, Inclusion, and Resolution Services, 005 Steele Hall, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-1120; by email: titleix@syr.edu; or by telephone: 315-443-0211. Federal and state law, and University policy prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sex or gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation). If a student has been harassed or assaulted, they can obtain confidential counseling support, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, from the Sexual and Relationship Violence Response Team at the Counseling Center (315-443-8000, Barnes Center at The Arch, 150 Sims Drive, Syracuse, New York 13244). Incidents of sexual violence or harassment can be reported non-confidentially to the University’s Title IX Officer (Sheila Johnson Willis, 315-443-0211, titleix@syr.edu, 005 Steele Hall). Reports to law enforcement can be made to the University’s Department of Public Safety (315-443-2224, 005 Sims Hall), the Syracuse Police Department (511 South State Street, Syracuse, New York, 911 in case of emergency or 315-435-3016 to speak with the Abused Persons Unit), or the State Police (844-845-7269). I will seek to keep information you share with me private to the greatest extent possible, but as a professor I have mandatory reporting responsibilities to share information regarding sexual misconduct, harassment, and crimes I learn about with the University’s Title IX Officer to help make our campus a safer place for all.

Hunger and food scarcity. There are food pantries at both Hendricks Chapel and on South Campus, stocked with edibles and personal care items. To find out more, go to the [Hendricks Food Pantry Site](https://chapel.syracuse.edu/student-support/food-pantry/), or contact Syeisha Bird at [smbyrd@syr.edu](mailto:smbyrd@syr.edu), or at 315-706-4526.

Mental health and overall well-being are significant predictors of academic success. As such it is essential that during your college experience you develop the skills and resources to effectively navigate stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health concerns. Please familiarize yourself with the range of resources the Barnes Center provides ([https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/](https://maestro.syr.edu/trk/click?ref=zvu694kig_1-5908x39e88x01654&)) and seek out support for mental health concerns as needed. Counseling services are available 24/7, 365 days, at 315-443-8000. I encourage you to explore the resources available through the Wellness Leadership Institute, [https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/wellness-leadership-institute/](https://maestro.syr.edu/trk/click?ref=zvu694kig_1-5908x3f53dx01654&).”

**COVID-19 Notes**  
  
**Regardless of your vaccination status:  
PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE ILL WITH SYMPTOMS CONSISTENT WITH COVID-19, ARE AWAITING TEST RESULTS, OR TEST POSITIVE.** (See SU’s [Stay Safe Pledge](https://www.syracuse.edu/staysafe/stay-safe-pledge/) for additional details.)

As of July 28, 2022, [SU states](https://news.syr.edu/blog/2022/07/28/fall-2022-public-health-guidelines/?_gl=1*1e3hm3z*_ga*MzkyMzAxNzYyLjE2NDc1MjEwMTM.*_ga_QT13NN6N9S*MTY2MDkxNzkxMi4xOS4xLjE2NjA5MTgwNTAuNDMuMC4w) “we strongly encourage all members of the campus community to consider masking based on an assessment of personal risk, especially when in large groups, high-density areas of campus, or in response to an exposure to a known COVID-positive individual.” Considering that our classroom consists of a large group in a small classroom (e.g., high-density), I strongly encourage my students to consider masking. COVID-19 can spread to anyone regardless of vaccination status (see [current CDC recommendations](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html)). Thus, while you may be vaccinated, please remember others on campus--and possibly in this class--are not, may live with people who are not vaccinated, and/or might have high risk health conditions. [**Wearing a mask**](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html)properly over your mouth and nose indoorsreduces COVID risks for you, your peers, your professors, and the larger Syracuse community.

Faculty, staff, and students must remain up-to-date and comply with SU’s COVID alert level. **This applies even if you are fully vaccinated.** You can check the current COVID alert level at [Stay Safe](https://www.syracuse.edu/staysafe/)—which includes applicable behavior expected or recommended at current contagion levels for everyone on campus. **When in doubt, wear a mask in all indoor and transportation settings, even if you are fully vaccinated.**

**All individuals** – regardless of vaccination status – are required by NYS law to wear a mask on public transit (including the Syracuse University Shuttle) and when visiting any healthcare facility (including the Barnes Health Center and the Kimmel Testing Center).

If you have to quarantine, you will be responsible for keeping up with your reading, assignments, getting notes from classmates, meeting with me remotely if necessary, etc. At this time I do not provide a remote/zoom/hybrid option for individual students who have to quarantine. However, if a substantial number of students in the class need to quarantine at once, or if I need to quarantine, then we might need to all switch to zoom/virtual class meetings.

