ED 737-001 Fall 2015 (29947)
Introduction to Discourse Analysis

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Office: 2334 SEB
Office hours: Tuesday 1-2, SEB 4119
Class meetings: Tuesday 9:00 – 12:00, SEB 2320

Course description
This course will get you started on doing discourse analysis as part of your research in education. We will read and discuss a range of studies that use discourse analysis and you will be introduced to a set of tools for analyzing discourse that you will practice using with texts we work on together as well as texts you are interested in analyzing for your own research. As we engage in this reading and analysis, we will also learn about different theoretical perspectives on discourse and think about the kinds of claims that can be made through analysis of language in context. Throughout the course, we will read articles that use discourse analysis to explore issues at different educational levels and content areas.

Course goals
- To consider different perspectives on language and discourse and understand their origins and implications
- To learn to read studies that use discourse analysis with a critical lens and evaluate the basis and validity of the claims that are made
- To develop familiarity with a set of tools for analyzing discourse
- To begin to develop a discourse analytic study

Readings available on CTools course website

Course requirements
- **Class participation, including careful reading of assigned texts and active participation in discussion and activities.** As you read each week, you will be provided with questions to consider and reflect on. These will be posted in the course site in the same folder as the articles for each week. **You will be expected to upload responses/reflections to your CTools course site dropbox each week by Monday morning at 9:00, so that I can review them in preparation for class on Tuesday.** These responses typically will not take more than one page total for all of the readings assigned. **Because I know that life often intrudes in planning, you may miss one of these assignments over the course of the semester without any penalty (25% of final grade).**

- **Analyses of discourse.** A goal of the course is to prepare you to conduct discourse analysis, so throughout the course, you will work with a text of your choice or with an
assigned text to practice using the analytical tools of discourse analysis. Each time new tools are introduced, you will see how a published author uses them and will then apply them to a text of your own choice. Learning to use the tools calls for extensive practice, and working with authentic texts from your own research context will offer opportunities to recognize common challenges and consider reliability issues. These will be homework assignments. By September 22 you should identify a text for that purpose (20% of grade).

- **Article presentation.** You will work with a class colleague to present an article you identify as relevant for work you are doing, and will critique it using criteria we learn about in class (10% of grade).

- **Discourse analysis paper.** For your final project, you will submit a paper that is your first attempt at a discourse analysis study, using the data you have been working with over the course and the analytic tools we will develop. This will be a scaffolded, multi-stage assignment, for which guidelines will be provided. Separate guidelines will be provided (30% of grade).

- **Presentation of your project.** You will present your discourse analysis project as you begin to develop it, and again during one of the final class sessions. Separate guidelines will be provided (15% of grade).

### Course Outline

1. **September 8: Introduction to the course**
   - Overview of the course
   - Systemic Functional Linguistics: A social semiotic theory for discourse analysis
   - Sharing research interests
   - Collecting interactional data for discourse analysis


**Prepare in advance:**
As you read the article for today, consider how your view of what discourse analysis can enable you to accomplish in your research is expanded or confirmed by what you read. Identify concepts presented in the article you find either problematic or of interest, and highlight any studies that are cited that seem to be relevant to you in the research you are doing or planning. We'll discuss and share views on these issues when we meet.

**Prepare for next time:**
- Post a paragraph to the discussion site saying why you are interested in DA and what kind of DA project you are thinking about doing
- Transcribe 2 minutes of an interactive text you record
- Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
2. September 15: Modes of discourse: spoken and written
- Understanding context
- Spoken and written language
- Transcribing spoken discourse: practice and theory

Read:
Hammersley, M. (2010). Reproducing or constructing? Some questions about transcription in social research. *Qualitative Research, 10*(5), 553-569.

Prepare for next time:
- Identify and bring to class a copy of a text you would like to analyze for your final project. Attach a description of the context in which the discourse occurred and your role in collecting the discourse data. In addition, identify and post to your dropbox a list of three articles you have identified as relevant for informing the project you plan to do, with a brief paragraph about why each is relevant (these do not all have to be articles that use discourse analysis).
- Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
- Begin reading on your own to identify articles relevant for your own research.

3. September 22: Critical Discourse analysis
- Exploring purpose: Analyzing Genre
- Reflexivity in DA: the position of the analyst
- Critiquing a DA study

Read:

Prepare for next time:
- Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
- Identify and bring to class a research article that uses discourse analysis in ways you consider relevant to the project you plan to do. Attach a brief statement about why you consider it relevant.
- Genre analysis of your chosen text
4. September 29: Exploring interaction in discourse
   Mood and speech function
   Identifying research resources

Read:
   An article of your choice, relevant to your research interests (bring to class).

Prepare for next time:
   • Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
   • Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
   • Do an exchange/move analysis of Lauren’s transcript
   • Add a paragraph about mode as a register variable to your final project folder
   • Revisit your genre analysis to think about stages and not just language patterns

   • Analysis of mood/speech function in your chosen text (or the text of a colleague, if your chosen text is not interactional)
   • Write a critique of the article you brought to class, using the process and guidelines discussed in class today

5. October 6: Classroom discourse and exchange structure
   Discourse moves and exchange structure
   Classroom talk
Amanda Milewski will visit our class today to talk about her own discourse analysis study.

Read:
   Read to develop your final project proposal

Prepare for October 27 class:
   • Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
   • Analysis of exchange structure in your chosen text (or the text of a colleague, if your chosen text is not interactional)
   • Reflection on the course to this point
Prepare for individual meeting with me during the next two weeks:
At least two days prior to our meeting, post to your dropbox:

- A revision and elaboration of the paragraph you wrote for September 15 that discusses the purpose for your study and the questions you want to explore.
- A revision and elaboration of your description of context submitted on September 22 that provides more detail about the context of your study, how your data were collected, and a statement about yourself as researcher that takes account of the notion of *reflexivity* that we have been developing in the course.
- A bibliography of at least five articles that you expect to cite in your final paper. At least two of these should be discourse analysis studies that use tools, ask questions, or model analyses that you plan to use in your study. Write a 2-3 page statement offering a synthesis of how these studies will inform the project.
- A list of questions you would like to discuss when we meet.

Following our meeting, I will ask you to send me an email summarizing our conversation and setting goals for yourself for moving forward on your project.

6. October 13: NO CLASS TODAY; INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WILL BE SCHEDULED TO DISCUSS YOUR FINAL PROJECTS

October 20: Fall Study break

7. October 27: Evaluation in discourse

*Appraisal theory*  
*Construction of identity in discourse*

Read:


Prepare:

- Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
- Conduct an appraisal analysis of your text with a focus on graduation
8. November 3: Text structure in Written Discourse

Theme-Rheme and Given-New
Information Flow
Pedagogical applications of discourse analysis

Read:

Choose one of these:
OR:

Prepare:
• Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
• Analysis of theme/rheme structure in your chosen text (or the text of a colleague, if your chosen text is not a written text)

9. November 10: Ideational meaning: What’s going on in a text?
Clause, verbs, and transitivity
Recognizing what a text is “about”

John Swales will visit our class today to talk about his own discourse analysis work and the MICUSP corpus.

Read:

Prepare:
• Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
• Analysis of the process types in your text
10. November 17: Agency in discourse
   Social actors and participants
   The construction of power and agency

Read:

Prepare:
- Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
- Analysis of social actors in your text
- A brief memo describing your progress on your project and raising any questions you are grappling with.

11. November 24: Review of discourse analysis approaches and tools
   Choosing analytic tools that fit the questions you are asking
   Revisiting identity

Read:

Prepare:
- Complete reading reflections/analysis questions
- Post a note to your dropbox about any issues you’d like to revisit as we begin to wind up the course.

12. December 1: Revisiting some themes of the course
   Presentations and discussion

13. December 8: Moving ahead with discourse analysis
   Presentations and discussion