**Culture and Communication**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF CULTURE THROUGH COMMUNICATION AND THE THEORY OF SIGNS**

Fall 2013       Brian Stross    ANT 307 (31260),   LIN 312 (41283)

**MWF 1-2 SAC 4.118**

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Office Hours MWF 11-Noon & by appointment in SAC 4.124


This section is an honors course

**FINAL EXAM** - Saturday, December 14, 9:00-12:00 noon, location TBA

**Emergency Evacuation & Lockdown Procedures**

**Goals** - The goals of this course are to introduce students to the study of human communication as it influences and is influenced by other aspects of culture, and to develop skills (through fieldwork, data collection, analysis and writing) in presenting your ideas on the roles of communication systems in human interaction. We hope to deliver a better understanding of the multiple ways in which language, culture, and society interact. To those ends there are **three short projects** to be completed during the semester.

**Description** - This course is a lower division introduction to topics in human communication from a linguistic anthropological perspective. Languages, like other communication systems, are adapted to new and different environments in which they are spoken, creating and maintaining social realities, reproducing cultural traditions, and conveying messages in a complex interplay of new and old information, sometimes necessary and sometimes frivolous, packaging meaning in various ways that generally conform to standards that can be articulated. As speech is an important mode of human communication, we start by outlining basic concepts allowing for the description of linguistic form. In the end we will focus more on language use than on language structure, examining various expressive speech genres, metaphors that we live by, the power of language, gender preferences in communication, language learning, proverbs, jokes, and multilingualism, among other topics.

**Requirements / Exams, Paper, Attendance**

The course grade will be based on **three written projects of 6-9 pages double spaced** (total 50%), a midterm exam (25%) and **e final exam** (25%). The final is comprehensive. Plus and minus grades will be used for the final grades. No penalty for one unexcused absence, but further such absences can lower one's course grade by two
and a half percentage points for each instance. Exams include information from lectures, readings, and films.

Texts:


Recommended reading:
E.T. Hall *Beyond Culture*. ISBN: 0-385-12474-0
Deborah Tannen 1998. *The Argument Culture*
Phil Agre *Information Studies (home page)*

Rationale for the Course Organization

WEEKS Film info may be revised

1. 8/28, 8/30

Introduction - Culture, Language, Communication, Meaning (notes)

Topics: What are culture, communication, language, (semiotics and the theory of signs), (sociolinguistics), ethnography of speaking, discourse, reality and its social construction, seeing the other, the speech act and its functions,

Themes this semester: politics and propaganda;

information and disinformation; (wikipedia)

speech play, verbal art and memory (learning, education);
technology and communication;

**Homework:** Read Tannen YWT xi - 61, seeing the other (click on this URL)

**Optional Further Background:** *The Silent Language* (Hall), *Beyond Culture* (Hall), *Portraits of the Whiteman* (Basso)

**Film on Friday** 8/30 *A World of Differences* (Audio-Visual library video 30 min.),

2. 9/4, 6

**Message Form** - Sounds, Words, Sentences

Topics: What are (phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, sentences; meaning), (click on this URL)

**Homework:** Read Tannen TNWIM Ch. 1; do Hebrew exercise; revisit the phoneme; study this notes link for the midterm exam.

Informal writing exercise, **first assignment** (or see Informal exercise) due 9/15

**Film on Friday** 9/6 *A World of Differences* (Audio-Visual library video 28 min.),

3. 9/9, 11, 13

**Message Form II** - More Sounds, Words, Sentence


**Homework:** read Tannen TNWIM Ch. 2, read online essay on documentary film. Start thinking about your first **second assignment**, deciding on one of the alternatives. (second assignment due on 9/29, final revisions due on 12/5) Writing Help

**Film on Friday** 9/13 *Do You Speak American: Up North*

4. 9/16, 18, 20

**Language and Cultural Meaning** - The Expression of Meaning

Topics: linguistic determinism/Sapir-Whorf, Moonhawk on Sapir-Whorf, lexical and semantic components, classification, recoding, markedness/implicational universals, fuzzy sets, focal meanings and prototypes, cultural presuppositions, language as a theory of reality, metaphor and metonym, Turn in first assignment - due 9-20