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments (subject to change)**

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| **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings Due** | **Assignments/Notes** |
| Tuesday,  August 30 | Introduction | Syllabus |  |
| Thursday, September 1 | Talk & Identity; Descriptivism | Everyday Talk, Ch. 1 (skip section on Gricean maxims) AND "Genre: Personal Conversation" (pgs. 259-262) | *Assign reading groups* |
| Tuesday, September 6 | Transcribing talk | Everyday Talk, Ch. 5 "The Sound of Talk" ONLY pgs. 107-121. AND pgs. 42-52 of **Deborah Tannen’s** "Conversational Style" (Bb) | *Recording and Transcribing guidelines*  *Student info sheets*  *Paper Bags* |
| Thursday, September 8 | Referring to people in talk | Everyday Talk, Ch. 3 (skip section on Sapir Whorf Hypothesis) | **Bring your paper bags/items and submit student info sheets!** |
| Tuesday, September 13 | Speech Acts | Everyday Talk, Ch. 4 |  |
| Thursday, September 15 | Interaction Structures/  Turn-taking | Everyday Talk, Ch. 6 | **1st Peer Review of Reading Activities**  *Sign up sheet for Discussion Leading*  *Cover sheets for transcripts* |
| Tuesday, September 20 | Data fest! | None! Work on your transcript; we will listen to all of the recorded conversations in class | **Transcript due (upload 3 minute clip and transcript on Blackboard)** |
| Thursday, September 22 | Style | Everyday Talk, Ch. 8 AND **Deborah** **Tannen**, "New York Style" (Bb) also available at: www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/newyorkcity | *New reading groups*  *Project 1 instructions* |
| Tuesday, September 27 | Stance | Everyday Talk, Ch. 9 |  |
| Thursday, September 29 | Narrative | Everyday Talk, Ch. 10 |  |
| Tuesday,  October 4 | Style & Gender | **Deborah Tannen** (1990), preface of *You Just Don’t Understand: Women & Men in Conversation* AND **Tannen** (1990) “'Put Down that Paper and Talk to Me!': Rapport-talk and Report-talk” chapter 3 of *You Just Don’t Understand: Women & Men in Conversation* (Bb) | *View and discuss "Gender and Communication" video and Charlie Rose Tannen interview*  *Preview Kiesling (2004)*  Discussion Leading |
| Thursday, October 6 | Style & Gender | **Casey Miller & Kate Swift** One step for Genkind (1972) (Bb) and **Scott** **Kiesling** “Dude” (2004) (Bb) | **2nd Peer Review of Reading Activities**  Discussion Leading  Discussion Leading |
| Tuesday,  October 11 | Gender & sexuality in discourse | **Jennifer Coates** (2013) The discursive production of everyday heterosexualities  **Lal Zimman** (2017) (Bb) “Transgender language reform” | *New reading groups*  Discussion Leading  Discussion Leading |
| Thursday, October 13 | Accents & Dialects | none; work on your project!  *Film, TBA* | *Prepare peer presentation response handouts* |
| Tuesday, October 18 |  | None; work on your project! | **Project Presentations** |
| Thursday, October 20 |  | None; work on your project! | **Project Presentations** |
| Tuesday,  October 25 | Dialects & language ideologies | Everyday Talk, Ch. 5 pgs. 121-131, AND **Rosina Lippi-Green** (2012) “Language Ideology and Language Prejudice” (Bb) | Discussion Leading  *Watch crash course sociolinguistics on Labov’s NYC department store study*  *Midsemester review & course evaluation* |
| Thursday, October 27 | Stigmatized dialects in the US | **Arthur Spears** (2014) “African American English” AND **Carmen Fought** (2014) “Chicano English" (Bb; for both of these you can stop reading at “further reading” sections) | Discussion Leading  Discussion Leading  *Final Project Instructions* |
| Tuesday, November 1 | Language attitudes, Linguistic discrimination, and Linguistic profiling | **Jane Hill**, "Mock Spanish" (Bb); AND **Rosina Lippi-Green** (2012) “The unassimilable races: what it means to be Asian” | Discussion Leading  Discussion Leading  Discussion Leading |
| Thursday, November 3 | Dialects in Media | **Rosina Lippi-Green** (2012) "Teaching children how to discriminate: What we learn from the Big Bad Wolf" (Bb) | **3rd Peer Review of Reading Activities**  Discussion Leading |
| Tuesday, November 8 | Dialects in Media | **Barbra Meek** (2006) "And the Injun Goes How": Representations of American Indian English in White Public Space | *New reading groups*  Discussion Leading |
| Thursday, November 10 | Dialects in Media | **Maeve Eberhardt & Kara Freeman** (2015) 'First things first, I'm the realest': Linguistic appropriation, white privilege, and the hip-hop persona of Iggy Azalea  Guest lecture from Theatre Professor Thom Miller on dialects in theatre! | Discussion Leading |
| Tuesday, November 15 | Code-switching and Language Selection | Everyday Talk, Ch. 7 AND  **Natalie Schilling-Estes** "Redrawing ethnic dividing lines through linguistic creativity" (Bb) | Discussion Leading |
| Thursday, November 17  (NO CLASS—I’ll at the National Communication Association) | Nov. 20th -27th Thanksgiving Break |  |  |
| Tuesday, November 30 | Discourse & Politics | **Cynthia Gordon** (2004) “‘Al Gore's our guy’: Family political identity”  AND **Sylvia Sierra & Natasha Shrikant.** 2020. “Fake Alignments.” In: *Language in the Trump Era* *Emergencies and Scandals* (Bb) | Discussion Leading |
| Thursday, November 29 | Discourse & Social Media | **Tannen**, Deborah. 2013. The Medium is the Metamessage: Conversational Style in New Media Interaction | Discussion Leading |
| Tuesday, December 1 | Discourse & Social Media | **Jackson Tolins** and **Patrawat Samermit**. 2016. GIFs as embodied enactments in text-mediated conversation.  **Lauren Michele Jackson**. 2017. We need to talk about digital blackface in reaction GIFs: Why is it so common. | Discussion Leading  **4th Peer Review of Reading Activities** |
| Thursday, December 9 | **Final Project presentations** | None; be working on your final project | **Final Project due** |
| ~~Final exam period~~  ~~Fri., Dec 16,~~  ~~5:15pm­-7:15pm~~ | **~~Final Project presentations due~~** | ~~None; be working on your final project~~ | **~~Final Project due~~** |