

**SCOM 637 –Spring, 2007**  
**Perspectives on Organizational Discourse**

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Office Hours: 11:00-12:00, 1:00-2:00, 3:45-4:30 TR  
Others by Appointment

**Description.** This class will explore the different perspectives, theoretical assumptions, critical issues, and struggles that organizational discourse analysts face. It focuses on how discourse functions as a way of knowing as well as a method for conducting research. Class periods and exercises will examine different approaches to doing discourse analysis as well as exemplars of research within different perspectives. Class periods will be divided equally between lecture and class discussion. I will present a general introduction to the topic or topics of the evening. Some class sessions will also involve applying particular course readings to texts and organizational exemplars. Open discussion and question-answer format are an important element of the seminar. Come prepared to ask questions, make comments, and become involved in class discussions.

**Cheating, Plagiarism, and Scholastic Dishonesty.** Cheating, plagiarism, and scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism consists of passing off one's own ideas, words, writings, etc. which belongs to another person. Plagiarism results in severe penalties. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section, "Scholastic Dishonesty," the Aggie Honor Code; or the Honor Council Rules and Procedures (<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>).

**Attendance:** Attendance in a seminar is a vital part of the learning process. Missing a 3-hour class is like missing an entire week of regular classes. I take absences into consideration in determining a student's participation grade. Absences should fit the university criteria for excused absences, e.g., illness, death in the family, etc. Missing more than one class will automatically lower a student's participation grade to a C.

**Americans Disabilities Act.** "The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please notify me and the Department of Student Life, Room b-116, Cain Hall, 845-1637, or e-mail [ssd@tamu.edu](mailto:ssd@tamu.edu)."

**Textbooks and Required Readings:** Textbooks are available in the MSC Bookstore.

Heracleous, L. (2006). *Discourse, interpretation, organization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Heracleous)

Phillips, L., & Jorgensen, M. S. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London: Sage. (Phillips)

Titscher, S., Meyer, M., Wodak, R., & Vetter, E. (2002). *Methods of text and discourse analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (Titscher)

Course packet available at TEES Copy Center, Room 221, Wisenbaker Engineering Research Center, (221 WERC) 845-3120, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Accepts personal checks, but no credit cards.

**Course Outline:**

Date	Topic	Assignment
Jan. 16	Overview of the Course Definitions and Issues in Organizational Discourse	Class Handout
	Video and Text Analysis of Mr. Sam Comparative Analysis of Mr. Sam—Emotions and Organizational Discourse	
Jan. 23	Varieties of Organizational Discourse Images of Discourse	Putnam & Fairhurst (packet) Heracleous, Ch. 1
	The Field of Discourse Analysis Discourses and Levels of Analysis	Phillips, Ch. 1 Alvesson & Karreman (packet)
Jan. 30	<b>Doing Discourse Analysis:</b> Texts, Data, Research Questions	Titscher, Ch. 1-4
	Paper Presentations on Conversational Analysis, Content Analysis, and Interaction Analysis	Titscher, Ch. 5
	Exemplars of conversational and interaction analysis	Pomerantz, Fehr, & Ende (packet) Fairhurst (packet)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Feb. 6	Interpretive Approaches	Heracleous, Ch. 2,
	Paper Presentations on Grounded Theory, Ethnography of Speaking, Functional Pragmatics	Titscher, Ch. 6, 7, 12
	Exemplars of discourse analysis with speech act theory and ethnography	Heracleous, Ch. 6 Cooren (packet)
Feb. 13	Discourse and Narrative Analysis	Gabriel (packet)
	Paper presentations on Narrative Methods—Rhetorical, Semiotic, and Postmodern	Titscher, Ch. 9
	Exemplar of organizational narrative analysis	Currie & Brown (packet) Barge (packet)
Feb. 20	Rhetoric, Corporate Rhetoric, and Organizational Control	Cheney, et. al. (packet)
	Paper presentation on rhetorical methods—Hermeneutics Analysis, Argumentation Analysis and Rhetorical Strategies	Titscher, Ch. 14
	Exemplars of organizational rhetoric	Brinson & Benoit (packet) Kuhn (packet)
Feb. 27	Critical Discourse Analysis—Fairclough CDA, Structural Approach	Heracleous, Ch. 5
	Paper presentations on Critical Discourse Methods	Titscher, Ch. 11
	Exemplars of structuration and critical discourse analysis	Clegg, et al (packet) Howard & Geist (packet) Fairhurst, Cooren, & Cahill (packet)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
March 6	Postmodern Discourse Analysis--Laclau and Mouffe's poststructuralism; Foucault and Power, Derrida—Deconstruction	Phillips, Ch. 3 Heracleous, Ch. 4
	Paper presentations on Postructuralism, Foucault and Discourse Analysis and on Deconstruction	Phillips, Ch. 2
	Exemplars of postmodern approaches	Zoller (packet) Real & Putnam (packet)
March 13	No Class—Spring Break	
March 20	Paper Presentations on Sample of Discourse Analysis in Organizations	
March 27	<b>Discursive Forms and Organizational Analysis</b> Humor	Tracy, Myers & Scott (packet) Terrion & Ashforth (packet)
	Literary Tropes Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche	Oswick, Putnam, Keenoy (packet) Heracleous, Ch. 5 Putnam (packet)
April 3	Contradictions, Paradoxes, Dialectical Tensions, and Dialogue	Tracy (packet) Collinson (packet) Martin (packet) Kellett (packet)
April 10	Silence, Presence/Absence, and the “Other” in Discourse	Meares, et. al (packet) Ward & Winstanley (packet)
	Texts and Conversations Organizations as Discursive Constructions	Taylor & Robichaud (packet) Fairhurst & Putnam (packet)
April 17	Comparison of Methods and Multiple Discourse Perspectives	Titscher, Ch. 16 Phillips, Ch. 5 Heracleous, Ch. 7
April 24	The Debate: Discourse, Organization, and Epistemology	Reed (packet) Chia (packet) Tsoukas (packet) Conrad (packet)

