Communication, Culture and Nature:
The Ethnography of Communication (EC)
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This booklet provides a general overview of ethnographic inquiry and some of its possibilities for creating insights into human communication. A leading question, for ethnographers is: How is communication conceived, evaluated, and practiced by people in various social scenes and groups? What are the available means for communicating by people in this place; what are the meanings of those means of communication to them? Early, seminal readings are presented which capture the basic philosophy and theory of EC. Several methodological issues are presented with selected essays from the field research literature as bases for reflection and/or discussion. The overall organization of this overview gives special attention to five modes of inquiry in ethnographic research (the theoretical, descriptive, interpretive, comparative, and critical modes). This organization is discussed in more detail in my article in the Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 2007 (volume 36, pages 167-182). This organization sets the stage for discussing four current topics and issues. These are: the nature of communication, how communication is formative of culture, identity, and, eventually, how communication relates to nature itself.

A selection of books in this tradition is worth mentioning at the onset. These are: Michael Agar (1986), Speaking of ethnography, Newbury Park, CA: Sage; Keith Basso (1996), Wisdom sits in places*, Albuquerque, New Mexico: U of New Mexico Press; Charles Briggs (1986), Learning how to ask: A sociolinguistic appraisal of the role of the interview in social science research. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Patricia Covarrubias (2005), Culture. Communication, and Cooperation: Interpersonal relations and pronominal address in a Mexican organization, Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers; Kristine Fitch (1998), Speaking relationally: Culture, communication and interpersonal connection, New York: Guilford; Tamar Katriel (2005), Dialogic Moments: From soul talks to talk radio in Israeli culture, Detroit, Ml: Wayne State University Press; Trudy Milburn (2009), Nonprofit Organizations: Creating Membership through communication, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.; Gerry Philipsen (1992), Speaking culturally, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press; Richard Wilkins and Pekka Isotalus (eds.) (2009), Speech culture in Finland. Lanham, Boulder, New York: University Press of America; Donal Carbaugh (2005), Cultures in conversation*, Mahwah, NJ & London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; Donal Carbaugh (1996), Situating selves: The communication of social identity in American scenes, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. For those interested in intercultural communication, there is the reader, D. Carbaugh (1990), Cultural Communication and Intercultural Contact, Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers. (* required reading)

What follows is an organization of some of this research literature according to special intellectual problems and specific topics. As a seminar group, we will create a schedule of study based upon this overview. An environmental focus is introduced on pages 9 and 10, below, and in a complementary reading packet (references on pages 11-12, below). Requirements include doing all reading and attending all seminar meetings; preparing written assignments for seminar meetings as well as completing a final research paper. Specifics will be discussed as we proceed.

Introductions: Sept. 9

Background and Basic Philosophy: September 16

These readings provide an introductory discussion about the ethnography of communication in its nascent stages, with special attention to some of its predecessors. In the course of this discussion, one can see how distinctive modes of inquiry were active as precursors in this approach to communication study, with these providing a kind of heuristic anchoring of subsequent research. What is communication from the point-of-view of this approach? What are possibilities for its study?

Recommended background readings.

1. Kenneth Burke. (1965/1954). <u>Permanence and change.</u> Indianapolis:
   Bobbs-Merrill; and his (1966) <u>Language as symbolic action,</u> especially the essays titled "Terministic screens," "What are the sign of What?," and "Definition of man."

2. Edward Sapir. (1949). <u>The selected writings of Edward Sapir on language.</u>
   <u>culture, and personality</u> (ed. D. G. Mandelbaum). Berkeley: University of California Press.

3. Benjamin Whorf. (1956). <u>Language, thought, and reality: Selected writings of</u>
   <u>Benjamin Lee Whorf.</u> (ed. J. B. Carroll). Cambridge: MIT Press.

4. D. Hymes. (1966). Two types of linguistic relativity (with examples from
   Amerindian ethnography). In W. Bright (ed.), <u>Sociolinguistics. proceedings from the Sociolinguistics seminar. 1964.</u> The Hague: Mouton.

