

COMM 310: Communication in Everyday Life
Fall 2008; MWF 11-11:50; MOLN 112

Instructor Information:

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Course description:

This is a course about interpersonal communication, often more specifically termed language and social interaction. That is, this course is about what happens when people interact face-to-face, in a large variety of contexts. We will examine the role of communication in structuring and accomplishing everyday activities. In order to do this, this semester students will participate in a multidisciplinary research project with students in Teacher Education, which we are calling the Classroom Ethnography Project. We will use what occurs in classrooms as one specific example for what occurs in any interaction more generally. The emphasis will be on observing, documenting, and analyzing social interaction, for only by watching real people in real situations can students discover for themselves the regularities in daily interaction. Much interpersonal behavior is learned but unconscious. Successful completion of this course involves a shift in perception: students will learn to consciously *see* what occurs when people interact, and will be given a vocabulary for discussing what they see.

Prerequisites:

Students enrolled in this course should have completed COMM 107, 108, 209 and 211.

Texts:

Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (1989). *Communication in everyday life: A social interpretation*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Web page:

There are two course websites. One, the basic site for this course, is located at <http://uwp.edu/~leedshur/310/index.htm>

This is where all of your assignments are available, along with a copy of the syllabus. In addition, there are extensive bibliographies available on that site to help you with your research project. Because it is accessible to anyone, it is where I will post materials that people outside of the course can see. But it is impossible for students to post to this site because it only works in one direction: I post materials, and you can easily retrieve them. The second web site is a Wiki, which means that it permits many-to-many communication – you can either read materials, or post them for me, or for other students, to read. Because this site will include student created materials with words or images of real people, it is password protected. That means no one can get to it except students currently enrolled in this course. All students need to be able to get to these sites on a regular basis; if you do not have a computer at home, use one of the campus labs for access.

Department Competencies:

The Communication Department has developed a list of 12 competencies. These are skills and understandings we expect all students to have mastered by graduation; all courses illuminate at

least one of the competencies. This course most directly connects to the following departmental competencies:

1. Working effectively with information, including evaluating materials produced by others, synthesizing viewpoints, and creating new ideas.
2. Attending to detail, negotiating situations, observing one's own place in specific contexts, and thinking systematically.
3. Analyzing rules and patterns in social and mediated interactions.
7. Understanding communication as the social construction of reality.
8. Understanding identity as constructed and sustained through language and interaction.

Course Outline:

Part 1: Introduction

Reading: Preface, Chapter 1

Exercise 1, 2

Review of syllabus and assignments. Discussion of the structure of the text, and how to make the best use of it. Overview of the field of interpersonal communication and the particular combination of approaches that make up the study of social interaction. Explanation of social order and interaction order. Discussion of particular parts of communication that can serve as the focus of study: interaction, language, symbols, rituals. Discussion of methods used in studying social interaction, and the need for audio/videotaping and transcription. Discussion of the connection between library research and field research (observations of actual behavior), and how to tie the two together. Exercises in observing interaction through fieldnotes, and beginning transcription from audiotape.

Part 2: Communication as Multichannel Behavior

Reading: Chapter 5

Exercise 3

Incorporation of nonverbal communication as one important part of interpersonal communication, presentation of the metaphor of communication as an orchestra, discussion of interaction rhythms, and the continuous nature of communication, and review of the different channels of communication. Exercise on learning to consciously see nonverbal aspects of interaction.

Part 3: Communication as Behavior with Pattern

Reading: Chapter 2

Exercises 4, 5

Introduction of case studies. Discussion of pattern (structure, system, form, and organization) extended to interpersonal communication as rule-governed, predictable, and analyzable. Exercises related to rules. Exercises in observing people on campus in familiar situations, and learning to see the pattern underlying the behavior, through fieldnotes and photographs or videotapes.

Part 4: Communication as Behavior we Learn

Reading: Chapter 3

Exercise 6

Discussion of communication among children, and the difference between teaching and learning. Discussion of communication as socially-based, related to culture, and arbitrary. Exercise related to the difference between learning and teaching.

Part 5: Communication as Behavior in Context

Reading: Chapter 4

Exercises 7, 8, 9

Discussion of how to establish appropriate boundaries of context, discussion of context extended to communication as having meaning, hierarchies for analyzing communication, and punctuation differences between individuals. General discussion of conversation analysis. Exercises using conversation analysis to understand the role of context in interaction.

Part 6: Communication as Multifunctional Behavior

Reading: Chapter 6

Exercises 10, 11, 12

Discussion of the various functions of interpersonal communication, with detailed examination of two that are often neglected: metacommunication and phatic communication. Focus on social identity and social relationship messages. Exercises using conversation analysis to understand how multiple functions occur simultaneously.

Part 7: Conclusion

Reading: Chapter 7

Presentation of extended example of communication within an organization. Reintegration of the concepts presented in the course as separate items. Presentation of research results by the class, to the class.

Final Exam

Assignments:

Exercises: There are a total of 12 exercises, ranging from brief paragraphs to short papers, available from the public website. Each one is marked as to how many points it is potentially worth (you will be graded on how well you perform, not solely on effort, so you may earn anything from 0 to the maximum number of points possible on each exercise). Taken together, all 12 are worth a possible total of 150 points. If you miss a class, check the course Wiki to see if there has been a change in schedule. I will accept these assignments up to *one* class period late (with a penalty of 10% of the total potential points on that exercise) if it is something you can do outside of class; after one class period I will not accept them except in extreme circumstances. Exercises will be either completed in class or posted to the relevant Wiki page.

Research project: Each student will choose a topic, and conduct both library and original research. Several parts of the project will be turned in separately, as a check that the whole is progressing satisfactorily; see the documentation on the project for details. Taken together, the research project will be worth 300 points, so it is the major effort of the semester. If you are not present for the in-class steps, you will not be able to make them up because they require either group work or a presentation to the group.

Class participation: This is a course in which involvement in the discussion is built into the course. Some of the exercises are 5 point assignments that are to be completed in class. If you are not present, you will not be able to make them up. Missing one or two will not be a problem, as there are a lot of points assigned over the semester; however, missing a lot will obviously impact your final grade. Similarly, since several activities related to the research project require your participation in class, if you are absent on those days it may well not be possible for you to make up those points. You will get points for attendance and class participation as well as for participating in the course Wiki.

Final Exam: At the end of the course there will be a final exam, designed to check that you have been able to synthesize the wide range of material covered in the course. It will cover the text, all class discussions, and all student presentations.

Grading:

Exercises	150 points
Research project	300 points
Participation	50 points
Final Exam	150 points

Total 650 points*

At the end of the semester, the points will be turned into grades using the following scale:

605-650	A	475-500	C
585-604	A-	455-474	C-
566-584	B+	436-454	D+
540-565	B	410-435	D
520-539	B-	390-409	D-
501-519	C+	0-389	F

*If we make changes in the assignments so that we do not end up with exactly 600 points, the percentages used in this scale will be maintained (80-82 = B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+).

Tentative schedule

- 9/3 Introduction to course, review of syllabus and assignments
- 9/5 Preface; review Wiki; **exercise 1 brought to class in hard copy**
- 9/8 Review “Research project” and “Vocabulary” handouts from course website; discuss

