

DISCOURSE, CULTURE, & IDENTITIES
COMM 2400 Section 009
Fall 2012

Instructor: **Dr. Karen Tracy**

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Class Location: Hellems 245

Class Time: M, W: 4-5:15

Office hrs: M: 12-2; M & W: 3:15-3:50
& by appt.

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Course Purpose

Through our communication, sometimes consciously, often unconsciously, we display who we are (male or female, old or young, American or Japanese, African-, Anglo-, Hispanic-, or Native-American, a student, a teacher, an attorney, a friend, an acquaintance, “skeptical,” “rude,” “sleazy,” “caring,” “funny,” and so on). It is also the case that we talk to people (and people talk to us) on the basis of what is believed to be true for a person of a particular category. This class has three purposes. A first purpose is to develop your skills in analyzing communication—to increase your ability to notice, name, and explain what goes on as people talk to and about each other. A second purpose is to foster a deeper understanding of how communication can go awry and why, more often than we would like, communicative exchanges can involve tension or conflict. The final purpose is to encourage you to develop informed and thoughtful positions about a set of controversial issues that involve how language, talk, or interactive practices do or should link to people of different genders, sexual orientations, races, and ethnicities.

D2L

To access the course website, go to *D2L*. Required readings, assignments, and Power Points, will be available there, as will be your grades (accessible only to you).

Course Materials (required)

- (1) [ET] *Everyday Talk: Building and Reflecting Identities* (Author: Karen Tracy, 2002, Guilford Press).
- (2) A set of readings, available on D2L in their assigned week.
 - ❖ Bailey, B. (2000). Communicative behavior and conflict between African-American customers and Korean immigrant retailers in Los Angeles. *Discourse & Society*, 11, 86-108.
 - ❖ Billig, M. (2001). Humour and hatred: the racist jokes of the Ku Klux Klan. *Discourse & Society*, 12, 267-289.
 - ❖ Cameron, D. (1998). 'Is there any ketchup, Vera?' Gender, power and pragmatics. *Discourse & Society*, 9, 437-455.
 - ❖ 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* (2nd ed., pp. 419-432). London: Routledge.

- ❖ De Fina, A., & King, K. A. (2011). Language problem or language conflict? Narratives of immigrant women's experiences in the US. *Discourse Studies*, 13(2), 163-188.
- ❖ Haspel, K., & Tracy, K. (2007). Marking and shifting lines in the sand: Discursive moves of ordinary democracy. In K. Tracy, J. McDaniel & B. Gronbeck (Eds.), *The prettier doll: Rhetoric, discourse, and ordinary democracy* (pp. 142-175). Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- ❖ Murachver, T., & Janssen, A. (2007). Gender and communication in context. In A. Weatherall, B. Watson, M. & C. Gallois (Eds.), *Language, discourse & social psychology* (pp. 185-205).

Course Assignments and Assessment

Exams & Quizzes: (260 points)

There will be a quiz (30 points), a midterm (100 points), and a final (130). The quiz will include objective questions (multiple choice, matching, T/F) only. The midterm and final will have short answer questions in addition to the objective sections. On the final there also will be a cumulative longer essay. *Anyone who misses an exam without a legitimate reason that has been approved in advance will have the exam grade lowered by 10 points.*

Group Data Analyses and Presentations (30 points)

During the first unit of the class (weeks 3-9), you will be a member of a small group (~3 students) who will collect data about a question regarding everyday talk. Each group will have a different question that they will investigate, and then that group will report what they learned to the class. Questions will involve making observations about such things as compliment-giving and advice-offering, where interruptions happen and who does them, how speakers switch between languages, and purposes of story-telling. Particulars of the data assignments and the day a group will be presenting are on D2L. Each group will have 10 minutes to present, followed by 5-10 minutes of class discussion. A group-prepared PowerPoint or handout will be due the day of the presentation.

Interaction Analysis Project (100 points)

A main goal of the course is to develop your ability to observe and analyze everyday communication. For this paper, you will analyze a videotaped discussion among three students about tattoos and body piercing, describing how their talk is doing the kinds of identity-work we will have discussed in class and read about. Prior to do this analysis, you will complete 2 mini-assignments: (1) a 1-2 page reflection identifying how your own discussion of this topic was similar and different from the observed one (10 pts) and (2) a transcription of a 2-3 minute excerpt of the observed discussion (10 pts). The paper will be 5-6 pages in length (80 pts). Specifics of the assignment will be provided in class and on D2L.