5. John A. Lucy. (1992). <u>Language diversity and thought.</u> Cambridge: Cambridge
   University press, especially chapters 1 & 2 which include an excellent overview of the "linguistic relativity hypotheses" associated with Sapir and Whorf.

Basic Concepts, Approach: September 23

Ethnographies of communication (EC) often use a holistic, synthetic, and highly heuristic conceptual system. The primary set of concepts was generated by Dell Hymes, most notably in his 1972 publication. These concepts suggest ways of conceptualizing social and cultural phenomena as communication, ways of formulating research questions about various communication phenomena, as well as ways of designing and executing ethnographic research. Given a particular intellectual interest (i.e., an intellectual problem or practice that you are interested in), and considering Hymes' framework, how might you pose ethnographic research questions? What kind of theory is a "theory of description"? These are possible subjects for discussion based upon these articles.

Read:

1. Dell Hymes. (1972). Models of the interaction of language and social life.
    In J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (eds.), Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication (pp. 35-71). New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

2. Tamar Katriel. (1990). Griping as a verbal ritual in some Israeli discourse. In Carbaugh (ed.), Cultural communication and intercultural contact, (pp. 99-113). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Inc.

3. Gerry Philipsen and Lisa Coutu. (2005). The ethnography of speaking. In R. Sanders & K. L. Fitch (Eds.), *Handbook of research on language and social interaction* (355-379). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

4. Kristine Fitch. (1994). The issue of selection of objects of analysis in ethnographies of speaking. Research on Language and Social Interaction. 27, 51-93.

5. Donal Carbaugh. (2008). Ethnography of Communication, pages 1592-1598.
    The International Encyclopedia of Communication (ed. W. Donsbach), Volume 4. Wiley-Blackwell (Oxford, UK and Maiden, MA).

6. Donal Carbaugh and Sally O. Hastings. (1992). A role for communication theory in ethnography and cultural analysis. Communication Theory, 2, 156-165.

7. Michael Berry (2009). The social and cultural realization of diversity: an interview with Donal Carbaugh, Language and Intercultural Communication, 9, 23-241.

Suggested Reading:

1. Richard Bauman & Joel Sherzer. (1989). Introduction to the second edition. Explorations in the ethnography of speaking (pp. ix-xxvii). Cambridge University Press.

The Concept of Culture: September 30

The ethnography of communication has examined communication as something radically cultural. Investigations thus take place at the nexus of communication and culture. What concept of culture is active in these formulations? These readings explore detailed conceptualizations of culture. How do conceptions of culture relate to conceptions of communication?

Read:

1. Clifford Geertz. (1976). From the native's point-of-view; On the nature of anthropological understanding. In K. Basso and H. Selby (eds.), <u>Meaning in</u> Anthropology (pp. 221-237). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

2. David Schneider. (1976). Notes toward a theory of culture. In K. Basso and H. Selbv (eds.). Meaning in Anthropology (pp. 197-220). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

3. Donal Carbaugh. (1994). Cultural communication and intercultural encounters: Personhood, strategic action, and emotions, <u>Teoria Sociologica.</u> 3 (1994), 17-45.

4. Donal Carbaugh. (1988). Comments on "culture" in communication inquiry. <u>Communication Reports 1.</u> 38-41.

5. Donal Carbaugh. (2010). Situating cultural studies in communication: Cultural   Discourse Theory (pp. 101-116). In Claudio Baraldi, Andrea Borsari, Augusto Carli (eds.), <u>Hybrids, Differences, Visions: On the Study of Culture.</u> Aurora, Colorado: The John Davies Group.

Cultural Conceptions of Communication: October 7

Each people conceives of and evaluates communication and expressive life according to its own beliefs and values. What indeed is communication; what is effective, or appropriate as communication; when should one speak; and when, be silent? These are all questions effectively addressed in the conduct of social life. These readings examine community-specific ideas about communication through a cultural perspective.

Read:

1. Donal Carbaugh. (1989). Fifty terms for talk: A cross-cultural study.
   International and Intercultural Communication Annual. 13. 93-120.

2. Brad Hall & Kathleen Valde. (1995). "Brown-nosing" as a cultural category in
   American organizational life, Research on Language and Social Interaction. 28, 391-419.