- possible topics; **User page on Wiki created in class – meet in MOLN 115 PC lab**
- 9/10 Chapter 1 started
- 9/12 Chapter 1 finished
- 9/15 Chapter 5 started
- 9/17 Discussion of transcription conventions; **exercise 2 brought to class in hard copy**
- 9/19 Chapter 5 finished; **topic choice posted to Wiki**
- 9/22 **Exercise 3 in class**
- 9/24 Chapter 2 started
- 9/26 Chapter 2 finished; **exercise 4 posted to Wiki**
- 9/29 Review how to write research questions and develop research design; review “Connections” and “Synonyms” handouts on course website
- 10/1 Chapter 3 started; **exercise 5 posted to Wiki**
- 10/3 Chapter 3 finished; **exercise 6 posted to Wiki**
- 10/6 **Research question posted to Wiki**; students placed in research clusters
- 10/8 Chapter 4 started; **exercise 7 in class**
- 10/10 Chapter 4 finished; **exercise 8 in class**
- 10/13 **Research design posted to Wiki**; research clusters review each other’s designs
- 10/15 Review connection between data collection, transcription, and analysis
- 10/17 **Exercise 9 posted to Wiki**; analysis in class of results
- 10/20 **Draft research bibliography posted to Wiki**; research clusters compare and supplement
- 10/22 Chapter 6 started; **exercise 10 in class**
- 10/24 **Fieldnotes posted to Wiki** (documentation of context, and at least one description of an interaction)
- 10/27 **Complete research bibliography posted to Wiki**; summary of knowledge gained from prior research prepared in research clusters
- 10/29 Chapter 6 finished; **exercise 11 in class**
- 10/31 **Exercise 12 posted to Wiki**
- 11/3 Chapter 7
- 11/5 Writing a literature review
- 11/7 **Transcript turned in as hard copy** (at least one interaction that you observed, audiotaped, or videotaped, must be transcribed)
- 11/10 Workshop: Bring in audiotapes or videotapes for analysis
- 11/12 Workshop: Bring in audiotapes or videotapes for analysis
- 11/14 Research clusters: help each other with analysis of data
- 11/17 **Draft analysis posted to Wiki** (describe something you learned through analyzing the data you have collected)
- 11/19 Review how to write up final paper
- 11/21 Work on final paper
- 11/24 Work on final paper
- 11/26 Workshop: Bring in audiotapes or videotapes for analysis
- 11/28 Thanksgiving break
- 12/1 Workshop: Bring in audiotapes or videotapes for analysis
- 12/3 **Paper draft due – bring hard copy to class for peer editing**
- 12/5 Help with presentations (handout: research question, citations for a few good sources on the topic, summary of research design, findings)
- 12/8 Presentations

12/10 Presentations
12/12 Presentations; **final paper due in hard copy**
12/15 Conclusion; return to “Vocabulary” handout; discuss final exam; complete course evaluations
12/17, 10:30-12:30, **Final exam**

Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with Disability Services in WYLL D175.

Honors work:

This course is available for students who would like honors credit. The honors program on campus has specific guidelines that must be followed if you want to do this; see me about what is required. If you are eligible and interested, we will work together to design an individually tailored project matching your interests to the content of the course.

Plagiarism and academic integrity:

Plagiarism is the term for taking credit for work that is not your own. This means you cannot take material from articles and books you find in the library and present it as your own work, you cannot let your friends prepare your assignments, and you cannot copy an assignment from a student who took the same course another semester. Plagiarism is taken seriously because a university is a place for learning and new ideas; your assignments are the evidence you provide of your learning, your original ideas. Providing work that is not your own or that is not unique to the assignment is inappropriate because it is a form of lying. The consequences of plagiarism are severe: you will be given an F on the specific assignment, or the entire course, at my discretion; depending on the severity of the offense, I may feel obliged to pursue it further within the university. Although it is rare, students have been expelled from college based solely on plagiarism. If you need advice on how to appropriately cite the work of others, please ask. Briefly, so long as you acknowledge that an idea is not your own, but give the original source, and so long as the assignment contains sufficient original work in addition to whatever is quoted from others, you are generally not going to get into trouble.

Other violations of academic integrity are also inappropriate though they do not generally have the same severe consequences as plagiarism. One example would be using the same assignment for multiple courses. You may draw on the same data and perform a different analysis, or you may perform a similar type of analysis of different data, in assignments for different courses, but you may not present the same data and the same analysis twice. (If you foresee a potential complication, see me about how to appropriately resolve it.) Other examples would be lying about the reason for an absence, or signing someone else’s name to a sign-in sheet when they were not present. Please keep in mind that students generally ask their professors for recommendations when they graduate, whether for jobs or for graduate school. If you are not concerned about today, consider the implications for the future of gaining a reputation as someone uncertain about what constitutes ethical behavior.

Vocabulary:
New Terms you should Understand by the End of this Course

Social order
Interaction order
Transcription
Interaction rhythm
Interactional synchrony/Asynchrony/Self-synchrony
Kinesics
Paralanguage
Proxemics
Social gathering
Social occasion
Co-presence
Civil inattention
Involvement shield
Tie sign
Frame
Impression management
Front stage
Back stage
Service encounter
Speech community
Speech act
Speech event
Facework
Phatic
Metacommunication

Comm 310:
Communication in Everyday Life
Workbook

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Introduction

These exercises have been designed for Comm 310, Communication in Everyday Life, as taught at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. You should also have a syllabus for this course, and the assigned text:

Leeds-Hurwitz, Wendy. (1989). *Communication in everyday life: A social interpretation*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Each exercise has a specific number of points assigned to it. Let that number be your guide to how much effort to put into the assignment. An exercise worth 10 points probably will take 1-2 hours; one at 20 points should take twice that. All 5 point exercises will be completed in class. Allot your time accordingly. Also, please notice that some exercises have multiple parts; be sure to complete all parts.

There are several different types of exercises, and they are labeled at the top. One type requires only brief responses from you and will be completed in class, another type is based on brief observations you will make out of class. Exercises completed in class obviously will be handwritten; those completed at home should be typed, double space, so I can easily read them.

The exercises match the major sections of the course and the text. The syllabus includes an initial schedule for when each exercise is due. If we get off schedule, we'll discuss a minor revision in class, and you should keep track of any changes so you know what is coming up. Look to see how many points future exercises are worth, in order to know how much time to budget.

Exercise 1: Observation (fieldnotes)

Value: 10 points

1. Find a busy spot (preferably on campus, preferably not next to any other students in the course) and stay there, with a pen and paper handy. Jot down the first two exchanges of 10 different conversations. An exchange is when someone says something and someone else answers; be sure to write down what they *really* say, not a summary of it. If people say things you don't want to repeat, fine, but don't edit what you hear, just omit that conversation. Be sure these are the opening remarks in a conversation, not the middles or endings, so everyone's data is comparable. The reason to write down ten exchanges is so that we have a fairly large database when we come back together to analyze what everyone has heard.

For example:

A: Hi!

B: Hello.

A: How are your classes?

B: Well, you know, they're okay.

You should have 40 lines of data at the end, 4 lines taken from 10 different conversations.

2. After you have collected all the data, think about if there are any observations you can make, or any questions you have about how people begin conversations. Try to make at least a comment or two about what you've learned from studying your small database. (We'll be able to make other generalizations in class when we share data, and you'll see then if your data was representative or not. Do not become wedded to your conclusions, as they are based on an extremely small data set, but do make some, as a beginning.)

NOTES:

Even if you know the names of the people speaking, do not write them down (this is in order to protect the privacy of the individuals).

Do not keep track of the rest of the conversation, as that is irrelevant to our concerns here.

Keep a written record of what you hear, don't assume you can remember it. And write down exactly what you hear, not the words you would rather have heard; if you are uncomfortable writing down swear words to discuss in class, don't include them in your data. There's no way for me to tell if you chose not to include a particular interaction. But do not change the words - that's falsifying data. (In a real study, eliminating data would be just as bad, but for our purposes here it is irrelevant.)

If there are more than two participants in a given interaction, note what each one says at the beginning, but if one person is silent for five minutes, don't write down all the conversation until he or she joins in. Just indicate that someone else was present, but silent.

If you are not getting much data and decide to move to a new context, mention that fact, as context substantially influences the data you will collect.

If you look (or feel) guilty of eavesdropping, others will get uncomfortable. Greetings are generally assumed to be public information, and there is nothing wrong with writing them down. You are not writing down anything else, so you are not likely to be passing on any great secrets

to the class. But if you hear something you think the speakers consider private, leave it out of your data set.

Exercise 2: Observation (transcription from audiotape)

Value: 20 points

Record at least 5 minutes of conversation (real conversation, not something set up for this purpose; that is, record people who would have been having a conversation even if you hadn't decided to set up your tape recorder). Then attempt to transcribe one page of the conversation ("transcribe" means to write a record of what was said), using the transcription conventions provided below. The goal of transcribing conversation is to freeze language so we can study it at leisure. It is important therefore to: 1) document the exact words spoken; and 2) use conventional ways of transcribing those words so others will be able to interpret what actually occurred. These are some of the basic conventions used in the field today. Those who call themselves conversation analysts use far more symbols, and create far more complex transcripts; you don't need that level of detail (although you will find it in some of your assigned readings this semester).

