

## CMN 457: Introduction to Language and Social Interaction

### Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of the conversational basis of social reality. It presents an overview of interpersonal communication processes and the ways in which they influence and construct identity, personal relationships, gender, interactional patterns, conflict, culture, and power. This course includes readings and class material from a variety of authors in the communication discipline as well as related fields in the humanities and the social sciences.

### Instructor Information

Name: Jessica Robles

Email: Jessica.Robles@unh.edu/jessica.s.robles@gmail.com

Phone: 603-862-3315

Office: Horton 105

Office Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays 10:10-11am and 12:30-2pm

Fridays 10:10-11am

Tuesdays by appointment

### Course Goals

1. Learn a unique, empirical, qualitative way of viewing *language and social interaction* in everyday life.
2. Gain familiarity with the standards and practices involved in conducting and writing *communication research*.
3. Understand the connections between *ordinary conversational interaction* and social realities such as *identities, relationships, gender, conflict, culture and power*.

### Required Readings

1. A selection of PDF articles and handouts accessible on the course website
2. "Everyday Talk" by Karen Tracy, available at the Durham Bookstore

### Gradable Items

1. **Assignments** include homework and in-class assignments. These assignments all involve some form of writing, such as a short essay, discussion post, or reaction paper. Except for those due in class, these assignments should be turned in through the course website. There are ten of these small assignments, each worth 5 points.
2. **In-class projects and presentations** are all to be completed during class time. They usually involve little or no written component, may include a creative or applied component, should be completed as a small group, and are meant to be presented. There are three in-class projects, each worth 10 points.
3. **Multiple choice quizzes** will test you on readings. Quizzes will be either scheduled during class time, or taken online through Blackboard. There are five quizzes, each worth 5 points.

4. **The quarter-term exam** takes place at the end of week 4. It is a mostly multiple choice exam worth 30 points and will be administered through Blackboard.
5. **The midterm essay** is due at the end of week 8. It is the foundation of the final essay. It involves data collection, preparation, and analysis. It is worth 50 points.
6. **The final essay** is the last major assignment and is due at the end of finals week. It is a mini-research paper and is worth 100 points.
7. **Participation** includes classroom engagement, website presence, attendance, and student-instructor contact.
8. **Extra credit** options are limited. Contact your instructor for details.

Point Distribution Summary

**Quizzes:** 5 points each; 25 pts total  
**Projects:** 10 points each; 30 pts total  
**Assignments:** 5 points each; 50 pts total  
**Quarter-term exam:** 30 points

**Midterm essay:** 50 points  
**Final essay:** 100 points  
**Participation:** 15 points  
**Extra credit:** up to 10 points

**TOTAL:** 300 points

Course Schedule

<i>Week &amp; Dates</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
<b>Unit 1</b>			
<i>Interpersonal Communication/Language and Social Interaction</i>			
<u>Week 1</u> <i>Aug 27, 29</i>	<b>Topic:</b> Intro to the Class <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture/syllabus/intros <b>Submit:</b> Attendance <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read handout 1	<b>Topic:</b> Observing Comm. <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture/outside <b>Submit:</b> Assignment 1 attendance <b>HW due before next class:</b> Assignment 2 Read handout 2	<b>NO CLASS (airport)*</b>  *there will be short video to watch
<u>Week 2</u> <i>Sept 5, 7</i>	<b>NO CLASS (holiday)</b>	<b>Topic:</b> Context <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture/discussion <b>Submit:</b> Quiz 1 attendance <b>HW due before next class:</b> None	<b>Topic:</b> Relations & Technologies <b>Class Activity:</b> Discussion <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read handout 3
<u>Week 3</u> <i>Sept 10, 12, 14</i>	<b>Topic:</b> Breaching Part 1 <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture/outside <b>Submit:</b> Assignment 3 <b>HW due before next class:</b> None	<b>Topic:</b> Comm. Theories <b>Class Activity:</b> Discussion <b>HW due before next class:</b> Handout 4	<b>Topic:</b> Social Construction <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> Assignment 4