3. Donal Carbaugh. (2006). Coding Personhood through Cultural Terms and
   Practices: Silence and Quietude as a Finnish "natural way of being".
   Journal of Language and Social Psychology. 25, 2006, 203-220 (with Michael Berry and Marjatta Nurmikari-Berry).

4. Donal Carbaugh, David Boromisza-Habashi, and Xinmei Ge. (2006). Dialogue in cross-cultural perspective. In N. Aalto & *E.* Reuter (eds.), Aspects of Intercultural Dialogue (pp. 27-46), Koln, Germany: SAXA Verlag.

5. Boromisza-Habashi, D. (2007). Freedom of expression, hate speech, and models of personhood in Hungarian political discourse. *Communication Law Review*, 7, 54-74. (http://tinyurl.com/6z64la)

A Theory of Cultural Communication: October 14

The ethnography of communication has developed over the years, with special concepts being proposed based upon field studies. One such development is the theory of cultural communication. In 1987 Gerry Philipsen published a theory of cultural communication. That theory offers an essential dialectic in communication study, a specific set of problems to be addressed, and particular forms of cultural communication. By 2002, a large body of literature had been created in the study of cultural communication. The following readings introduce that theory, and that literature.

1. Gerry Philipsen. (1987). The prospect for cultural communication. In L. Kincaid (ed.), Communication Theory: Eastern and Western perspectives (pp. 245-254). New York: Academic Press.

2. Gerry Philipsen. (2002). Cultural communication. In W. Gudykunst and B. Mody (eds.), Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication (pp. 51-67). Sage.

3. Donal Carbaugh. (2005). Chapter 7 from Cultures in conversation.

Communication and Intercultural Competence: October 21 (see below too)

The idea of competence has been central to the study of communication and culture. The term was proposed in 1966 by Dell Hymes as a way of drawing attention to actual communication practices, their structure, function, and meanings - as a contrast to Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence. Subsequent work has focused upon the dimensions of appropriateness and effectiveness in communicative performance.

l. Hymes, D. H. (1971). On communicative competence. In J. Pride and J. Holmes
    (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Penguin, 1972.

2. Donal Carbaugh. (1993). Cultural pragmatics and intercultural competence. The
    Competent Intercultural Communicator: AFinLA Yearbook 1993, (eds. L
    Lofman, L. Kurki-Suonio, S. Pellinen, & J. Lehtonen). Publications de
    1'association finlandaise de linguistique applique, 51. 117-129.

3. Donal Carbaugh. (1993). Competence as Cultural Pragmatics: Reflections on some
    Soviet and American encounters. International and Intercultural
    Communication Annual, 17, 168-183.

Procedures for Cultural Interpretation of Communication, Formulating Codes: Oct. 21

Ethnographers are concerned that they understand the meaningfulness of communication from the vantage point of the participants who produce that communication. Participant ideas about who they are, what they are doing, how they feel about who they are and what they are doing, and how they relate with their natural and social worlds, is an essential part of ethnographic inquiry. Being able to argue that you know something about this 'native view" is one essential objective of ethnography. In what ways can one work toward this objective? What might hinder achieving that objective? And, what can be done in order to achieve it? These suggest subjects for this week's discussion.

Read:

 1. Gerry Philipsen. (1986). Mayor Daley's council speech: A cultural analysis. Quarterly
    Journal of speech. 72. 247-260.

2. Donal Carbaugh. (1996). Situating Selves, Appendix.

3. Philipsen, G. (1997). A theory of speech codes. In G. Philipsen and T. Albrecht
    (Eds.), Developing communication theories (pp. 119-156). Albany, NY: State
    University of New York Press.

4. D. Carbaugh. (2005). Chapter 8 from Cultures in Conversation.

Cultural Identity and Personhood: October 28

Interpreting identity can lead to basic premises about what a person is, what a person can and should do. These premises can vary by expressive system, and can be formulated as the cultural bases of personhood. These readings explore, comparatively, different premises of personhood as they are active in intercultural communication encounters.

Read:

1. Selected chapters from D. Carbaugh. (2005). Cultures in conversation. Mahwah, NJ & London: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.
2. D. Carbaugh. (1990). Intercultural communication. In Cultural Communication and Intercultural Contact. Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.