Be sure to begin by identifying the context and participants.

Joan:	indicate speaker name in the left column, and put all the words people speak in the right column
<u>no</u>	use underlining to indicate unusual stress on a particular word
wait a mi-	use a dash to indicate that a sudden cutoff of speech; normally this occurs between speakers; within one speaker's talk, usually there is a slight pause, which should be marked by a comma, rather than a dash
[went to [went to Italy	use brackets to indicate that two people started speaking at the same time (called an overlap) - you need two of these (one for each speaker at the point of overlap, not two for a single speaker) - and arrange the words on the page, so the second speaker's words are directly under the first speaker's words that they overlap - do not need brackets at the end of the turn
(today)	use single parentheses to indicate that you are unclear about what was said (if you give a word it is understood to be a guess; if you can't even guess, leave 5 blank spaces inside the parentheses - don't write "unclear")
((cough))	use double parentheses to indicate that something happened which cannot easily be transcribed (a laugh, cough, whisper) or to provide a gloss on the words (if a speaker leaves the room, or a door slams)
(3)	to indicate periods of silence (don't bother with less than a full second, and round off to the nearest second) - put between speaker names as if it were a full turn, as all speakers contribute to the silence
we went to= =Chicago	use the equals sign to indicate that one speaker has finished a word and the next speaker started talking just at that exact second (put at the end of the first speaker's words <u>and</u> the beginning of the second speaker's words); this is called "latching" and is interesting because it implies speakers know each other especially well, otherwise there would be a dash for interruption

If the speaker has a long utterance, begin a new line at each pause. If you have one or more seconds of silence, start a new line for it, as all speakers must cooperate for a silence to occur. Use double space, as always with assignments, for ease of reading. By convention, titles of books, films, or televisions shows are usually put in italics (*The Simpsons*).

NOTES:

This exercise requires permission from the people you will tape. Please have them sign this note, and turn it in with your assignment. **THE ASSIGNMENT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION, AS IT IS ILLEGAL TO TAPE PEOPLE WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION**, not to mention not very nice.

(Under normal circumstances, students find it more interesting to collect their own data. However, if anyone is unwilling to record their own tape, it is possible to work with previously recorded data. The important goal for the course that you begin to understand how to transfer oral data into a written transcript, but that goal can be met with any data. See me at least a week before this assignment is due if you wish to pursue this option, so we can make alternative arrangements.)

I understand that I will be tape recorded, and that some of the conversation will be used in a class to fulfill an assignment focusing on how conversations are put together and how spoken words are transcribed onto paper. I also understand that someone else (either other students or the instructor) may hear the tape of my conversation.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Exercise 3: Data Analysis (videotape)

Value: 5 points

This is an exercise designed to help you begin to separate the various channels of nonverbal communication. Obviously all occur at once in interaction, however, as an exercise in seeing, it is easiest to focus on one at a time.

A brief reminder:

language refers to the words people use (what dialect they use, particular vocabulary words, grammatical structure, etc.)

paralanguage refers to the ways in which people use their voices, with the exception of the words they speak (so it refers to their accent, pitch, intonation, and various noises they make from laughing to crying, etc.)

proxemics refers to the use of space (how close people stand to each other, where they sit in relation to one another, etc.)

kinesics refers to the use of body movements (facial expressions, how people move their various body parts, sitting positions, posture, etc.)

touch refers to the ways people physically contact one another (who is touched, in what way, for how long, etc.)

objects is the general term used to refer to the ways in which people use material culture (food, clothing, furniture, jewelry, etc.) to express themselves

The standard way to view videotape is to watch it again and again, moving from topic to topic as soon as you learn what you want to know related to each topic. Be careful to write down only what you can see and hear, not what you think participants think or intend, as you cannot be certain of either. One of the goals of this assignment is to practice focusing only on behavior, not interpretation. If you realize you have been describing your interpretation rather than the participants' behavior, cross it out and start over.

First viewing:

Watch the segment of videotape that will be shown in class. Determine the context and categories of participants.

Second viewing:

Listen to hear as many words as you can write down.

Third viewing:

Attend to paralanguage instead of language this time. Try to figure out who is giving what sort of emphasis to their words, with what effect.

Fourth viewing:

Focus on proxemic behavior. Look to see how participants organize themselves or each other in space. Who sits where? Who changes position? Who controls someone else's position?

Fifth viewing:

Focus on kinesic behavior. Who is doing what with their body that you can notice (this includes facial expressions, gestures, posture).

Sixth viewing:

Focus on touch. Who touches who, where, for how long? Does anything change as a result of the touching?

Seventh viewing:

Focus on objects. What objects are relevant to this context? How are they used? Who controls them?

Exercise 4: Observation (fieldnotes)

Value: 20 points

Listen to conversation among your friends until you hear at least one insult.

Begin by documenting the context (where did this conversation take place) and participants. Be sure to provide the actual words spoken, and any nonverbal elements that seem essential to understanding what occurred.

In order to understand what has occurred we will need to know at least the following details, so be sure to document them all:

- the utterance immediate prior to the insult
- the utterance containing the insult (get the exact words down)
- the nature of the insult (possible topics include reference to one or more of the following: gender, age, role, character, intelligence, appearance or physical characteristics, questioning authority, ignoring authority)
- the response to insult by the person who was insulted (silence, agreement, laughter, protest, apology, confusion, intensifier, fight, metacommunicative comment about the insult)
- any comment on how the insult is to be taken by the insulter, if one was made (clarification that it was, or wasn't, an insult; denial of intent to insult – these can occur prior to, concurrent with, or after the insult)
- any response to the insult from bystanders (attempt to calm down the situation; attempt to further provoke one of the participants)

Now, analyze what you witnessed:

7. comment on the nature of the insult (would you have considered this an insult if uttered by a classmate? close friend? stranger?)
8. comment on the nature of the response (if another insult was made, was it more or less intense? what seems to be the emotional response – teasing? anger?)
9. comment on any relevant past history among these particular people that you are aware of (do they often use insults as teasing? is this a common insult? is it necessary to share particular history with this group to even understand the insult?)
10. comment on how you know when words that sound like an insult are intended to be taken as an insult, and when they are to be taken as teasing.

This will work best if you are not one of the immediate participants, but if you have no other examples to use, go ahead and use an interaction involving yourself. It will also work best if you do not use an interaction that occurred in the past, but one that occurs after this assignment is made, so you can document the specific words and actions, rather than relying on your memory, which is quite likely to be faulty.

Exercise 5: Observation (photographs/videotape)

Value: 20 points

Just as researchers use audiotapes to capture speech, still cameras or video cameras are used to capture nonverbal data as visual images. Using either a camera or video camera, document the use of space in some context with which you are already familiar. If you do not have either, go to Media Services and borrow one briefly for this assignment.

There are many different topics you could choose to document. Here are some ideas:

- Focus on the placement of desks and chairs in an office as a means of marking status. Who gets their own space? Who shares space with others? How much space does each person get to control?
- Focus on the personalization of impersonal space. How do people use photographs, plants, or other objects that are unique to them as a way to indicate that a particular space is normally theirs to control?
- Focus on the interpersonal distance between people. How does the amount of space someone is allotted in interaction indicate status? How can you tell who is interacting with others, and who is alone, in a particular context?
- Focus on the connection between relationships and use of space. Where does the head of the family sit at the dinner table? Do two people who are dating sit next to each other or across from each other when in a restaurant?

Just document one idea. Explain the topic you wanted to study and how the photographs or videotape illustrate behavior. Answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the context?
- 2) Who are the participants?
- 3) What is the issue you wanted to document?
- 4) What do the photographs/videotape show as related to your issue?
- 5) What did you learn from using visual images that you could not have learned without them?

Bring your photos or videotape to class so you can share what you saw with others in the class.

You will need to get consent for all but public spaces. Therefore, while people sitting in Main Place do not need to sign consent forms, family members or employees in an office do. If you use a photograph of family or friends from a past time, you do not need consent – it is assumed you had it as a participant, so you can use that photograph for research now. (I couldn't publish something like that without consent, but you can use it for a small in-class exercise.)