<u>Week 4</u> Sept 17, 19, 21	<b>Topic:</b> LSI Perspectives <b>Class Activity:</b> Project 1 <b>Submit:</b> Project sign-in <b>HW due before next class:</b> Study for exam	<b>Topic:</b> Exam Review <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture/questions <b>HW due before next class:</b> Quarter-term Exam	<b>NO CLASS (study day)</b> Quarter-term Exam due before Monday
<b>UNIT 2</b> <i>Identity-Work/Basic Discursive Practices</i>			
<u>Week 5</u> Sept 24, 26, 28	<b>Topic:</b> Unit 1 Overview Unit 2 Preview <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read chapter 1	<b>Topic:</b> Comm. & Identity-Work <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture/outside <b>HW due before next class:</b> None	<b>Topic:</b> Comm. & Performance <b>Class Activity:</b> Discussion <b>Submit:</b> Quiz 3 <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read chapter 2
<u>Week 6</u> Oct 1, 3, 5	<b>Topic:</b> Culture & Rhetoric <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> None	<b>Topic:</b> Interpreting Comm. <b>Class Activity:</b> Project 2 <b>Submit:</b> Project sign-in <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read chapter 3	<b>Topic:</b> Person-Referencing <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read chapter 4
<u>Week 7</u> Oct 8, 10, 12	<b>Topic:</b> Speech Acts <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read chapters 5-6	<b>Topic:</b> Sound & Language <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture/video <b>Submit:</b> Assignment 5? <b>HW due before next class:</b> Recording done	<b>Topic:</b> Transcribing Discourse <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>Submit:</b> Assignment 5? <b>HW due before next class:</b> Assignment 6
<u>Week 8</u> Oct 15, 17, 19	<b>Topic:</b> Analyzing Data <b>Class Activity:</b> Data session <b>HW due before next class:</b> Quiz 4 Read Writing Guide	<b>Topic:</b> Analytic Writing <b>Class Activity:</b> Workshop <b>Submit:</b> Assignment 7 <b>HW due before next class:</b> Midterm Essay	<b>NO CLASS (work day)</b> Midterm Essay due before Monday
<b>UNIT 3</b> <i>Complex Discursive Practices in Context</i>			
<u>Week 9</u> Oct 22, 24, 26	<b>Topic:</b> Unit 2 Overview Unit 3 Preview <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read chapter 7	<b>Topic:</b> Interaction Structures <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture/outside? <b>HW due before next class:</b> None	<b>Topic:</b> Breaching Part 2 <b>Class Activity/Submit:</b> Discussion <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read Stokoe, 2008
<u>Week 10</u> Oct 29, 31, Nov 2	<b>Topic:</b> Laughter & Media <b>Class Activity/Submit:</b> Lecture/discussion <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read chapter 8	<b>Topic:</b> Communication Style <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> None	<b>Topic:</b> Lifestyle <b>Class Activity:</b> Discussion <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read chapter 9
<u>Week 11</u>	<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Topic:</b>

<i>Nov 5, 7, 9</i>	Narrative <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture/outside? <b>Submit:</b> Quiz 5 <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read Cameron, 2006	Gender & Relationships <b>Class Activity:</b> Video/discussion <b>HW due before next class:</b> Final Essay Guide	Final Essay <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> Chapter 10
<u>Week 12</u> <i>Nov 12, 14</i>	<b>Topic:</b> Stance <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read van Dijk, 1992	<b>Topic:</b> Race & Power <b>Class Activity:</b> Discussion <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read Bailey, 2001	<b>NO CLASS (conference)</b>
<u>Week 13</u> <i>Nov 19, 21</i>	<b>NO CLASS (holiday)</b>	<b>NO CLASS (holiday)</b>	<b>NO CLASS (holiday)</b>
<u>Week 14</u> <i>Nov 26, 28, 30</i>	<b>Topic:</b> Culture & Conflict <b>Class Activity:</b> Project 3 <b>Submit:</b> Project sign-in <b>HW due before next class:</b> Read chapter 11	<b>Topic:</b> Unit 3 Overview Final Essay Preview <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture/discussion <b>HW due before next class:</b> Assignment 8	<b>Topic:</b> Data & Analysis <b>Class Activity:</b> Data session <b>HW due before next class:</b> Assignment 9
<u>Week 15</u> <i>Dec 3, 5, 7</i>	<b>Topic:</b> Literature Review <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> None	<b>Topic:</b> Format & Structure <b>Class Activity:</b> Lecture <b>HW due before next class:</b> Assignment 10	<b>Topic:</b> Final Essay Prep <b>Class Activity/Submit:</b> Final Workshop <b>HW due next week:</b> Final essay
<u>Week 16</u> <i>Finals Week</i>	Final Essay Due Saturday, December 15 by noon		

### Course Policies

**Absences and make-ups:** If you anticipate an absence for whatever reason, please consult the course schedule or Blackboard calendar to see what you are missing, and make sure you get notes from a classmate. If there is something due for credit on the day you are missing class, email me ahead of time to arrange making up the work. If you have an unanticipated absence, email me as soon as the situation arises and be prepared to share any documentation you have of the emergency or hardship before emailing me about making up any work which might have been due.

**Late work:** Late work is not generally accepted. If late work is accepted it may involve significant reductions in assignment points. If you contact me in advance, with documentable problems, you may be granted an extension for full or partial credit depending on the circumstances. If you experience an emergency or hardship which prevents you from turning in an assignment on-time and which you could not foresee in advance, your work may be accepted with documentation if you contact me as soon as the problem arises or as soon as you are able to notify me about it.

**Grading:** Grading is done based on written rubrics which accompany assignment descriptions, as well as other expectations which may be communicated in class or by other means. Students are responsible for soliciting information about how their work will be graded if there is any question or concern about it other than what is officially communicated. Grades are not generally negotiable, but I am always willing to discuss them. Assignments will typically be graded within a week, though

on some occasions grading may take up to two weeks (particularly in the case of large assignments). The following is the University standard for the value of letter grades:

<b>A</b>	Excellent
<b>A-</b>	Intermediate Grade
<b>B+</b>	Intermediate Grade
<b>B</b>	Superior
<b>B-</b>	Intermediate Grade
<b>C+</b>	Intermediate Grade
<b>C</b>	Satisfactory, Competent
<b>C-</b>	Intermediate Grade
<b>D+</b>	Intermediate Grade
<b>D</b>	Marginal
<b>D-</b>	Intermediate Grade
<b>F</b>	Failure

**Contact:** If you have questions about class or assignments you can drop by office hours without an appointment except in rare cases when office hours may be cancelled, about which you will be notified in advance (barring emergencies). Emails will generally be responded to within 24 hours with possible delays on weekends or when notified in advance of conferences or other situations which limit email access.

**Ethics:** Students are responsible for their own work and are expected to conduct themselves in a reasonable and respectful manner in class. Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated. Students are expected to keep track of their class progress. Students should feel free to share their opinions in class without being derogatory to others. If you ever have concerns about how you feel in class or your ability to fully participate due to the class environment or these expectations, please meet with your instructor.

For University Policies read the Students Rights and Responsibilities: <http://www.unh.edu/student/rights/>

### Course Expectations

**Time expectations and workload:** A college course assumes you will spend twice as much time on work outside of class as you spend in class per week. This means that your teachers—and other university administrators—expect a certain amount of reading and writing outside of class. In our class, we meet a little less than three hours per week; thus, on average, I'd assume most students will spend *5-6 hours a week on this class outside of class time*. This won't necessarily be true for everyone, or be true all the time, but it's a good standard to go by.

**Teaching and learning philosophy:** Your time in this course constitutes an important and valuable educational event which, in addition to the weeks and hours and months of in and out of class during the semester, has involved significant effort to prepare and contains a fervent hope for a lasting impact beyond its official "end." I believe that teaching is not a one-way street and that to do your best you will have to put in as much effort to learn as I am putting into teaching—you have to be an *active* student, not just sitting there and expecting things to sink in on their own. I can attest that I will have worked hard to prepare for class and that I will be enthusiastic about the material. My efforts will only go so far if you do not match them.

I assume a number of things about your class experience, some of which I will mention at the beginning and throughout the class. For example, I assume that you want to want to learn and will make an attempt to do so. I assume that you care about your progress and will monitor your own work/grades and contact me if you need help or have trouble with that. I assume that you will make all reasonable efforts to be in class and pay attention and that you will prioritize your education over most other things. Obviously, not all of these assumptions are correct all the time. But you are responsible for taking care of the consequences should these things not be the case. Sometimes work, other classes, social stuff, health, family, and other elements have to be prioritized over our class. It is your job to make those decisions, to own them, and to deal with their results.

I will always make every reasonable effort to assist you with help you may need to do your best in class. I am happy to talk about any of the course concepts in class or in emails and to provide opportunities to succeed if you fall behind. This can only happen if you come to me and communicate what is going on and what you need. I cannot guess everything about what your life is like or what is going on or what you may or may not understand.

Teaching, for practical purposes, has to be aimed at the “middle” or majority of students’ abilities, interests and needs in the class. Some people will find the class harder than others—such students may need to make more effort to come see me, to ask questions in class, or to contact me to talk about the course. Some people will find the class easier than others—such students may also have to be in touch with me to come up with ways to make the class more challenging for them or to get what they want out of it.

There are always different levels of understanding course material. You can probably get by with a fairly superficial level of understanding and doing so may make many aspects of the class seem “easy” or “obvious.” This is not a big deal, but if you find yourself feeling that way, it means you are only grasping the basics, and your grade will probably be pretty basic as well. This doesn’t mean that you won’t learn interesting things or have some fun in the process, but keep it in mind!

### **Readings**

- Cameron, D. (2006). Performing gender identity: Young men’s talk and the construction of heterosexual masculinity. In A. Jaworski & N. Coupland (Eds.), *The discourse reader* (pp. 419-432). London: Routledge.
- Bailey, B. (2000). Communicative behavior and conflict between African-American customers and Korean immigrant retailers in Los Angeles. *Discourse & Society*, 11, 86-108.
- Robles, J. (Fall, 2012). Handout 1: Introduction to Communication. *Introduction to Language and Social Interaction*, University of New Hampshire.
- Robles, J. (Fall, 2012). Handout 2: Communication and Context. *Introduction to Language and Social Interaction*, University of New Hampshire.
- Robles, J. (Fall, 2012). Handout 3: Making the Invisible Visible. *Introduction to Language and Social Interaction*, University of New Hampshire.
- Robles, J. (Fall, 2012). Handout 4: Social Construction and Communication Theory. *Introduction to Language and Social Interaction*, University of New Hampshire.
- Stokoe, E. (2008). Dispreferred actions and other interactional breaches as devices for occasioning audience laughter in television “sitcoms.” *Social Semiotics*, 18, 289-307.
- Tracy, K. (2002). *Everyday talk: Building and reflecting identities*. NY, New York: Guilford Press.
- van Dijk, T. (1992). Discourse and the denial of racism. In A. Jaworski & N. Coupland (Eds.), *The discourse reader* (pp. 506-520). London: Routledge.