Suggested reading: Talking American: Cultural Discourses on DONAHUE. Unit one.

Culture and the Communication of Identity: Nov 4

What is identity and how is it a communication phenomenon? Ethnographers have explored how cultural practices of communication both presume and create a sense of identity. In so doing, they explore "the communication of identity." These essays and studies explore the nature of identity from a communication perspective, and how it is active in specific social scenes.

Read:

1. Gerry Philipsen. (1989). Speech and the communal function in four cultures. International and Intercultural Communication Annual. 13. 79-92.

2. Donal Carbaugh. (1996). Situating selves: The communication of social identities in American scenes. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

3. Review G. Philipsen's essays on Cultural Communication.

Recent Developments: Cultural Discourse Analysis: Nov 10

What is the approach to communication study known as Cultural Discourse Analysis? This article explicates this approach through five modes of inquiry: theoretical, descriptive, interpretive, cross-cultural, and critical study. Special attention is given to intercultural encounters and interpretive analysis.

Read:

1. Donal Carbaugh. (1988). <u>Talking American: Cultural Discourses on DONAHUE.</u> New Jersey: Ablex.

2. Donal Carbaugh, Tim Gibson, & Trudy Milburn. (1997). A view of communication and culture: Scenes in an ethnic cultural center and a private college. In B. Kovacic (Ed.), <u>Emerging theories of human communication</u> (pp. 1-24). Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

3. Donal Carbaugh (2007). Cultural Discourse Analysis: The Investigation of Communication Practices with special attention to Intercultural Encounters, <u>Journal of Intercultural Communication Research.</u> 36, 2007, 167-182.

4. Michelle Scollo. (in press). Cultural Approaches to Discourse Analysis: A Theoretical and Methodological Conversation with Special Focus on Donal Carbaugh's Cultural Discourse Theory, <u>Journal of Multicultural Discourses</u>.

Communication, Culture, and Nature-Native/Places: November 18

       The following readings set the stage for discussions of, what might be called, "discourses of dwelling." These discourses, and discursive devices, establish for people where they think they are, what they should do when there, and what generally is deemed "environmental" in their lives. Specific questions revolve on the one hand about what people say about nature, and their place of dwelling. On the other, one can explore what, if anything, nature can say to us.

Peoples, Places, and Divisive Discourses of Dwelling

       People everywhere expressively create meanings about where they are, with this being intimately related to who they are. In some places, these meanings become sites of discursive contest. In these readings we explore these dynamics, with special attention to the landscape as a discursive resource.

1. Situating Selves, chapters 8-9.

2. Keith Basso. (1996). Wisdom sits in places, especially chapters 2& 3.

3. D. Carbaugh. (2005). Chapter 7 from Cultures in conversation.

Contesting Spaces (continued) and Narrative (see below)

Read: Donal Carbaugh & Lisa Rudnick. (2006). Which place, what story? Cultural discourses at the border of the Blackfeet Reservation and Glacier National park. Great Plains Quarterly. 26, 167-184.

Narrative as a Discursive Device for Dwelling in Place: December 2

       Stories or narrative forms can create a powerful sense of place, both through terms about one's natural environment, and through terms concerning its spiritual presence. These readings explore that dynamic.

Read:

1. D. Carbaugh. (2001). "The people will come to you": Blackfeet Narrative as a Resource for Contemporary Living. In J. Brockmeier and D. Carbaugh (eds.), <u>Narrative and Identity</u> (pp. 103-127), Amsterdam and New York: J. J. Benjamins.

2. D. Carbaugh. (2002). "I Speak the language of the universe": A Universally Particularizing Form of Native American Discourse. In David Li (ed.), <u>Discourse in Search of members: A *festschrift* in honor of Ron Scollon</u> (pp. 319-334). New York and Oxford: University Press of America. 2002.

On Nature and Contemplative Discourses as a Resource for Revelatory Insight

       What is "nature" and "spirit"? How are these expressed and experienced? This essay develops the above insights by exploring meditative forms of discourse, what these reveal about nature and spirit, and how this process mediates between people and nature's places.

Read:

 Donal Carbaugh & David Boromisza-Habashi. (2007). Cultural Rhetoric, Revelatory moments, and Nature. In Christian Meyer and Felix Girke (ed.), <u>The Interplay of Rhetoric and Culture.</u> Oxford and New York: Berghahn Book Studies in Rhetoric and Culture III. 32 pp.

 Donal Carbaugh, (2007). Quoting "the environment": Touchstones on EARTH. <u>Environmental Communication: Journal of Nature and Culture</u>, 1, 63-73.

DECEMBER 9: Papers presented, due by 5 PM

Environmental Communication Readings (in the order each appears in the reading packet)

Donal Carbaugh. (1996). Naturalizing communication and culture. In James Cantrill & Christine Oravec (eds.), The symbolic earth (pp. 38-57). Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Gary Snyder. (1990). "Survival and sacrament," from his The Practice of the Wild (pp. 175-185). San Francisco, CA: North Point.

Henry David Thoreau. (1937). 'Walking" in Walden and other writings of Henry David Thoreau (pp. 597-632). New York: The Modern Library.

Ralph Waldo Emerson. (1933). "Nature" in The heart of Emerson's essays (pp. 143-178). Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

John Muir. (1954). "The valley" in The wilderness world of John Muir (pp. 143-178). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Roderick Nash. (1967). "The condition of wilderness" and "Old world roots of opinion" in his Wilderness and the American mind (pp. 1-22). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Gary Snyder. (1990). "The etiquette of freedom," "The place, the region, and the commons" and "Tawny grammar" from his The Practice of the Wild (pp. 3-77). San Francisco, CA: North Point.

Wallace Stegner. (1992). "The sense of place", Harrowsmith Country Life. Sept./Oct, 41-43.

Gary Snyder. (1995). "Unnatural writing" and "Language goes two ways" in his A place in space: Ethics, aesthetics, and watersheds (pp. 163-180). Washington D.C.: Counterpoint.

Barry Lopez. (1984). "Landscape and narrative" in his Crossing open ground (pp. 61-71). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Kent C. Ryden. (1993). "Of maps and minds: The invisible landscape" and "Folklore and the sense of place" in his Mapping the invisible landscape: Folklore, writing, and the sense of place (pp. 19-96). Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

Donal Carbaugh. (1996). "Decisions and conflicting selves: Dramatic depictions of a natural environment" and "Dueling identities: In search of common political ground" in his Situating selves: The communication of social identities in American scenes (pp. 157-190). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Wendell Berry. (1990). "The work of local culture" in his What are people for? (pp. 153-169). San Francisco: North Point Press.

Donal Carbaugh. (1999). "Just listen": Listening and landscape among the Blackfeet," Western Journal of Communication. Special issue on Place, 63. 250-270.

Vine Deloria, Jr. (1991). "Reflection and revelation: Knowing land, places, and ourselves." In James A. Swan (ed.), The power of place & human environments (pp. 28-40). Wheaton, IL: Quest Books.

Paul Rezendes. (1998). "Stalking silence," "Speaking without words," and "Coyote intelligence," in his <u>The wild within</u> (pp. 69-95, 141-159, 185-197). New York: Berkley Books.

N. Scott Momaday. (1999). "A first American views his land." In D. L Bamhill (ed.), <u>At home on the earth: Becoming native to our place</u> (pp. 19-29). Berkeley: University of California Press.

L. M. Silko. (1999). Landscape, history, and the Pueblo imagination. In Barnhill(ed.), (pp. 30-42).

Wendell Berry. (1990). "Nature as measure" in his What are people for? (pp. 204-210). San Francisco: North Point Press; and "Preface: The joy of sales resistance" in his <u>Sex, economy, freedom & community</u> (pp. xi-xxii). New York: Pantheon.

Bryan G. Norton. (1996). The constancy of Leopold's land ethic. In A. Light and E. Katz (eds.), <u>Environmental Pragmatism</u> (pp. 84-102), New York: Routledge.

Anthony Weston. (1996). Before environmental ethics. In Light and Katz (eds.), pp. 139-160.