**Homework:** read Novinger Ch. 1, Tannen TNWIM Ch. 3, click White White

**Film on Friday** 9/20 *First Contact* (dept. video 54 min.)

5. 9/23, 25, 27

**Contextual Components:** Ethnography of Communication

Topics: Evolution of language (autonomous, non-autonomous; rhetorical style; involvement vs non-involvement)

Power and solidarity, performance, respect, Austin and Searle on speech acts, gossip (see week 11)
Homework: read Novinger Ch. 2, Tannen TNWIM Ch. 4, Klein (PtheP)
Film on Friday 9/27  *The Human Animal – Language of the Body* (Desmond Morris)

6. 9/30, 10/2, 10/4
   Communicative Interactions
   Topics: interactional synchrony
   conversational structure, conversational postulates,
   (directives and responses), routines (greetings, apologies), politeness,
   social networks, networking, verbal art
   Homework: read Novinger Ch. 3, Tannen TNWIM Ch. 5
   Film on Friday 10/4  *Do You Speak American: Down South*
   Turn in Second Assignment on Monday 10/4  Rewrites, to be based on feedback,
   due on 12/5
   Hints on how to write goodly.

7. 10/7, 9, 11
   Societal Segmentation and Linguistic Variation: Class & Race
   Topics: social stratification (race, class, caste), African American Vernacular English
   in the US, the structure of AAVE, settings and contexts, “ebonics”.
   Homework: read Novinger Ch. 4, Tannen TNWIM Ch. 6, and
   Black English (click on AAVE link above, & see E-mail)
   Film on Friday 10/11:  *American Tongues* (dept. video, 56 min)
   Start thinking about your third assignment, deciding on one of the alternatives,
   Third assignment due on 11/3, (revisions due on 12/5)

8. 10/14, 10/16, 10/18
   Language and Gender:  English and English Speakers
   Topics: Pronunciation, intonation, grammatical variation,
   vocabulary, conversational style, gender bias
   Homework: read Novinger Ch. 5, TNWIM Tannen Ch. 7
   Midterm exam on Friday of this week  10/17 (covering material
   through the 7th week of classes) (sample midterm exam)

9. 10/21, 10/23, 10/25
   Cross-Cultural Studies of Language and Gender
   Topics: power, complexity of form, linguistic marking of gender,
   Gender-exclusive patterns, linguistic and stylistic preferences,
   images of gender in linguistic form.
   Homework: read Novinger Ch. 6, Tannen TNWIM Ch. 8
   Film on Friday 10/25  *Gender Issues*

10. 10/28, 10/30, 11/1
Language Learning
Topics: language acquisition, LAD, rule vs. rote, sequences in sounds, grammar, vocabulary, speech socialization (instructional strategies).
feral children (1, 2).
Homework: read Novinger Ch. 7, Tannen TNWIM Ch. 9.
Film on Friday 11/1: Do You Speak American: Out West
(Are there "bad" words)

11. 11/4, 6, 8 Acquisition of Communicative Competence
Topics: Learning communicative styles (functional categories, politeness, expressing feelings, disputing), learning status and role, learning the rules of conversation (turn taking, affirmations, narration), speech play & verbal art, gossip (see week 5),
Homework: read Novinger Ch. 8, Tannen TNWIM Ch. 10.
Learning from advertising.
Turn in Third Assignment on 11/8 revisions due 12/5
Film on Friday 11/8 Teaching Sign Language to the Chimpanzee Washoe
(dept. video, 48 min.)

12. 11/11, 13, 15 Multilingual Nations
Topics: linguistic diversity, language standardization, language minorities, code switching, attitudes towards other languages and speakers, bilingual education, indigenous/native languages, Creole languages.
Homework: read Novinger Ch. 9, tba
FILM on Friday 11/15: I'm British, but... (dept. video, 30 min.)

