

Linguistics/Sociology 273A
Language and the Body
Lerner/Thompson
Winter 2010

Gene H. Lerner
<lerner@soc.ucsb.edu>
3411 SSMS
403-9862
Office Hours: Tue. 1-3
and by app't

Sandra A. Thompson
<sathomps@linguistics.ucsb.edu>
3518 South Hall
284 - 7470
Office Hours: Wed. 1-3
and by app't

Course Outline

Goals

This interdisciplinary course brings together the methods and findings of interactional linguistics and those of conversation analysis in a dialogue centering on the visible behavior of the body in the organization of talk-in-interaction. The main aim will be to find ways to describe, account for, or at least come to terms with the relationship between various sorts of visible and vocal conduct -- especially gesture, gaze, body movement and prosody -- and everyday language use. A primary goal would thus be the formulations of new understandings of the ways in which spoken language, including "grammar" and "meaning", is intertwined with gesture, gaze, and body movements in face-to-face naturally-occurring interactions.

This course will fulfill LISO (and possibly departmental) requirements; please see your advisor and/or the instructors to check on your particular needs.

Enrollment

The course can be taken as either a one-quarter course (4 units) or as a two-quarter (4 units + 2 units) course.

Written work

Assignment 1a. *Depiction of visible conduct – choosing data*

- Find about 3 to 5 seconds of interactionally interesting video from the course video recording and attempt to devise a method for depicting the **visible** aspects of the action in conjunction with the talk, keeping track of (1) your reasons for picking the particular extract, (2) choosing the method of depiction you used, and (3) assessing the successes and troubles you encounter in the process. Your goal is simply depiction, not hypotheses or ideas for projects (but of course depiction can be informed by analytic interest and this should be noted).
- **Assignment 1a – finding your clip - is due** the following week, **Jan. 15**: you'll discuss why you picked this extract in class and show your video clip.

Assignment 1b. *Depicting visible conduct – adding visible action to a transcript*

- For **Assignment 1b**, due on **Jan. 22**, you'll hand in your transcription. Please bring handouts of your transcript for everyone and be prepared to discuss your reasons for picking the particular extract, choosing the method of depiction you used and assessing the successes and troubles you encounter in the process.
- For this assignment, you will find it important to familiarize yourself with the approaches that will be furnished to the class.

Assignment 2. *Paper Topics*

- Find at least two extracts from the data (either your own or 'Game Night') that exemplify two **different** possible research paper topics (based on the course readings and topics).
- Write a one- to two-page analysis of the data extract and précis for each topic. In consultation with the instructors, choose one of these topics to pursue for your paper.
- **Assignment 2** is due **Feb. 12**. Be prepared to show both extracts and briefly present your candidate projects in class.

Assignment 3. *Term Project*

Nota bene: The most successful projects build on something in one or more of the course readings – or are touched off by something in the readings.

- a. If you are taking the one-quarter version of the course, you'll write a short (five- to ten-page data-based) paper (not including transcripts) describing the workings of some aspect of the visible component of interaction using examples from the course data (and elsewhere if you like) and its relation to talk-in-interaction in the context of the course readings and topics. You can expand the topic in one of your two-page papers from Assignment 3 or choose another phenomenon (in consultation with the instructors). Exact due date to be arranged in class.
- b. If you are taking the two-quarter version of the course, you'll turn in a rough sketch of your proposed research at the end of the first quarter and spend the first 8 weeks of the second quarter preparing a final research paper. During this period the course will meet *informally*, holding occasional informal data analysis sessions during the scheduled class time for feedback on projects from the instructors and the other course participants. We will resume meeting for the ninth and tenth weeks of the Spring quarter, so that students can present their papers to the class. Papers will be due at the tenth week session. Papers should contain both detailed data analysis evidencing the phenomenon and a discussion of its relation to the readings (i.e., at least one of the readings.)

Class video

In class we will focus on the video 'Game Night'. The transcript for 'Game Night' can be downloaded from GauchoSpace. The associated video will reside on a campus server and so will be available for watching from any on-campus networked computer. However you will need a computer with the "Pro" version of Quicktime to extract and store movie clips for your course project. Quicktime Pro is available in the Rincon (Mac) Lab as well as on Mac computers in the Open Access Lab both in Phelps. Quicktime Pro is also available on the Mac computers in the Language Lab in Kerr. See the "Access to Course Data" page in GauchoSpace for instructions on accessing the course data and your personal folder on the server. A user name and password will be assigned to you on the first day of class.

Class Participation

We will meet weekly during the Winter quarter (9-11:45 Fridays). Each session will be divided between

- a. Discussion of Readings.
- b. Data session:
 - viewing small sections of the class video of conversational interaction and discussing issues of 'language and the body' that emerge from our joint observations of the video (and transcript of the talk)
 - the data sessions will be organized thematically, as indicated on the syllabus (bring the 'Game Night' transcript to class every week)

Participants will be expected to do the following:

1. Read and be prepared to discuss the weekly readings.
2. Present two of the readings during the quarter, according to the Guidelines below.
3. Spend at least 30 minutes a week previewing the assigned video section before we examine it as a group on Friday.

Guidelines for Presenting Reading Assignments

- assume everyone is familiar with the reading, so you don't want to summarize it
- plan to take only about 5 to 7 minutes for your presentation
- state what you think is important about this reading
- state why you think this reading was assigned
- state how it seems to you to fit into the course, and how it is relevant to other material in the course
- introduce an extract from the class video that bears on the reading (if possible)
- offer 2 or more questions that you'd like to see form the basis for the day's discussion of that reading
- if you wish, offer your own alternative analysis or understanding of the point the author is making
- optionally, hand out a brief outline of your main points, or the author's main points, or important or confusing quotations for discussion.