

The Ethnography of Communication

English 770.03 (08648-1)

Professor: Ray Cashman

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Office Hours: 8:30-11:30 a.m Tuesdays, or by appointment

Quarter: Spring 2007

Meeting Time: MW 1:30-3:18

Location: DE 262

Course Description

This class begins with a treatment of language as social action and investigates how people from a range of speech communities/communities of practice “do things with words” (J.L. Austin). Through close attention to specific speech events—that is, through ethnography—we come to appreciate how the meanings of verbal messages are negotiated by speakers and listeners employing and enacting culturally specific models of performance, expectation, and interpretation.

We will investigate perspectives from folklorists, sociolinguists, linguistic anthropologists, and discourse analysts to better appreciate the interdisciplinary “ethnography of communication” approach pioneered by Dell Hymes. We will give special attention to longer stretches of oral discourse in their performance contexts, in particular narratives from several genres. Toward the end of term, we will expand the investigation to non-verbal expressive forms.

Required Texts

- *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*, Keith Basso
- *Competence in Performance: Creativity of Tradition in Mexicano Verbal Art*, Charles Briggs
- *The Folklore Text: From Performance to Print*, Elizabeth Fine
- *Turf Wars: Discourse, Diversity, and the Politics of Place*, Gabriella Modan
- *Material Conflicts: Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland*, Neil Jarman

All texts available **only** at SBX bookstore, 806 North High St. between 14th and 15th Ave

All Other Readings are Available on Carmen @<https://carmen.osu.edu/>

Expectations:

Attendance. The success of a small class depends on the regular attendance of all participants, so I expect you at every class session, barring significant illness or other personal emergencies. Also, please come on time. Lateness is disruptive and inconsiderate to your fellow classmates and to me.

Preparation and contribution. Note that this is a reading-intensive class. You must keep up with the readings and come prepared to discuss them. Participation in class discussion is expected and necessary; it ensures the best possible educational experience for all. Contributing is not necessarily about having the right answers. Discussion allows us to raise questions and critical concerns, try out new ideas and positions (even if we eventually abandon them), and help each other consider all sides of an issue.

Due dates. Late work is a sure sign of indolence, shiftlessness, and moral turpitude. (Contact me ASAP if you have compelling reasons to need an extension)

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is the representation of another's work or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Grading:

20%

participation

- attendance, preparation, and contribution to discussion
- turns at leading class discussion
- weekly readings responses

20%

ethnography of a speech event

20%

ethnopoetic transcription of recorded verbal performance
(audio materials provided)

40%

take-home final exam (“or best offer,” to be explained)

Leading class discussion. Each student will have at least two opportunities (possibly more depending on class size) to present a set of readings and lead discussion. I will provide tips for leading discussion in general, and I will of course be on hand to guide, if necessary, discussions that stray. Generally I will want the last 15–20 minutes of each class to synthesize points made, add to these points, and/or suggest issues for further consideration.

Reading responses. Those who are not leading discussion will compose two-page responses to the readings. You will post these responses to Carmen by 9:00 pm the night before the readings are due. Be sure to leave yourself time to read all posted responses before coming to class. You have three goals in your responses: 1) Identify and evaluate the methodological and theoretical implications of the text. In doing so, you will need to highlight certain main points in the readings, but do not get bogged down in summarization. 2) Identify perspectives and aspects of methodology that you can build on in your own research—what is useful to you now or may be in the future? 3) Pose questions you would like to see addressed during discussion.

Ethnography of a speech event and ethnopoetic transcription projects. I will post to Carmen and hand out nauseatingly detailed assignment sheets.

Final “obo.” The default will be take-home essay questions asking you to synthesize and engage with readings from throughout the term (10-15 pages). Or you may propose by **4/11** a different final product that is relevant to both this class and your research, e.g., a literature review of a particular issue or area, an analysis of fieldwork data you’ve already gathered, an application of class readings to different materials (perhaps literature, advertising, or ritual), or a thesis chapter that relates to issues in this class.

Class Schedule (subject to change):

Week 1—3/26 and 3/28

Fundamental Concepts and Case Studies, take one

“Basic Terms, Concepts, and Issues,” Muriel Saville–Troike (pp. 10–40, *The Ethnography of Communication*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003)

“The Analysis of Communicative Events,” Muriel Saville–Troike (pp. 88–143, *The Ethnography of Communication*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003)

>“How to Ask for a Drink in Subanum,” C. O. Frake (pp. 87–94, *Language and Social Context*, ed. Pier Giglioli. New York: Penguin Books, 1985)

“To Give Up on Words,” Keith Basso (pp. 80–98, *Western Apache Language and Culture*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1990)

Recommended: *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach*, Dell Hymes. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974).