13. 11/18, 20, 22 Bilingual Communities
Topics: language change (contact, innovation), language use in bilingual speech communities, bilingual conversational strategies, language revitalization, language shift, interethnic miscommunication.
Homework: read Tannen YWT 138-191. Rewrite your lecture notes. Think about an encounter you've had recently in an Educational, Media, Legal, or Medical institutional framework and come prepared to discuss it in class. Watch video at this URL or this one
FILM on Friday 11/22: To Make the Balance (Audio-Visual library, 33 min)

14. 11/25, 11/27 (Thanksgiving) holiday on Friday
Language and Institutional Encounters
Topics: language labels and status, institutional contexts. Literacy (education, health, law, the media, the military).
Homework: Analyze the discourse in this link: George Galloway & Congress & come to class prepared to discuss one element of this speech act, or discuss the power of TV media illustrated by Wallace’s emmy winning interview. Or see this pizza order and come prepared to discuss its context.

15. 12/2, 4, 6

Communication and the Senses

Topics: use of furniture and arrangement, space and distance, time, silence.

Review of semester.

Homework: prepare for final exam

Turn in revised assignments on or before 12/5

Final Exam will be held at scheduled time (Final is Saturday, December 14, 9:00-12:00 noon Location TBA).

(sample final exam)

This course will have one Midterm Exam and one Final Exam. Each will count for 25% of your course grade. In addition there will be 3 written homework assignments, together counting 50% of your grade (10% + 20% + 20%). The exams will cover lectures and homework assignments from the textbooks. Attendance and participation are expected, of course, and can affect your course grade as well.

The following books will be useful to those who would like to pursue some of the course topics in more depth.

BOOK RESOURCES

P 91 C563 1992 pcl stacks
Donal Carbaugh 1990. Cultural Communication And Intercultural Contact
P 91 C85 1990 pcl stacks
Kristine Fitch Speaking Relationally. HM 132 F576 1998 pcl stacks
Ulf Hannerz Transnational Connections. CB 428 H365 1996 pcl stacks
Steven Johnson Interface Culture. T 58.5 J64 1997 pcl stacks
Stella Ting-Toomey  *Communicating Across Cultures*.  GN 345.6 T56 1999
pcl stacks
Anna Wierzbicka.  1997.  *Understanding Cultures Through Their Key Words.*

**VIDEO RESOURCES**

*That's Not What I Meant*  (AV library video  VIDCASS 9706)

*The Iron Chef*

*Unforgivable Blackness*  The Rise & Fall of Jack Johnson

*Joe Leahy's Neighbors*  (dept. video  90 min.)
(update on Joe Leahy) (long review of First Contact, Joe Leahy's Neighbors, and Black Harvest in *Visual Anthropology Review* Vol 10, no. 2 [1994])

**INTERNET RESOURCES**

WEBSITES  (for the curious)

VARIOUS Modes of Communication, how to:

Teach someone something technical

Approach Graduate School

Tips for Graduate Students

Design effective e-mail action alerts

*Find your voice*

Be a leader in your field

Host a speaker

The following information comes from official UT policies

Please, read carefully
Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University Code of Academic Integrity. No plagiarized work will be accepted. Sources consulted from books, journals, or web pages should be acknowledged. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Papers bought online or otherwise plagiarized will receive a zero.

You are encouraged to study together and to discuss concepts covered in lecture and sessions. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e-mail, an e-mail attachment file, a diskette, or a hard copy.

Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. [During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion, comparing notes, and copying from others are not permitted during examinations. Any such behavior will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.]

Accommodations for students with disabilities

In compliance with the UT Austin policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259- voice or 471-4641 – TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed. See Web site below for more information:  http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssh/providing.php
University Electronic Mail Notification Policy

(Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students)

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in e-mail address. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html.

In this course e-mail will be used to communicate with students. You are responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class announcements.

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Religious Holidays

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holyday you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence.

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus