

192:444 LANGUAGE, BEHAVIOR, AND COMMUNICATION  
Spring 2009 \* Mon/Wed 1:10-2:30 CIL 103

Dr. Jenny Mandelbaum

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Course website: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu>

Office hours: 10:45-12:45 Mondays; and by appointment

Readings: PDFs available on the course website at <https://sakai.rutgers.edu>

Overview: This course takes up the question of how we use language to communicate, with a special focus on the language of relationships. We begin by surveying some theories of language in order to see how and why language has been studied, and what has been found. Next, by examining the details of video- and audio-tape recorded, naturally occurring conversations, students learn to look beyond the "taken for granted" answers to questions about how and why we behave as we do. You will learn specific details of some of the ways in which we use language to accomplish the mundane activities of everyday life. By analyzing tapes and transcripts of naturally occurring conversations, we will examine how people deploy the various features of conversational organization, such as action sequence organization, turn-taking organization, and conversational repair, to engage in social activities using puns, dirty jokes, storytelling and laughter. We will then analyze professional settings -- doctor-patient interaction and the law courts -- in an attempt to see how the methodical use of language plays a part in "creating" these settings. We end the semester by examining some routine conversational activities (complimenting, complaining and blaming, managing invitations, and teasing) that have special implications for relationships.

Ordinary, everyday conversation is treated as a prime site for studying language use in communication. Students learn to examine tapes and transcripts of naturally occurring conversations in order to explain not just what is getting done in conversation, but how it gets done. In this way you will discover ways of looking beyond the taken-for-granted or stereotypical to explain how we accomplish various activities and settings, and how we construct our "selves" and relationships through our everyday use of language in communication.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. recognize and explain various approaches to what we know about language, how we come to know it, and why it is important.
2. recognize and explain such features of conversational organization as turns, action sequences, and repair.
3. recognize, and explain how we do, some basic everyday activities in conversation, with special attention to their implications for relationships. These include puns, dirty jokes, storytelling, complimenting, complaining, blaming, and teasing, and the construction through interaction of the doctor/patient and legal settings.
4. read and construct detailed transcriptions from tapes of ordinary talk.
5. describe what is getting done in a conversation, and how it is getting done.
6. describe the implications for theories about language, behavior, and communication of the detailed study of ordinary talk

## Course Requirements and Grading

1. Responsible attendance, timely completion of assigned readings, **active participation** in class discussions and exercises. **(10%)**

It is impossible to do well in this class if you do not attend class regularly. If you know that class attendance is difficult for you this is not the class for you! It is **essential** that everyone attend class regularly and do the readings.

**Reading summaries. (10%)** In order to encourage you to conquer the readings in time for class, at the BEGINNING of each class period you must submit a **typed** summary of each reading due that class day. Please submit a separate summary for each reading, but staple the summaries together.

The summary should have the following format:

In OUTLINE form, summarize IN YOUR OWN WORDS the main points and/or findings of the article. Your instructor must be able to tell from this summary that you have read and understood the whole article.

This will enable the instructor to evaluate and assist with any problems in understanding the readings. You may miss two summaries in the course of the semester without penalty. If you miss a class, you may submit the summary within a week of its due date. Summaries must be brief -- no longer than one page in length.

2. Two short exercises. **(5%)**
3. A preliminary analysis **(15%)**, presentation **(10%)** and a paper **(25%)** in which you have the opportunity to do a piece of original research. **Phase (1)** of this project will involve producing a detailed analysis of a piece of conversational data, using the tools developed in the preceding weeks of the course. This will involve beginning to lay out the features of a particular practice or action in conversation. This will be assigned on **2/23/09**, and due on **3/25/09 (15%)**. **Phase (2)** of the project will lead to the presentations on 4/29 or 5/4. In phase (2) you will use additional data to further develop your understanding of the phenomenon under examination. This may take the form of a case study of that action, in which you produce a detailed analysis of a single instance of a particular practice, lay out the steps involved in the enactment of that practice, and then begin to lay out possible non-case specific features of the practice or action. In phase (2) projects will be developed initially in groups. The final presentation will be done by the group together. Final papers may be submitted as group work, but you will have the option to submit your own paper if you prefer. A more detailed explanation of this assignment will be provided. There will be ample time in class for groups to work on the project.  
**Note: The particulars of this assignment may be altered somewhat depending on class size and interests.**
4. A midterm exam. **(3/11/09) (25%)**

## Grading policy

Assignments cannot be accepted late **unless prior arrangements are made**.  
Students must complete all assignments in order to pass the class.  
NEVER miss class or come late to class in order to hand in an assignment!