Recommended: “The Ethnography of Communication,” Zdenek Salzmann (pp. 216–32, *Language, Culture, and Society*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1998)

*** * * Ethnography of a Speech Event assignment to be handed out * * ***

Week 2—4/2 and 4/4

Fundamental Concepts and Case Studies, take two

“Speech Community,” Marcyliena Morgan (pp. 3–22, *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, ed. Alessandro Duranti, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)

“Signifying and Marking: Two Afro-American Speech Acts,” Claudia Mitchell-Kernan (pp. 151–64, *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, ed. Alessandro Duranti, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001)

“Communication of Respect in Interethnic Service Encounters,” Benjamin Bailey (pp. 119–46, *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, ed. Alessandro Duranti, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001)

“Cultural Approach to Male-Female Miscommunication,” Daniel Maltz, Ruth Borker (pp. 81–98, *The Matrix of Language*, ed. Donald Brenneis and Ronald Macaulay, Boulder: Westview Press, 1998)

“A Parable in Context,” Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (pp. 105–30, *Folklore: Performance and Communication*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth Goldstein, Paris: Mouton, 1975)

“The Joke as Gloss,” Elliott Oring (pp. 85–96, *Engaging Humor*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003)

Recommended: *Rethinking Context: Language as Interactive Phenomenon*, ed. Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Week 3—4/9 and 4/11

Place, take one: Ethnography and Poetics of Place

Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache, Keith Basso (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996)

*** * * Proposal for alternative final product due 4/11 * * ***

Week 4—4/16 and 4/18

Verbal Art, Performance, Genre, take one

“The Contribution of Folklore to Sociolinguistic Research,” Dell Hymes (pp. 42–50, *Journal of American Folklore* 84/331, 1971)

“Folklore’s Nature and the Sun’s Myth,” Dell Hymes (pp. 345–369, *Journal of American Folklore* 88/350, 1975)

“Verbal Art as Performance,” Richard Bauman (pp. 165–88, *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, ed. Alessandro Duranti, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001)

“Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life,” Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs (pp. 59–88, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, 1990)

“Genre, Intertextuality, and Social Power,” Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman (pp. 131–72, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 2/2, 1992)

“Genre and Ideology in Northern Ireland,” Ray Cashman (*Midwestern Folklore* in press)

Recommended: “Performance,” Richard Bauman (pp. 41–49, *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Recommended: “Genre,” Richard Bauman (pp. 53–59, *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Recommended: “Speech Genres in Cultural Practice,” Richard Bauman (*International Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, London: Elsevier, in press)

Recommended: *A World of Others’ Words: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Intertextuality*, Richard Bauman (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)

Week 5—4/23 and 4/25

Verbal Art, Performance, Genre, take two

Competence in Performance: The Creativity of Tradition in Mexicano Verbal Art, Charles Briggs (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988)

Week 6—4/30 and 5/2

Ethnopoetics and Transcription, take one

“Ethnopoetics,” Catherine Quick (pp. 95–105, *Folklore Forum*, 30/1–2, 1999)

“Ethnopoetics,” Dennis Tedlock (pp. 81–85, *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments*, New York: Oxford University Press)

“Coyote and Junco” and “A Guide to Reading Aloud,” Dennis Tedlock (pp. xlv, 65–74, *Finding the Center: The Art of the Zuni Storyteller*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press)

“Transcription: From Writing to Digitized Images,” Alessandro Duranti (pp. 122–61, *Linguistic Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

“Poetic Retranslation and the Pretty Languages of Yellowman,” Barre Toelken and Tacheeni Scott (pp. 65–116, *Traditional Literatures of the American Indian*, ed. Karl Kroeber, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press)

The Folklore Text: From Performance to Print, Elizabeth Fine (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984)

Recommended: "Discovering Oral Performance and Measured Verse in American Indian Narrative," Dell Hymes (pp. 431–57, *New Literary History*, 8, 1976/1977)

***** Ethnography of a Speech Event due 4/30 *****
***** Transcription Project assignment to be handed out *****

Week 7—5/7 and 5/9

Ethnopoetics and Transcription, take two

The Folklore Text: From Performance to Print, Elizabeth Fine (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984)

Week 8—5/14 and 5/16

PLACE, take two: Discourse Analysis and the Politics of Place

Turf Wars: Discourse, Diversity, and the Politics of Place, Gabriella Modan (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007)

Week 9—5/21 and 5/23

Nonverbal Communication and the Politics of Culture

Material Conflicts: Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland, Neil Jarman. (New York: Berg, 1997)

***** Transcription Project assignment due 5/21 *****

Week 10—5/30

TBA

NB: *** no class 5/28, Memorial Day ***

***** FINAL (OBO) DUE: Wednesday 6/6/07 *****
in my mailbox, Denny 421, by 3 p.m.