"Talking about Race" Analysis (80 points)

In this second paper you will analyze a public conversation that occurred between Dr. Laura Schlessinger, a controversial radio talk show host and a white woman, and a caller to her show, who was an African American woman. In this telephone call the two women get into a debate

about what are the appropriate ways to talk about race in the U.S. This paper will extend the work you did in the first paper. The paper will be 5-6 pages in length, and specifics of the assignment will be provided in class and on D2L.

Controversy Reflections (30 points)

In the last unit of the course we will be discussing issues about how people ought to communicate with and about each other on issues that involve sensitivity or controversy. Following two of three of these more formal full-class discussions, you will write a 1-2 page personal reflection about your stance toward the issue (15 points each).

Attendance & Participation

For the class to work well, it is important that you attend regularly and participate thoughtfully. If you speak up frequently and make thoughtful, relevant contributions, you will be eligible for 5 to 8 points extra credit. Anyone who has more than 2 unexcused absences (being late or leaving early = ½ class) will receive an attendance penalty (3 points per class) that will be deducted from the final grade.

Course evaluation is based on the exams and the quiz (260 points), two analysis papers (160), a group presentation (30 points), and a series of small assignments (50 pts) for a total of total of 500 pts. Grades will be assigned using the following point schedule.

A	465 and up	C+	385-399
A- (90%)	450-464	C	365-384
		C- (70%)	350-364
B+	435-449		
B	415-434	D+	335-349
B- (80%)	400-414	D	315-334
		D- (60%)	300-314
F = 299 or below			

Department and University Services and Policies

Technology Services: The Communication Department has equipment that is available for students to checkout. Equipment includes laptops, digital VHS cameras, web cameras, wireless Internet cards, transcribers, tape recorders, and more. Please see <http://comm.colorado.edu/tac> for more information.

Academic Accommodation:

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, submit a letter from Disability Services during the first two weeks of class. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303 492-8671, Willard 322, <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/>). Accommodations for religious observance should also be submitted in the first two weeks.

Classroom Conduct:

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html>. Definitions of sexual harassment and how to seek help if you or someone you know is a target can be obtained at: <http://hr.colorado.edu/dh/Pages/default.aspx>.

Honor code:

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information on the Honor Code is at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html>.

Tentative Schedule

This schedule will be adapted to meet the needs of the class. You are responsible for date changes announced in class. These will be posted on D2L

	Part I: Everyday Talk
Wk1 8/27-29	Class Introduction & Key Terms W: Read: ET c1
Wk2 9/3-5	Rhetorical & Cultural Perspectives M: Labor Day. No class W: Read: ET c2
Wk3 9/10-12	Person-Referencing M: Read ET c3 W: Quiz and Participate in Peer Group Discussion
Wk4 9/17-19	Sound of Talk M: Read ET c5 and Observation-Reflection due W: <i>American Tongues</i>
Wk5 9/24-26	Speech Acts & Language M: Read ET c4 and Transcription due W: Read ET c6
Wk6	I nteraction Structures

10/1-3	M: Interaction Analysis Paper Due W: Read ET c7
Wk7 10/8	Style and Stance M: Read ETc8 W: Read ET c10
Wk8 10/15-17	Narrative & Closing Thoughts M: Read ET c9 W: Read ET c11
Wk9 10/22-24	M: Exam Review W: Exam
Unit II: Controversies about Discourse & Ethnicity/Race, Sexual Orientation, & Gender	
Wk10 10/29-31	Talking about Race M: Read Haspel & Tracy W: Read Billig
Wk11 11/5-7	Ethnicity and Conflict M: Read DeFina & King W: Read Bailey
Wk12 11/12-14	M: Controversy #1 Discussion: Ethnicity & Public Policies W: Talking about Race Analysis paper due on line No class—Meeting of National Communication Association
Wk13 11/19-21	Thanksgiving break: Enjoy!
Wk14 11/26-28	M: Controversy #2: Sexual Orientation & Religious Freedom W: Gender Overview —Read Murachever & Janssen
Wk15 12/3-5	Gender continued M: Read Cameron 1998 W: Read Cameron 2006
Wk16 12/10-12	M: Controversy #3: Sexual Harassment & Workplace Romance W: Class Wrap-Up and Review for Final
Final	Wednesday, December 19th 7:30- 10:00 AM