Date	Topic	Assignment
	Final Papers Due on Monday, April 30 at 5:00 p.m.	

**Assignments:**

1. **Discourse Method and Approaches.** The first paper assignment will be due between Jan. 30 and March 6, depending on the topic that you select. This paper will be an overview summary and critique of a particular discourse analytic method. You will need to examine readings on the method you select and synthesize the approach in light of: definitions and descriptions, theoretical roots and underpinnings, techniques for how to conduct the analysis, and strengths and weaknesses of the method. You should draw from the readings assigned for the evening that discuss the method you select and additional readings included on a class handout. This paper will be a 7-9 page paper. Papers will be presented in class and you should provide a copy of your paper for members of the class. The discourse method paper is 20% of the course grade.
2. **Discourse Analysis Paper:** Each student will select a narrow, small-scale organizational text for conducting a discourse analysis with a particular method. For example, you could select organizational documents, memos, annual reports, media coverage, published interviews, transcripts of talk in meetings or other settings, web site postings, cartoons, or other types of texts. For this particular paper, the text you select should be narrow rather than multiple documents or comprehensive data. You will need to select a particular discourse method and use this method for analyzing the text(s) that you select. This paper may a beginning for developing the final paper in the class. A more detailed explanation for the assignment will be distributed later in the course. Papers will be presented on March 20. Presentations should be short, resembling the 10 limit for convention papers. Specific guidelines for presentation will be discussed later in the course. This paper should be 8-12 pages and counts 25% of your final grade.
3. **Final Paper—Research Project.** Each student will write a 20-25 page final paper in the course that falls into one of three options:

**Option 1**—This option for the final paper is a research design in a narrow topic area of discourse and organizational studies, e.g., emotion (e.g., emotional labor or emotional expression), organizational change (e.g., downsizing, mergers and acquisitions), conflict (e.g., negotiation, peer conflict); technology (e.g., use of information technology, GDSS), gender (e.g., sexual harassment, women in management), leadership (e.g., transformative leaders, charismatic leaders), etc. The research design will include a brief overview that sets up the discourse perspective in this area (major issues and research concerns), a review of the literature that examines discourse in this area, research questions, methodology, sample and design, proposed data collection, and proposed tool for analysis. This project roughly parallels a proposal for a study that uses discourse analysis.

**Option 2**—This paper is a literature review on some area of organizational discourse analysis that you would like to explore in depth and that has not received a major review in other

publications. For example, you could conduct a literature review on the research on humor in organizations, argumentation in organizational analysis, framing and cognitive views of organizational discourse, discourse and emotional expression, dialogue, cartoons and graffiti as discursive forms, discourse and facework in organizations, etc. Students who select this option should work closely with me to narrow their focus, get lists of references, and design their papers. Literature reviews need to make an argument, unify the paper through a central thesis statement, use this thesis to organize the paper, and thread the material together in a coherent form.

**Option 3**—This options could draw from the small-scale discourse analysis paper and apply it to additional texts to conduct a research study. For this paper, you will need to collect several different texts from an organization (or multiple organizations), narrow your focus to a research concept, conduct the literature review (especially the discourse literature on this topic), form research questions, apply a specific type of discourse method, and conduct the study to ascertain what you can learn through this type of research. If you involve human subjects in the study, you will need to work with me to complete a Classroom IRB form. If you draw your data from public documents, media, or web or internet data, you would not need IRB approval unless you talk with members of the organization. The research paper should contain the following: rationale for the study, theoretical and conceptual perspective, literature review, research questions, methods and data analysis approaches, research findings, conclusions, and limitations.

Regardless of the option that you select, you should have your topics and general ideas for the paper selected by March 20. I encourage you to show me outlines, rough drafts, or portions of your project as it develops. Term papers are due early on **Monday, April 30 by 5:00 p.m.** The term paper project counts 45% of the final course grade.

**Grading Policy:**

Discourse Method Paper	20%
Short Discourse Analysis Paper	25%
Final Course Paper	45%
Class Readings and Participation	10%

Professor Putnam  
Spring 2007

**SCOM 637**  
**Perspective on Organizational Discourse**  
**Reading Packet**

**Jan. 23**

Putnam, L. L. & Fairhurst, G. T. (2001). Discourse analysis in organizations: Issues and concerns. In F. M. Jablin and L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 78-136). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Alvesson, M. A. & Karreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis. *Human Relations*, 53, 1125-1149.

**Jan. 30**

Pomerantz, A., Fehur, B. J., & Ende, J. (1997). When supervising physicians see patients: Strategies used in difficult situations. *Human Communication Research*, 23, 589-615.

Fairhurst, G. T. (2004). Textuality and agency in interaction analysis. *Organization*, 11, 335-353.

**Feb. 6**

Cooren, F. (2004). Textual agency: How texts do things in organizational settings. *Organization*, 11, 373-393.

**Feb. 13**

Gabriel, Y. (2004). Narratives, stories and texts. . In In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Oswick, and L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Discourse* (pp. 61-77). London: Sage.

Currie, G., & Brown, A. D. (2003). A narratological approach to understanding processes of organizing in a UK hospital. *Human Relations*, 56, 563-586.

Barge, J. K. (2004). Antenarrative and managerial practice. *Communication Studies*, 106-127.

**Feb. 20**

Cheney, G., Christensen, L. T., Conrad, C., & Lair, D. J. (2004). Corporate rhetoric as organizational discourse. In In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Oswick, and L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Discourse*. London: Sage.

Brinson, S. L., & Benoit, W. L. (1999). The tarnished star: Restoring Texaco's damaged public image. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 12, 483-510.

Kuhn, T. (1997). The discourse of issues management: A *Genre* of organizational communication. *Communication Quarterly*, 45, 188-210.

**Feb. 27**

Clegg, S. R., Courpasson, D., & Phillips, N. (2006). Discursive theories of organizational power. In *Power and organizations*, Ch. 10 (pp. 290-319). London: Sage.

Howard, L. A., & Geist, P. (1995). Ideological positioning in organizational change: The dialectic of control in a merging organization. *Communication Monographs*, 62, 110-131.

Fairhurst, G. T., Cooren, F., & Cahill, D. J. (2002). Discursiveness, contradiction, and unintended consequences in successive downsizings. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 15, 501-540.

**March 6**

Zoller, H. M. (2003). Health on the line: Identity and disciplinary control in employee occupational health and safety discourse. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 31, 118-139.

Real, K. & Putnam, L. L. (2005). Ironies in the discursive struggle of pilots defending the profession. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 19, 91-119.

**March 27**

Tracy, S. J., Myers, K. M., & Scott, C. W. (2006). Cracking jokes and crafting selves: Sensemaking and identity management among human service workers. *Communication Monographs*, 73, 283-308.

Terrion, J. L., & Ashforth, B. E. (2002). From 'I' to 'we': The role of putdown humor and identity in the development of a temporary group. *Human Relations*, 55, 55-88.

Oswick, C., Putnam, L. L., & Keenoy, T. (2004). Tropes, discourse, and organizing. In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Oswick, and L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Discourse* (pp. 105-127). London: Sage.

Putnam, L. L. (2003). Dialectical tensions and rhetorical tropes in negotiations. *Organizational Studies*, 25, 35-53.

**April 3**

Tracy, S. J. (2004). Dialectic, contradiction, or double bind? Analyzing and theorizing employee reactions to organizational tension. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 32, 119-146.

Collinson, D. (2005). Dialectics of leadership. *Human Relations*, 58, 1419-1442.

Martin, D. M. (2004). Humor in middle management: Women negotiating the paradoxes of organizational life. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 32, 147-170.

Kellett, P. M. (1999). Dialogue and dialectics in managing organizational change: The case of a mission-based transformation. *Southern Communication Journal*, 64, 211-231.



**April 10**

Meares, M. M., Oetzel, J. G., Torres, A., Derkacs, D., & Ginossar, T. (2004). Employee mistreatment and muted voices in the culturally diverse workplace. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 32, 4-27.

Ward, J., & Winstanley, D. (2003). The absent presence: Negative space within discourse and the construction of minority sexual identity in the workplace. *Human Relations*, 56, 1255-1280.

Taylor, J. R., & Robichaud, D. (2004). Finding the organization in the communication: Discourse as action and sensemaking. *Organization*, 11, 395-413.

Fairhurst, G. T., & Putnam, L. (2004). Organizations as discursive constructions. *Communication Theory*, 14, 5-26.

**April 24**

Reed, M. (2000). The limits of discourse analysis in organizational analysis. *Organization*, 7, 524-530.

Chia, R. (2000). Discourse analysis as organizational analysis. *Organization*, 7, 513-518.

Tsoukas, H. (2000). False dilemmas in organizational theory: Realism or social constructivism. *Organization*, 7, 531-535.

Conrad, C. (2004). Organizational discourse analysis: Avoiding the determinism-voluntarism trap. *Organization*, 11, 427-439.