HU5004 Communication in Cultural Contexts  
Victoria Bergvall Fall 2005
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Course Description
This semester, the course will focus on the “turn to discourse” that has underlain the shaping of many of the major theoretical trends over the last century. We will begin by examining issues and intersections of discourse, ideology, and culture, focusing on how different theorists have characterized the role of language: In contrast to much of the empiricist spirit that saw language as a transparent lens through which to see the world, many modern theorists have seen language as critically shaping the world that we see around us, such as Frederick Jameson talked of the “prison house of language.”

The first part of the course will undertake a brief overview of some significant movements of the last century, and consider the work of philosophers, cultural theorists, literary scholars, linguists, educators, etc., as they consider issues of race, class, gender, colonialism, globalization, and identity. The latter part of the term will focus on how ideologies may be examined through theoretical and methodological lenses, such as Critical Discourse Analysis.

In order to introduce students to the varieties of theoretical perspectives and areas of expertise in this department, we will invite colleagues from different disciplines to help us understand their field’s intersections with these topics.

Required Texts
Lechte, John (1994) Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers: From structuralism to postmodernity. NY: Routledge. [50 Thinkers]

Course Goals
• To introduce students to a sample of the significant ideas, theorists and terms that underlie present intellectual conversation.
• To introduce students to some of the professors and perspectives available in the department under the “Communication in Cultural Contexts” (stream C) in the RTC program.
• To get students to make connections between these ideas and their own interests.

Course Requirements
• Keeping up with weekly reading assignments and active class participation in the discussions of the readings.
• Weekly reading responses to questions given (2-3 typed pages that reflect on the questions posed by the week’s readings), to be shared with class.
• Presentation of some issue, major theorist(s), or topic group during Weeks 3-12. generation of reading/response questions for the class, based on a 5-7 page paper. This will require outside reading and annotated bibliographies/summaries for the class members.
Final 15-20 page analytic paper that connects some stream of this research to a relevant topic of mutual interest, to be presented to the class during weeks 13-14, and turned in by Monday of Finals week.

ADA NOTE
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call the Dean of Students' office (x7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (x7-3310).

Schedule of Course Events
(subject to change depending on class needs)

NOTES ON READINGS & GUESTS:
I am still refining this reading list, and will supplement some of the works, authors, and guests named here with other or more particular readings. Stay tuned.

Week 1, M 8/29
Introductions
Intellectual histories, past and present
Discourse; ideology; language, culture, thought
Structuralism, Semiotics
Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Freud
Readings:
Reader pp. 1-99
*Saussure, Croce, Voloshinov
*Saussure, Spitzer, Williams, Schulz, Cameron

Week 2, M 9/5 Labor Day, no class
On-line introductions and discussion of relationships between language and culture.
("Save" 3 hours for Fems & Rhets conference)
Conferences with VB

Week 3, M 9/12
Philosophical traditions
The linguistic turn
Wittgenstein, Quine, Rorty
Guest: Ted Lockhart

Week 4, M 9/19
Marxism, Post-Marxism
Class
Marx, Serres, Althusser
Adorno, Arendt, Habermas, Laclau & Mouffe
Critical Theory
Guest: Ciro Sandoval

Week 5, M 9/26
Postmodernism
Post-structuralism
Cultural Studies
Guest: Patty Sotirin
Readings:
Reader pp. 221-284
Mukarovsky, *Foucault, *Derrida
Vossler, Bloomfield, *Bakhtin, *Gramsci
Week 6, M 10/3
Feminisms: First and second wave; post-feminist/third wave
Deficit, dominance, difference, standpoints, Performativity
Masculinities, sexuality.
Irigaray, Kristeva, Lakoff, Kramarae, Tanner, Butler
Attend Fems & Rhets conference for 3 hours (Thurs-Sat)
Readings:
Reader pp. 139-217
Spender, Lakoff, Cixous, Riley, Butler
Irigaray, White, Spillers, Cameron

Week 7, M 10/10
Post-colonialism
Standard Language, World Englishes
Race, ethnicity, and language ideologies
Guest: Sandra Boschetto-Sandoval
Readings:
Reader pp. 241-239
*Menken, Paulin, Dabydeen, *Brathwaite, *Kachru
*Fanon, *Achebe, *wa Thiong'o

Week 8, M 10/17
Lippi-Green, *English with an Accent
Visual representation
Guest: Diane Shoos

Week 9, M 10/24
Lippi-Green, *English with an Accent

Week 10, M 10/31
Chouliaraki & Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity

Week 11, M 11/7
Chouliaraki & Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity

Week 12, M 11/14
Implications for education
Reading
Reader 444-485
*Bernstein, Labov, Bourdieu, Cox

Week 13, M 11/28 Student Presentations

Week 14, M 12/5 Student Presentations