The professional way to combine photographs with text is to insert them into the body of the discussion. This is easy in MS Word – simply go to insert, choose photograph, and choose the file of the photograph. This is not required, however. If you only have a hard copy of a photograph and don't have time to scan it, but just want to attach it to the paper, that is fine for this exercise. For your final project, however, actually incorporating images into your paper would be best. It is also possible to select one or more frames from a digital videotape to integrate into a paper using Photoshop.

I understand that I will be photographed or videotaped, and that some of the images will be used in a class to fulfill an assignment focusing on how people interact. I also understand that someone else (either other students or the instructor) may see the photographs or videotape.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Exercise 6: Observation (fieldnotes)

Value: 15 points

We have been discussing communication as something we learn. Find an example of someone learning something on campus. This is a university, after all, and you should be able to find someone learning something somewhere!

For this exercise, you are not required to use either audiotape, videotape, or cameras. Just hone your observational skills.

Describe the following things:

- 1) context;
- 2) participants;
- 3) what it is that was learned; and
- 4) whether there was any *teaching* involved.

In thinking about your observation and your description of it, end with some analysis:

- 5) how do you *know* something was learned?

Exercise 7: Data analysis (audiotape)

Value: 5 points

Read through the following transcript while listening to the tape of this conversation. The context is a business lunch in England, at which one employee is substantially critiqued. This is an abbreviated transcription, meaning that it only provides some of the details conversation analysts usually record.

Listen especially to the use of silence in this conversation, as well as the use of critical paralinguistic phrases such as “mmm” (“paralinguistic” means sounds you make with your vocal cords that are not words yet still convey meaning). Do you hear any sounds that are uncommon in American English?

Listen for times when the participants seem to contradict themselves when you look at the words on paper (the same person saying “Yes” and then “No” immediately). Does this make more sense when you hear the words spoken and can hear the intonation pattern?

Listen to who says what in terms of content. Who actually says there is a problem here? Which line or lines seems the most essential statement of the problem? of suggested resolutions?

Listen for the points where one of the participants asks the waitress for more coffee. What work do you think this sort of topic change does in the interaction? That is, what happens as a result of the request? Think about the pronoun shifts: the first request is first person (“Can I have some more coffee please”), the second is third person (“Could we have some more coffee please”). What difference does this make? Do you find other places where the pronouns shift in this way? (Look at lines 37 and 41).

Looking at these and other details we’ll discuss in class, think about what you have learned up to this point as a *participant* in interaction that permits you to interpret these elements as an *analyst*. Is it easy or hard to figure out what is going on here? What parts are easy and what parts are hard?

- 1 Clive On that on that basis hh how much time do you find you need to spend at// Dunstable?
- 2 Frankie Dunstable I was going to ask that one yeah
- 3 Iain Oh well Dunstable it Dunstable I do as a half way stop basically. I mean that’s basically you get two sides out of that. A half way stop for me and also I keep the contacts going and look at the building and check th- the operation
- 4 Clive What does that actually mean two days a week
- 5 Iain Yeah going and coming to a degree virtually twice a week Yes
6. Clive No I’m just trying to identify how many days a week you’ve actually got available to do the selling that that
- 7 Iain Er er about three days a week //I mean
- 8 Clive Three days
- 9 Iain An that would diminish subject to how the calendar ends up
(1 sec)
- 10 Martin I that sounds to me like at least one day too little
(16 sec)
- 11 Iain I’m just trying to think how bluntly I can put it. Why
((general laughter))
- 12 Martin Because (1 sec) Dunstable shouldn’t take two days a week
- 13 Iain No no it doesn’t take two days a week No No sorry.
- 14 Martin Right

15. Iain It just happens to be er it's on the Monday way and the Friday back or it's I'm going South so I go through Dunstable cos I mean it's just on the M1 I mean that's sorry it's not two full days in a week. Alright it's actually you're talking physical hours it's a day about three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon or vice versa
- 16 Clive Because you travel the way you do
- 17 Iain I travel the way I do yeah
- 18 Clive That tuh that is effectively two days taken out of your week from selling
(3 sec)
- 19 Iain Alrigh Alrigh er er // No No It's not It's not two days a week
- 20 Clive I don't know
- 21 Frankie It doesn't have to be
- 22 Iain Cos there's a telephone at Dunstable there's a telephone at Dunstable and that's what we're talking about in selling so that doesn't stop. While I'm at Dunstable I'm still doing that. I can still be selling erm. Actually Dunstable itself or Queensway Hall does require sort of a half day per week involvement
- 23 Martin Oh yes No I mean I take would think that reasonable
- 24 Iain Quite I mean you see well I mean when I'm in Dun I mean the assumption two assumptions are made here one that if if I am at home ((tap)) work stops or if I am in Dunstable ((tap)) work stops. It doesn't. It's wherever there is a phone the work goes on. I mean that's exactly what you said to me a minute ago // right so therefore
- 25 Martin Mmmm
- 26 Iain Just because I'm in Dunstable doesn't mean to say I'm only doing Dunstable, I'm in sales, it just happens to be there's a phone in an office there
- 27 Martin Sure
- 28 Iain There isn't an office there's (inaudible)
- 29 Frankie So I mean if you
(inaudible)
- 30 Frankie If you re-arrange your travel then Dunstable be // once a week
- 31 Iain Oh sure. If I go If I go to look at these places Dunstable's in the middle of it yeah
(3 sec)
- 32 Iain I mean er what is the consensus coming out that I'm spending too much time at Dunstable
- 33 Frankie No. I just asked (hheheh//he)
- 34 Iain Yes No No
- 35 Martin No but I think you should judge your own erm productivity
- 36 Iain Mmhmm
- 37 Martin By the combination of two things. One is the very tangible effect of how many contracts one actually gets
- 38 Iain Yes
- 39 Martin that's the most tangible way
- 40 Iain Mmhemm
- 41 Martin But the other way is how many erm leads you are able to create and follow up
- 42 Iain Mmm
- 43 Martin Erm and if if in a week because of everything going on you only get to see one person then if you equate er you at a cost of £1000 a week then it has cost us £1000 to see that person
- 44 Iain Yah
- 45 Martin Yeah erm so the more people // that you can get in
- 46 Iain You're tightening the spring. Yes go on.
- 47 Martin No the more people that you can see
- 48 Iain Can I have some more coffee please

- 49 Martin Usefully
- 50 Iain Mmmm
- 51 Martin (1 sec) the better and I think you need to think a bit in those sorts of terms because you're the expensive element (4 sec) And if to make it possible for you to get to see some more people we need to change any other things to make it possible then maybe we should think about that because because we can't replace you // alright
- 52 Iain Mmhmm
- 53 Martin But there may be elements that we might be able to replace in other ways
- 54 Iain Mmhmm
- 55 Martin We can't replace Iain Cameron as the man up from who goes in and talks someone into giving him the contract
- 56 Iain Mmm
- (2 sec)
- 57 Martin It's a question of whether we should in fact think of the ways in which maybe we could make that time more productive, I don't know, It's just I was getting a bit worried when we were coming down to three days a week available for selling which OK I know it was just the way the conversation went but I mean is that what it actually works out at
- (2 sec)
- 58 Iain No
- 59 Martin No
- 60 Iain No it doesn't. It works out at five days a week selling er it's a process. I'm sitting down to lunch but I mean I'm still selling, an I mean
- 61 Martin We'd noticed
- ((general laughter))
- 62 Iain I mean so then I mean. No. I find you can't quantify like that. You've got a sixty hour week selling or whatever it is. It er it's a continual process er really er in this business apart from having actually to compile tenders, letters, followup situations that require any documentation then where I am is not quite that important as long as I am still selling. N I mean if there is doubt whether I'm selling or not, I would like it put on the table. If there's doubt whether I'm selling or not.
- 63 Martin No
- 64 Iain Yes
- 65 Martin Sorry
- 66 Iain Yes when you know three days a week. It feels I mean if there's doubt whether I'm selling. No
- 67 Martin No
- 68 Iain Could we have some more coffee please
- ((general (forced) laughter))

Excerpt from: Sharrock, W., & Anderson, R. (July 8-11, 1986). *SLF Lunch*. Paper presented at Erving Goffman: An Interdisciplinary Appreciation, York, England. Used with permission.