## Grading Criteria

An A grade will be awarded to an assignment that both fulfills the terms of the assignment and shows evidence of out-of-the-ordinary original, creative, analytical, and interesting thought. A B grade will be awarded if the terms of the assignment have been fulfilled thoroughly and thoughtfully, with some evidence of originality and creativity. Assignments that merely fulfill the terms of the assignment will receive a C grade. Assignments that fail to fulfill the terms of the assignment will receive a D. An assignment that does not approximate the terms of the assignment will receive and F.

## Scholastic Dishonesty -- Plagiarism

Avoid plagiarism by being very careful that it is clear to the instructor that your work is your own and not anyone else's. Among other things, this means writing up your own assignments (including reading summaries), not looking over at the exams. of others, and showing in detail where the materials you use in your papers come from. Be sure always to show source and page number (e.g., Sacks, 1984, p. 43, and then a list of references at the back of the paper). If you find yourself paraphrasing an author, include a footnote or some other reference to show the source of the material you are using, also citing source and page number. If you are doubtful about issues regarding plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, please feel free to discuss them with the instructor. The consequences of scholastic dishonesty are very serious.

## Tentative Schedule of Activities

		<u>Readings</u>
Wed 1/21	Introduction to the course and to each other	Download readings from Sakai under Resources
Mon 1/26	Studying language -- how, why, and what?	Reading 1
Wed 1/28	Issues in the study of language	
Mon 2/2	Capturing the details of talk (and why we bother)	Readings 2 & 3 Online transcription tutorial at: <a href="http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/schegloff/TranscriptionProject/index.html">http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/schegloff/TranscriptionProject/index.html</a>
Wed 2/4	A "doing" perspective <b>Assignment 1 due - What do you mean by that?</b>	Readings 4 & 5
Mon 2/9	How we do things with talk <b><u>The Social Work of Talk</u></b>	Readings 6 & 7
Wed 2/11	The surprising orderliness of the unnoticed -- the case of puns	Reading 8

Mon 2/16	Why do we tell dirty jokes? <b>Assignment 2 due - bring a joke to class</b>	Reading 9
Wed 2/18	Storytelling as a way of doing things	Reading 10
Mon 2/23	A new view of "context" <b>Project phase (1) assigned</b>	Reading 11
Wed 2/25	A visit to the doctor	Reading 12
Mon 3/2	Your day in court	Reading 13
Wed 3/4	Why look at talk closely?	Reading 14
Mon 3/9	Review and catch-up	
Wed 3/11	<b>Test 1 -- Includes all readings and class materials up to and including 3/9</b>	
Mon 3/16	}	
Wed 3/18	} <b>Spring Break</b>	
	<b><u>Talk as relational</u></b>	
Mon 3/23	The process of analysis	
Wed 3/25	Complaining and blaming	Readings 15 & 16
	<b>Project phase (1) due; phase (II) assigned</b>	
Mon 3/30	Teasing	Reading 17
Wed 4/1	Complimenting and responding to compliments	Reading 18
Mon 4/6	Offering and rejecting invitations	Reading 19
Wed 4/8	No class	
Mon 4/13	Telling and responding to troubles	Reading 20
Wed 4/15	No class	
Mon 4/20	Little words that matter	Reading 21
Wed 4/22	Laughter and intimacy	Reading 22
Mon 4/27	Before words	Reading 23
Wed 4/29	Project presentations	<b>ATTENDANCE MANDATORY</b>
Mon 5/4	Project presentations	<b>ATTENDANCE MANDATORY</b>
<b>Fri 5/8</b>	<b>Paper due via email to <a href="mailto:jennym@scils.rutgers.edu">jennym@scils.rutgers.edu</a> by 12 noon</b>	

## Reading List

(Readings are posted on the class website at <https://sakai.rutgers.edu>)

- 1 Pinker, Steven. (1994). The language instinct. Chapters 1 & 2. New York: Perennial Press.
- 2 Transcription symbols. In J. M. Atkinson & J. C. Heritage (Eds.), Structures in Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. ix-xvi.
- 3 Jefferson, G. (1985). An exercise in the transcription and analysis of laughter. In T. Van Dijk (ed.), Handbook of Discourse Analysis (Vol. 3: Discourse and Dialogue). London: Academic Press, pp. 25-34.
- 4 Garfinkel, H. (1967). Passing and the managed achievement of status in an "intersexed" person. Studies in Ethnomethodology. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall. Chapter 5 pp. 116-137.
- 5 Sacks, H. (1984). Doing being ordinary. In J. M. Atkinson & J. C. Heritage (eds), Structures in Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 413-429.
- 6 Austin, J.L. (1962). How to do things with words. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Lecture 1, pp. 1-12.
- 7 Sacks, H. (1984). Notes on methodology. In J. M. Atkinson & J. C. Heritage (eds), Structures in Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 21-27.
- 8 Sacks, H. (1973a). On some puns with some intimations. In R. W. Shuy (ed.), Sociolinguistics: Current Trends and Prospects. 23rd Annual Round Table Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press. pp. 135-144.
- 9 Sacks, H. (1978) Some technical considerations of a dirty joke. In J. Schenkein (ed.) Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction. N.Y.: Academic Press. pp. 249-270.
- 10 Mandelbaum, J. (1989). Interpersonal activities in conversational storytelling." Western Journal of Speech Communication, 53, 114-126.
- 11 Schegloff, E. A. (1987). Between macro and micro: contexts and other connections. In J. Alexander et al. (Eds), The Micro-Macro Link. Berkeley: University of

California Press.

- 12 Heath, C. (1989). Pain talk: The expression of suffering in the medical consultation. Social Psychology Quarterly, 52, 2, 113-125.
- 13 Drew, P. (1985). Analysing the use of language in courtroom interaction. In T. Van Dijk (ed.), Handbook of Discourse Analysis (Vol. 3: Discourse and Dialogue). London: Academic Press. pp. 133-148.
- 14 Schegloff, E. A. (1987b). Analyzing single episodes in interaction: an exercise in conversation analysis. Social Psychology Quarterly, 50, 101-114.
- 15 Pomerantz, A. (1978) Attributions of responsibility: Blamings. Sociology, 12, 115-121
- 16 Drew, P. & Holt, E. (1988) Complainable matters: The use of idiomatic expressions in making complaints. Social Problems, 35, 398-418.
- 17 Drew, P. (1987) Po-faced receipts of teases. Linguistics, 25, 1, 219-253.
- 18 Pomerantz, A. M. (1978). Compliment response: notes on the co-operation of multiple constraints. In J. N. Schenkein (ed.), Studies in the Organisation of Conversational Interaction. New York: Academic Press. pp. 79-112.
- 19 Drew, P. (1984). Speakers' reportings in invitation sequences. In J. M. Atkinson & J. C. Heritage (eds), Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 129-151.
- 20 Jefferson, G. & Lee, J. (1981) The rejection of advice: Managing the problematic convergence of a 'troubles-telling' and a 'service encounter'. Journal of Pragmatics, 5, 399-422.
- 21 Bolden, G. (2006). Little words that matter: Discourse markers “So” and “Oh” and the doing of other-attentiveness in social interaction. Journal of Communication, 56, 661–688.
- 22 Jefferson, G., Sacks, H. & Schegloff, E. A. (1987). Notes on laughter in the pursuit of intimacy. In Graham Button and John R.E. Lee (Eds.) Talk and social organisation. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters (pp.152-205).
23. Kidwell, M. (2005). Gaze as social control: How very young children differentiate ‘the look’ from ‘a mere look’ by their adult caregivers. Research on Language and Social Interaction, 38, 417-449.