Exercise 8: Data analysis (audiotape)

Value: 5 points

Read through the following segment. Think about the following questions:

In line 1, what interactional work does Carter's question do?

In lines 2, 3, and beyond, why does Jennifer make such a fuss about a tooth coming out? Does Carter's having called attention to it somehow require that a fuss be made?

There is no tooth fairy. Why do so many American parents pretend there is?

When Carter leaves the dinner table to get the tooth, Mom objects, but only makes one comment (lines 16-17) and does not return further to the topic when he returns. What would have happened in terms of the interaction if she had continued that subject?

Jennifer's comment in line 10 seems negative, but in line 11 she seems to reverse herself and make a positive comment. Does this seem like it would make sense in the interaction?

In line 13, Carter has an overlap with Jennifer. What happens to the comment he was trying to make?

In lines 18 and 19 Carter reports that he has brought the tooth. Why then do you think Mom has to repeat the content of his statement in line 20? Given that Marty has not yet been part of this conversation, why is the statement addressed to her as well as to Jennifer?

Mom's comment in line 20 and Carter's question in line 1 both elicit a strong reaction from Jennifer. They do not seem at all similar in form, yet they seem similar in function. Is this often the case, do you think?

Line 27 is the last part of this interaction about the tooth – at that point the conversation moves on. The closing marker to this topic apparently is Carter's last nod. Does the topic feel finished at that point, or do you think it was interrupted by other dinner table conversation?

Context: dinner table talk

Participants: Mother, Marty (14-year-old daughter), Carter (7-year-old son), Jennifer (friend of family)

Present but not participating in this segment: Mother's boyfriend, 12-year-old daughter, 8-year-old son

- 1 Carter: Jennifer, did you even notice something?
- 2 Jennifer: You lost another one down there!
- 3 Ooh, when?
- 4 Carter: ((nods))
- 5 At school
- 6 All I had to do was

7 Twist and pull at the same time

8 And then boom

9 It just came out

10 Jennifer: Ooh, nooo!

11 Cool

12 Did the [tooth] fairy come?

13 Carter: [but I-]

14 I didn't put it under my pillow yet

15 But I know where the tooth is

((leaves table, makes noise from the other room))

16 Mom: Ya know

17 Let's finish dinner

((everyone starts another topic while he's out of the room))

18 Carter: Here's my tooth

19 My huge big tooth

20 Mom: Jennifer and Marty

 There's Carter's tooth

21 Jennifer: Oooh

22 Holy moly

23 Carter: Man, look at that ((shows off place in mouth where tooth came out))

24 I'm kidding!

25 Jennifer: Eeew

26 That big huge tooth came out of that little bitty hole?

27 Carter: ((nods))

Exercise 9: Observation (fieldnotes)

Value: 20 points

Listen to conversation among your friends until you hear at least one apology.

In order to understand what has occurred we will need to know at least the following details, so be sure to document them all:

- the utterance (or behavior) immediate prior to the apology
- the utterance containing the apology (get the exact words down)
- the nature of the apology (in other words, is the person apologizing for words, actions, lack of words or actions, their own behavior, someone else's behavior, etc.)
- the response to apology by the person who received it (did it seem to be accepted as being a "real" apology, that is, one made in good faith? If not, how was that lack of perception of good faith marked?)
- any comment on how the apology is to be taken by the person apologized to, if one was made, by any bystanders (this is especially relevant if the person seems not to be accepting it as a "real" apology)

Now, analyze what you witnessed:

- comment on the nature of the apology (did it seem to you an apology was called for? That it was freely offered? That it was "real"?)
- comment on the nature of the response what seems to be the emotional climate (regret? serious concern for how the original behavior was taken?)
- comment on any relevant past history among these particular people that you are aware of (is the language or behavior that required the apology common for this group? is an apology standard? is it usually accepted as sincere?)
- comment on how you know when an apology is sincere, and when it is offered simply to "save face".

This will work best if you are not one of the immediate participants, but if you have no other examples to use, go ahead and use an interaction involving yourself. It will also work best if you do not use an interaction that occurred in the past, but one that occurs after this assignment is made, so you can document the specific words and actions, rather than relying on your memory, which is quite likely to be faulty. Try to use a different behavior that resulted in an apology than the earlier assignment related to an insult; you will learn more.

Exercise 10: Data Analysis (fieldnotes)

Value: 5 points

Read the following description of interaction in a Biology class taught within a College for Kids in the US. The students are fourth graders. The teacher is a college professor. His immediate goal is to teach the students a little bit about biology, including the basic body parts and how they function; his eventual goal is to interest students in biology more generally so that they will consider a science major when they get to college. In this excerpt, all the notes relating to a model of the human body have been pulled together for analysis.

Based on the evidence provided here, is the immediate goal met? What do you think is the likelihood of the eventual goal being met?

In line 19 the teacher tells an aide to stop putting together the model. Why?

In lines 13 and 14, one student requests and is granted permission to put the model together; in lines 15 and 16 he tells other students that the teacher told him to do it. Is there a difference between these two positions?

Focus on either of these parts, or any aspect of the notes that interests you, and briefly discuss the learning that you can see occurring in the section you have chosen.

Monday, Day 6.

For the first time, the instructor made a comment about the model. He pointed to it standing in the left rear corner of the room while in the midst of some comments about what the class will be doing this week:

1 Dr. P: ...and sooner or later we have to take apart that person standing in the corner (gestures vaguely in the direction of the model).

A parent volunteer sitting in front of the model looked up and answered:

2 Amy: Not me!

3 Dr. P: No, you don't have to worry.

Tuesday, Day 7.

I noted several children standing in front of the model discussing it, very briefly, before class began.

Wednesday, Day 8.

The instructor had moved the model to the right forward corner of the room, on a desk in front of the door through which the children generally entered. It is impossible not to notice when entering the class that morning. The first part of class is taken up by a trip to the biology department's animal facilities; when we returned there was some discussion of differences between plant and animal cells, plant fibers, grass clippings as food for animals versus people, leading to a discussion of heart beats.

4 Dr. P.: I'd like to begin another exercise.

He uses the model of a human body to show where the heart is located, while discussing heart beats. In response to a question by Jeremy,

5 Dr. P.: Well, let's digress a moment.

and he begins to take the model apart. The lungs are difficult to remove.

6 Dr. P.: We need a hammer.

7 Children: He's going to die!

Several of the children groan and shiver as the model is taken apart. Various internal organs are held up in turn: liver, gall bladder, intestines, fat. Dr. P. comments that each student should have the opportunity to take the model apart and put it back together. [It is unclear when he intends this to occur.] In response to questions, children call out the name and function of various organs, and answer questions:

8 Dr. P.: How big is your heart?

Michael knows how big it is, as big as your fist. Kyle and Stephen sitting next to me make fists, compare their size, talk about those being the size of their hearts. Further comments on the color of blood, function of arteries and veins, then:

9 Dr. P.: We're going to perform open heart surgery.

as he takes half the heart out (half stays in, with diagrams of the circulatory system printed on it).

10 Dr. P.: I'd like you to feel your heart beat.

Tells them to check at the wrist, not with their thumbs, then at the neck. One child tells a story about her father having heart surgery. Dr. P. brings out stethoscopes, describes the parts, has everyone come up to the table and get one, they push and crowd and in the process one is pulled apart. Dr. P. holds it up, saying:

11 Dr. P.: Who has dissected a stethoscope?

They wander around the room listening to each other's pulse; he encourages this:

12 Dr. P.: Play with it a few minutes.

After a short time, he checks that they know where to find the heart (on the left side). Dr. P. begins an exercise where they take their own pulse and graph the result on paper, it requires two attempts before most have completed the task. Dr. P. then has them run up and down the stairs in the building to increase their heart rate, and graph the result. After the stair-runners return they want to do the exercise again, and Dr. P. agrees. At this point Jeremy asks him:

13 Jeremy: Can I put this together? [points to the model]

14 Dr. P.: Yes.

Jeremy works on putting the pieces back together on the model, and Kyle comes over to help. Then Kyle leaves to run down the stairs with the others, but Darin comes to help, then Matt, then

Von. They begin to compete for access to the model (there are too many hands and not enough room for all to reach.)

15 Jeremy: Teacher said that I'm supposed to do this! (said loudly)

Jeremy pushes the one closest to the model, Von, out of his way.

16 Jeremy: Teacher said that I'm supposed to do this! (the same words, in the same tone of voice)

Jeremy and Von play-fight, while Darin continues to work on the model. Matt leaves, Kyle returns, Von leaves. Jeremy gets up onto the table, sitting directly in front of the model in order to work on it more easily. (It is difficult to maneuver the pieces, and he has more leverage this way.) Darin leaves, Matt returns to help, Stephen joins in. At this point Dr. P. walks around the room with a handout (drawing of a grasshopper with labels for body parts missing), turns on the overhead projector, and puts on a slide with labels for the body parts. As this happens, Darin and Matt have left the model and are returning to their seats. Jeremy walks away, leaving Kyle alone still working on it. Two of the parent volunteers, Kathy and Pat, go over the model, sending Kyle to his seat, and put the remaining pieces back themselves. Kyle picks up a handout on the way to his desk.

Thursday, Day 9.

I walk in 10 minutes before class is scheduled to start, but there are already some children in the room (they have been arriving earlier and earlier). Jeremy is putting together the model again; Jennifer's brother Kevin (joining us only today, here with their mother to hear Jennifer's report) helps. Von and Dan wander over to help. At 11:30 the class formally begins with:

17 Dr. P.: Who has a report?

[The children have been encouraged to do related experiments at home, and to tell everyone the results; only a few have done so to date.] As Jennifer gives her report describing a rabbit, Jeremy, Von and Dan continue to work on the model and talk.

18 Dr. P.: Could I ask the youngsters who are dissecting the model to please be seated so we can listen to the reports?

One of the parent volunteers, Kathy, walks over to them; as they walk back to their seats, she begins to complete the model.

19 Dr. P.: You don't have to reassemble it. I'm sure someone will do that later.

[Later I noticed the model was put back together, but did not see who did it.]

Friday, Day 10.

Again I walk in early, and again Jeremy, Von and Dan are working on the model. Jeremy sits on the table with the model, as he did on Wednesday. After putting my notebook and pen down on a table, I walk over to the model. Jeremy comes towards me with the brain in his hand:

20 Jeremy: I'm the smartest person in the world.

I have him balance the brain on his head and try walking without letting it fall, he walks that way back to the model. Dan and I work on the model, with Jeremy as critic (taking out the very

parts we just put in). Several parts do not fit perfectly, which is cause for some discussion. By working with them, I discover that Jeremy knows nearly all the body parts by name now, though Dan calls the liver “a second kidney.” As Dan and I try to complete the model, Nathan comes over and helps us get the chest wall on (it fits badly and is difficult to attach). David and his father come in.

21 David: Some people do it every day.

As Nathan and Dan finish closing up the model, Jeremy has moved to the nearby sink and is playing with the water. Today everyone stops playing and sits down in time for the formal beginning of class. An hour later, after they have dissected frogs and are cleaning up, David puts the head of the model on backwards, and many of the children crowd around laughing.

Excerpt from: Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (1997). The concept of context in social communication theory. In J.L. Owen (Ed.), *Context and communication behavior* (pp. 319-335), Reno, NV: Context Press.

Exercise 11: Data analysis (audiotape)

Value: 5 points

Read the following conversation. In class we will listen to the tape of this conversation. Pay particular attention to the functions various comments seem to fulfill. See if you can identify all of the functions we have been discussing (referential, emotive, conative, poetic, phatic, and metacommunicative). Try to match at least one function to each utterance. Remember that a single utterance can fulfill more than one function, and that not every function is apparent in every conversation. In addition, there is something going on here that is not quite clear without knowing some family history – why do you think no one is willing to pass Father the gravy he requests repeatedly?

Context: Dinner table talk.

Participants: Parents in their 40s, children in their late teens and early 20s.

- | | | |
|----|-----------|--|
| 1 | Father | Is that gravy I see over there? |
| 2 | Daughter | ((laugh)) |
| 3 | Boyfriend | Could be:: |
| 4 | (2) | |
| 5 | Son | Looks like we're gonna need more gravy. |
| 6 | Daughter | Hey, I made two packets. |
| 7 | Father | We had a late lunch, din't we? |
| 8 | Son: | Yah. ((scoops up gravy, scowls)) |
| 9 | Daughter | It's instant, gimme a break. |
| 10 | Boyfriend | That's the best. |
| 11 | Daughter | Instant gravy? |
| 12 | Boyfriend | Yeah |
| 13 | Son | (Don't say that, we're on tape) ((whispers)) |
| 14 | Boyfriend | Sorry, I forgot. |
| 15 | Mother | ((drops something)) Whups! Whups! |

16 Boyfriend She's torowin' shit. Stuff.

17 Daughter Yep.

18 (1)

19 Father Please pass the gravy (my way)

20 Mother: Those Packers whomped 'em today ((using electric can opener)). You'd

21 have been [proud of] me-

22 Daughter [I saw that]

23 Mother I even turned it on=

24 Father =Please pass the gravy=

25 Mother =The radio in the car. I listened to it.

26 Son (Hold on, Dad.)

27 Daughter What was the final score?

28 Father I can't eat. I can't eat without gravy ((whining, teasing voice))

29 Son Shut up.

30 Daughter What was the final score?

31 Father There's a spot right here ((tapping table near his place))

32 Mother I don't know what the final score was.

33 Father 28, [10]

34 Son [28], 10

35 (3)

36 Mother I just know that they whomped 'em. Uh, I just saw Tuesday's but I

37 missed today's.

38 Father Oh, rats.

39 (2)

40 Father Tomorrow.

41 Daughter ((laugh))

42 Father We don't care about today.

43 (4)

44 Father Yesterday is gone ((sing-song))

45 Daughter ((laugh))

46 (4)

47 Daughter Got salt over there?

48 ((Mother gives Father food: cottage cheese and mandarin oranges))

49 Father Wow. Thank you, honey.

50 Daughter [Those look good]

51 Mother [I made hard-boiled] eggs too. For anybody who wants hard-boiled eggs.

Exercise 12: Observation (fieldnotes)

Value: 20 points

Describe one example of interaction that you actually observed, and show how it exemplifies at least three of the following functions:

referential
emotive
conative
poetic
phatic
metacommunicative

Be sure to explain the terms very briefly as you use them.

NOTE:

The basic discussion of these functions is in chapter 6 of Leeds-Hurwitz (1989). The goal is not to have you simply copy out the definitions appearing there, but to have you paraphrase them in your own words, and then apply them, so it is clear you have understood them.

If you absolutely cannot think of one example of interaction that met at least three of these functions, you may use multiple examples to explain the different functions.

You may use part of an audiotape or videotape you previously made for this course for another assignment if you like.

Instructions for Research Project

NOTES: See point record for amount of points each part of the research project is worth. See the syllabus for the due date of each part.

I. Basic ground rules

This course is about the ways in which language and social interaction are patterned. Your assignment in this paper is to study some small piece of patterned behavior, in some context, discover what prior research by others contributes to your understanding, and synthesize what you learn from our own observations with what you learn from reading about the observations of others.

You will be studying interaction, not media. Do not assume it is appropriate to study a film, or television show, or chatroom - they are appropriate for many assignments in this department, but not this one. You are required to study *face-to-face interaction* for this course – that means *co-presence* is required (in other words, you must be physically present at the same time in the same space as the other participants in the encounter).

All papers must describe what is called *naturally occurring* interaction. That means you need to document something that would be occurring even if you were not there – so do not try to create an experiment, and do not try to use questionnaires.

You will be doing what is called *participant observation*. That means you will need to be an acceptable member of the interaction, either as a regular participant (as with your family) or as an observer who is not unduly intrusive (such as a volunteer at a shelter). Participant observation assumes repeat access. One hour of observation does not a good paper make. Expect to go back repeatedly over the semester.

II. Available resources

On the website for this course that I have created, there are many *bibliographies*. These are designed to help you in all the steps of the project: choosing a topic, writing a research question, developing your research design, providing specifically relevant library sources, writing a literature review, writing the final paper. The bibliographies are arranged in topics chosen either because these are obvious topics for this course or because a prior student wanted to study that topic and so I put together a bibliography for him/her. Every so often a student thinks it is better to ignore these bibliographies deliberately, and create new ones. That is silly: the goal is to give everyone a good start, with appropriate sources, so please use them.

In addition to this handout detailing how to do the research project, there are several other handouts on the D2L site that will help you to determine which of the sources you find are most appropriate. One is called “Synonyms” and it lists the likely qualifiers used in various disciplines to study language and social interaction; use this to check whether the source you have found is

appropriate. Another is called “Connections” and it provides a list of research methods you should be using, and the communication theories you should be assuming are appropriate for this project.

Feel free to stop by during my office hours to discuss your research project individually if you need more help than we have time for during class. If you cannot come during office hours, ask for an appointment at a time you can meet me. You can also contact me via email for help at any stage.

III. Choosing a topic

Every research project begins with the choice of a topic. All of the following are reasonable ways to begin – so think about whether one (or a combination of several) seems particularly intriguing. Be sure to choose something that piques your interest, as you will be spending the entire semester learning about this one thing.

Channels

One easy way to divide up social interaction is to choose a specific channel of communication. That means you may choose to focus on any of the following:

- Language (the words people say; can include a focus on a dialect or register; metaphor)
- Paralanguage (includes silence, intonation)
- Kinesics (includes body movements, gestures, facial expressions, eye gaze)
- Proxemics (includes spatial relationships between people as well as the built environment)
- Touch (who touches who when and where and with what result)
- Less studied topics include: material culture, time, taste, and smell. Since we’ll cover material culture in 440, there is very little research on time, and taste and smell are almost impossible to study, I’d recommend not choosing one of these.

Obviously real interaction involves all of these channels most of the time. But that’s a lot to study for a beginner, so I’d recommend focusing on one of these, or a specific connection between two (such as language and eye gaze).

Contexts

It is also possible to focus on a specific context. Any context to which you have access is appropriate. Some obvious ones are:

- Family (a frequent emphasis is dinner table conversation, since many families still try to gather everyone together then)
- Schools (the teacher/student dyad is the most studied, but there are a lot of other possibilities, such as peer interaction or home/school disjunctions)
- Organizations (a large topic, but many of you will study this in Comm 303 anyway)
- Service encounters (this means anytime one person is a customer and the other has to help them, like a waitress or receptionist or grocery clerk)
- Health (a big topic these days; less studied than doctor visits but more accessible are nursing homes)

- Legal (again, lots of people have been studying courtroom interactions lately)
- Political (this being a presidential election year, you could go to a political rally, but be careful not to turn this into a media analysis – you can't just tape a television show!)

Participants

You can choose one type of social role or social characteristic to emphasize, including any of the following:

- Age (you can study kids, which is especially appropriate if you have some, or if you are studying to become a teacher; or you can study the elderly)
- Gender (a huge topic lots of people have studied - in fact, it is so large that you will have to divide it up fairly early into something smaller)
- Culture (you can study members of a particular cultural group and how they communicate within the group, as with the use of African American Vernacular English; you can study code-switching, which is the use of two languages or dialects by the same participants)

Structure

It is quite common for people who study interaction to focus on the structure of the interaction, including any of the following elements:

- Openings (how people start a conversation)
- Closings (how people end one)
- Topics (how people introduce new topics, drop old ones)
- Turn-taking (how people get turns to talk)
- Interruptions (how participants manage overlaps in speech)

Genre

It is also quite common for people to emphasize one type of speech (this could apply to more than speech, but most studies emphasize language), including:

- Narrative (a big topic, lots to choose from)
- Insults/teasing (something college students can easily study among peers)
- Compliments
- Politeness forms
- Gossip
- Verbal art of various forms (jokes, proverbs, toasts, roasts, etc. – any form where the esthetics are as critical as the content)

One good way to decide on a topic is to do some readings on that topic – use the bibliographies at this stage as well as once you have chosen a topic.

Your topic must be something in which you can maintain interest for the time you work on this project – otherwise you won't enjoy the research.

Assignment: You will be asked to commit to a topic quite early in the semester, so as to give you the maximum amount of time possible to conduct your research.

IV. Research question

Part of committing to a specific topic is figuring out your research question – that means the issue you want to resolve with the research. For example, if you are interested in proxemics and are active in your church, you might ask who in the organization gets the most space. If you work in a restaurant, you might ask how the conflict between customers wanting to be treated as individuals and servers needing to treat them all similarly is worked out. If you work in an office, you might ask whether men gossip about the same topics as women.

A. Basic ground rules for writing a research question.

A good research question must be stated as a question; also, it should be answerable, it should be something you can answer within the length of time available, and it should clearly relate to the course for which it is designed. In this course that means you will want to ask questions that ask you to document what occurs rather than why it occurs, which is often not answerable. It means you will want to clearly limit the question – not gender’s influence in any context, but with your own specific group of friends. It means you will want to focus on something observable, and based on social interaction, given the focus on this class on observing real social interaction.

You will likely revise your research question several times throughout the semester. That is typical, not a problem. As you learn more about your topic, you will be able to narrow down your specific interests more clearly.

B. Formatting questions

“How many” – wrong – this is a quantitative question

“Why” – wrong – this is virtually always impossible to answer

“Yes/no” question – wrong – leads to a one-word answer

Who, when, how – better openings because they lead to answerable questions

Connections or comparisons between things also work

Assignment: You will be asked to turn in a research question.

V. Research design

Once your research question is at least provisionally written, you need to develop a research design to answer that question. A research design is just a list of things you will do in order to find your answer. Choosing a particular method will be the center of your research design. You have to decide whether your topic requires audiotapes, videotapes, or photographs, or whether fieldnotes will be adequate. For example, for the proxemics in church question, you might decide to photograph the church offices, a church service, and a more casual meeting of church members. Then you could study the photographs to determine who is granted the most space either in terms of desks etc in the office, or distance between participants in the service and meeting. For the service encounters question, you might take notes each day that you work, and then interview other servers to get their opinions. For the office gossip question, you might

audiotape office gatherings, and transcribe the interesting parts. After you have the basic method, you will need to detail who you will study, in what context, at what times. For example, you might take notes on interactions with your friends occurring once a week for duration of the semester.

Further examples: if you want to study how family members interact with your grandmother, who has Alzheimer's and is in a nursing home, you could say you will be videotaping the family visits over a two month period, transcribing what you videotape, and analyzing any of the interactions that seem particularly interesting. If you want to study whether teachers ask different types of questions of boys than girls, you could say you will begin by observing a fifth grade classroom, take fieldnotes for the first month until you have figured out what is worth audiotaping, then audiotape a specific type of interaction that interests you, then transcribe the audiotapes, and analyze any differences between the questions asked of girls versus boys.

Assignment: You will be asked to turn in a research design.

VI. Doing the research

Once you choose a general topic (and even before finishing your research question and research design), you can begin the two-pronged approach to the research: documenting what occurs in a context to which you have access; and reading what previous scholars have had to say about your topic or context, so you extend rather than duplicate their work. For example, all research takes either a synchronic or diachronic approach. A synchronic approach requires that you emphasize different things occurring at a single point in time. A diachronic approach requires that you study change over time. Since we have only a single semester, you will be using a synchronic approach. Depending on your topic, you may find publications that add a diachronic element to your study. This is one way that you can potentially use material documented by others. Personally, I always begin by reading what others have said, so I have something to think about when doing observations.

A. Reading research by prior scholars

You should read as much as possible that is as closely related to your topic as possible so you get some good ideas about what to look for and what to make of it. This means you will locate and reject some sources as potentially interesting but not relevant to your project. ***You are required to use at least 10 sources in your final paper.*** Given that you know some will not be useful, this means you will at least locate and glance through a lot more. Do not get upset if you are having trouble finding relevant sources – sometimes it means that you have an unusual topic that is in need of study, which is good: if someone else had already answered your research question directly, you would need to choose another one. (Of course, it could also mean you're not yet very good at library searches – if you think that's the case, come see me). Since Comm 209 is a prerequisite for this course, we will not spend class time on how to conduct library research; you are assumed to already have learned that.

To locate appropriate sources: start with the bibliographies I have posted on the web site for this course. They do not completely cover any topic, but they give you a good start on those topics

others have investigated. If you want to choose a topic that is not covered in any of the bibliographies, talk to me about it. I have lots more sources than are listed here; they're just a convenient beginning point.

Since no library ever has everything you will want, start your research early and assume you will need to use both Universal Borrowing (which gets you books from other University of Wisconsin libraries) and Interlibrary Loan (which gets you books outside our system, or articles). When you find a source that looks likely, always look for it first in our library (because that is fastest, and if we have it, you can't request it on UB or ILL), then through UB (because that only takes 2-3 days to get to you), and then use ILL (that takes 2-3 weeks). UB and ILL requests are made electronically, from the library home page. UB and ILL materials will be available at the circulation desk at the library as they arrive. Be sure to check in there every week to see what has arrived for you! It is depressing to have students request materials and never even realize they have arrived before they have to be returned to the home library (usually within 2 weeks of arriving at UWP).

All sources must be academic: that means they should come from academic journals (for example: *Research on Language and Social Interaction*; *Text*; *Language in Society*; *Quarterly Journal of Speech*), not from popular sources such as newspapers, or web sites (unless you have cleared the latter with me ahead of time – a few will be appropriate but most will not).

Keep notes on what you read throughout the semester, so you don't have to read everything again at the end. And since library books need to be returned, do not expect to have them all available to skim through while writing the paper. My suggestion is to keep track of the following:

- an APA citation for whatever you read;
- a summary of the content (what the author(s) think are the main points);
- any interesting quotes (be sure to keep the page number!);
- and any new ideas about how this will be relevant to your own research project.

I save my notes on each reading under the author's last name and year of publication (so the document name might be "Ochs.85" if it was written by Elinor Ochs and published in 1985) as a quick way to organize what I am learning, and to help me retrieve it again. You may prefer another form. But if you use one form consistently, it will make your job easier.

Notice that you will probably need to approach your topic from several directions. If you are observing behavior in a service encounter, you will do readings on that topic, but the gender bibliography may also be helpful, or the language bibliography, or the insult bibliography. If you want to observe children, look at the children's bibliography, but you will probably need to look at the school or family bibliographies also.

B. Documenting what occurs

You have 3 methods available: you may participate and take notes on what happens; you may audiotape; or you may videotape. The choice of which form to use depends on your topic choice,

not what you think will be the easiest. Obviously if you wish to emphasize language, you should use a tape recorder. If you wish to emphasize nonverbal aspects of communication, you should use a video camera (occasionally just a camera works - I've had a student document use of space through photographs, for example - but most of the time a video camera gets you more and therefore better data). If you are in a context where it is impossible to tape, or if your specific focus does not require attention to particular words or movements, then you take notes. ***You are required to use data from at least 10 observations in your final paper.*** That way you should have a reasonable grasp of the communication you are discussing.

If you are taking notes, always document the date, who is present, what is occurring, and as much detail of what gets said and done as possible. Keep these notes in a single journal, so you don't lose any of them. I recommend typing them up as you make the observations, because you usually can still remember what occurred, and will be able to provide substantial details beyond got written down, whereas if you leave the task of typing up notes until the end of the semester, you will have very little data to analyze.

If you audio or videotape, you will need permission from the participants because it is illegal (and not nice) to tape people when they do not know you are doing it.

Here is the consent form you should use:

I understand that I will be audio(video) tape recorded, and that some of the material will be used to fulfill an assignment for a course on interaction. I also understand that someone else (either other students or the instructor) may hear or see the tape.	
<hr/>	
Printed name	
<hr/>	
Signature	Date
<i>(repeat name/signature lines as often as necessary for the number of participants)</i>	

You only need to get this signed once for the whole semester by each person. Children under 18 cannot legally give consent - you need to ask their legal guardian.

Assignments: You will be asked to come to class prepared to share notes from your observations (fieldnotes), to share some of the raw data collected through using audiotapes, videotapes, or photographs (workshop day), and to share a draft transcript. We do this publicly for several reasons: it ensures you are actually doing the research, it shows other students how to analyze different forms of data, and this is how researchers really study interaction. They show each other the data in the form of fieldnotes, transcripts, and raw data, and get help with ideas for analyzing that data. You also will be asked to turn in a draft and a final copy of your

bibliography. This way I can see if you need help finding more relevant references, and can check your APA format before grading you on it.

VII. Analyzing the data

You will do exercises in class to teach you specific skills that you will need to use in the paper (like focusing on behavior rather than interpretation, and transcribing audio/video taped data, and learning to analyze it). But after you learn how to work with the data you collect, we will do some analysis together. We do this because real researchers work together to analyze what they find, and figure out what it means. You will therefore bring in some of your data to class on specific days both to share what you're finding to the whole class and to get help analyzing what you're learning. We will spend time talking about what sorts of analysis are justified by what sorts of data, and how to move from data to analysis.

Assignment: You will be asked to bring in a draft analysis of some of the data you have collected. Expect to explain your context and focus, and the other students and I will help you analyze some of your data. Real researchers always share their initial analyses with others to get input.

VIII. Writing the paper

Your goal is to combine what you have learned from books and articles by prior researchers with your own original research into a coherent paper. Every paper should include the following parts:

Cover page (1 page)

As with all academic papers, this should include an interesting title for your research project; your name; the course number and title; my name; and the semester. Do not put a page number on the cover (but do put page numbers on the rest of the paper).

Introduction (1-2 pages)

Make sure your introduction answers the following questions:

What is the topic are studying?

Why is it of interest to you?

What is the context you chose?

Who are the participants?

What was your own role in this context, and how are you related to the other participants?

What is your research question?

Body (7-10 pages)

This is where you combine what you have learned, using **data from at least 10 observations** and **notes from at least 10 academic sources** (books, articles, book chapters). Use actual transcripts from audio or video tapes (you don't have to transcribe every minute of every tape, of course, but do transcribe the most interesting parts), or your fieldnotes from specific observations, to document your statements about what occurs in this context and why it is interesting. The body of the paper should be where you spent the most time, and should be the longest section because it is the heart of it.

The body of the paper should include two parts: the literature review and the report of your original research. You may choose to separate these (in which case the lit review always comes first) or to combine them. Depending on your research question and topic, it should make sense to do one rather than the other, but I leave that choice to you.

Conclusion (1-2 pages)

What is the answer to your research question?

What did you learn about interaction in this context?

How does that apply to interaction more generally?

What did you learn about the research methods you used?

What additional research would you like to do on this or related topics if you had no constraints in terms of time and money?

References (1 page)

This is where you put the APA citations to at least 10 academic sources. Every one listed must be cited in the paper, and every source cited in the paper must appear in this list. They go in alphabetical order by first author.

Appendix

If you had people sign consent forms, put them in an appendix.

If there is reason to think that turning in all of your fieldnotes would be helpful, put them in an appendix.

If you transcribed a long portion of an interaction, but only used a little of it in the body of the paper, you can turn in the complete transcription in an appendix.

(If you have more than one appendix, they are labeled Appendix A, B, etc.)

Audiotapes or videotapes

If you made audiotapes or videotapes, turn them in with your paper so I can look at the original data if that seems necessary. Label them, and put them in an envelope or folder, with your paper, so they are less likely to get separated from it.

Assignments: You will be asked to turn in a draft of the paper, and then a completed paper at the end of the semester.

IX. Presenting the research to the class

One of the fun parts of research is sharing what you learn with others. Therefore, each student will be expected to briefly present what he or she has learned to the entire class at the end of the semester. Assume this is to be a 5-minute presentation, with emphasis on 3 things:

- a brief description of context (where, who, what was your focus);
- what was your research question; and
- what is the answer (as far as you were able to learn in one semester).

Once we arrange the schedule, you **MUST** be present on the correct day to get credit. Not showing up for your own presentation is very bad form!

Assignment: Present your research results to the rest of the class. Expect to provide a handout (including research question, citations for a few good sources on the topic, summary of research design, findings). That way, if someone else in the course becomes interested in your topic later, they will have a starting point.

X. Extra credit

Up to 25 additional points may be earned by turning in citations to sources relevant to the topic bibliographies on the course web site which are not currently listed there. These must be in APA format. You will get one point per source. You do *not* need to have read these, they do *not* need to be on your own topic, and they do *not* need to be in your paper. The goal here is to share knowledge with others this semester and for future semesters.