ANTHROPOLOGY 9215B

Discourse and Society

COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2025

Professor: Dr. Karen Pennesi (she/her)

E-mail: pennesi@uwo.ca

Office hours: Wednesdays 1:30 – 2:30 pm in Social Science Room 3404

Credit value: 0.5

Class Time: Thursdays 9:30 - 12:30 p.m. in Social Science Room 3227

Course Description:

Discourse analysis provides empirical grounding for explanations and interpretations of culture, society and social behaviour. Attention to discourse (language in use as talk, text or sign) reveals the diversity of perspectives within cultural and social groups, reminding us to be critical of generalizations we make, while deepening our understanding of issues. In this course, we will explore how discourse is shaped by many things including the world as we know it, the structures of particular languages, socio-political relations, prior discourses, the limitations and possibilities of modes of communication, and various interactional goals.

Course Syllabus:

This course is organized to answer the question: "How do we engage in social life through language?" Engaging in social life involves (1) establishing *identities,* (2) exercising *agency* in defining elements of social life and achieving goals, and (3) making experiences, events and other phenomena *meaningful*. Therefore, the weekly course content is divided into the following sections:

- Theoretical foundations
- Identity essentials
- Focus on methods
- Agency and power
- Meaning-making

All forms of discourse analysis that we will learn in this course consider language use from an explicitly ethnographic approach, which shows how the production and interpretation of discourse are simultaneously part of interactional, local, national, and global contexts. We will be asking how particular discourse patterns help speakers interpret their daily experiences and negotiate relationships within questions of power, identity, inequality,

modernity/tradition, globalization, and others. In addition to analytic models, we will also address methodological issues around data collection, transcription and representation.

Students are expected to make connections to their own research and apply the theories and methods from the readings to analyses of their topics of interest. Because discourse analysis is best learned by practice, students will be required to conduct original research, collecting and analyzing data.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- identify structures and patterns in oral and written discourse
- describe linguistic phenomena using academic terminology
- use various theoretical models to analyze how spoken and written discourse is connected to social, political and cultural processes
- conduct a research project investigating aspects of language in use

Course Materials:

Required readings will be made available on the course OWL site.

Optional book to purchase:

McIntosh, Janet and Norma Mendoza-Denton (eds.) (2020) *Language in the Trump Era: Scandals and Emergencies*. Cambridge University Press.

- This book is available to read free online through Course Readings on OWL.
- You may wish to purchase a copy of this book since we will be reading several chapters from it. It is available used from various sellers online or new directly from Cambridge University Press.

Evaluation:

% of Grade	Assessments
10	Participation in class discussions
20	Response papers
20	Seminar leader and synthesis
5	Proposal for Research Project
15	Presentation
30	Essay
100	**TOTAL**

Class Participation – 10%

Your active and informed participation is expected in every class. Please let me know ahead of time if you are unable to attend a class. Your classmates come from various disciplines so you may at times feel that you know a lot more or a lot less than others, depending on the topic of discussion. Whether your interest is primarily in the features of language or in the workings of society, an interdisciplinary class like this provides opportunities to learn from each other; therefore, I encourage you to direct questions and comments to your classmates and not just to me. The expectation is that everyone will receive full marks (5 points per class) unless there is reason to deduct marks for insufficient preparation, inappropriate or insufficient contribution to discussion, or unexcused absences.

Response Papers – 20%

Before most classes, you will prepare a **1.5 page (single-spaced) response** to the week's readings in relation to your own learning. You may write in point form (bullets) but you must still write in full sentences. That is, you do not need to develop coherent paragraphs, but each point should be a complete thought and there must still be a "flow" when reading so that it makes sense to someone else. Use subheadings or sections to help you organize.

The focus of your **response** should be on what you found useful, insightful, difficult or problematic as you think through the ideas and how you might use them for your project for this course or for your thesis research. You may also mention connections you see to things you have observed or read outside this course. DO NOT simply summarize the readings (though you may find that a useful first step to do in your own notes before writing the response paper). **Make specific references to concepts, terms, theories, and examples from the readings.** Take note of particular passages or quotes that you would like to discuss in class. This will clarify your points and demonstrate that you have done the readings.

This assignment will maximize your learning and prepare you to be an active participant in class discussions. You may focus more on some readings than others, but you should **have at least one point responding each of them** (or the suggested videos). If you are unable to do a close reading of each item, at least read the abstract, introduction, and conclusion, and skim through to see what the main ideas are and what kind of data was analyzed. **Printed copies of response papers are due in class on the week the readings are assigned (print on both sides of a single sheet) and electronically on OWL > Assignments by 9 a.m. the same day.**

Each response paper will be given a score out of 5 based on your level of critical engagement with the material. The lowest score will be dropped so 8 responses total will count toward your final course grade.

Seminar Leader – 20%

Each student will be responsible for leading one weekly class discussion. There are 3 parts to this assignment.

a) You will write a **1000-1200 word synthesis** of the main ideas (theoretical approaches, concepts, analytical methods) of <u>all</u> the readings and videos for that week. A synthesis goes beyond summarizing the main ideas of individual readings, so that you are discussing them in relation to each other and to the week's topic(s). You may also make connections to previous readings we have done. Do NOT simply list each reading with notes below it like an annotated bibliography. You may do that as a first step in your rough draft just for yourself, but then you should organize your points under thematic or conceptual headings for the synthesis. Use the weekly topic as a guide for identifying common themes or concepts in your synthesis. A sample will be provided on OWL. You must upload a copy of your synthesis on OWL > Forums by **Wednesday at noon** for the members of the class to have time to read before we meet.

b) You will prepare 3-5 **discussion questions** which show connections among the current set of readings as well as to past weeks, as appropriate. The aim of the discussion is to further our understanding of the concepts and theoretical approaches. Good discussion questions will go beyond "What did you think of X?" or "Do you agree with X?" Think about how authors apply particular models of analysis or the theoretical questions they raise. Invite your classmates to challenge some of the ideas or findings. Think about applying concepts and theories from one reading to the data described in another. You may consult with me before the class to discuss potential questions.

c) The leader will also bring in a **small data set** for the class to analyze using the concepts and theories presented that week. The data can be a transcript from a published source or an audio or video clip. It can be from a news source or social media. It can be from an interaction you observed and made notes about. The point is that the class should be able to examine the data and either find examples of the concepts in the readings or use the theories from the readings to explain what is happening in the data. You don't have to have the answers all worked out ahead of time; we will do it in class. You need to provide some guidance in the form of questions or instructions the class can follow individually or in partners.

Grades for leading the seminar will be based on how well the leader is able to draw out the main ideas and common themes in the readings, provoke thoughtful and productive

discussion through the questions and presentation of the material, facilitate participation of the group, and choose an appropriate data set for illustrating points from the readings.

Individual Project – 50%

The topic for this project is open, with the requirement that you use the models and theories from the course to perform an original analysis of some discourse. (*Hint: make notes on the analytical models described in the readings and in Weeks 7-9; then pick one or two to follow*). This may be more ethnographic or discourse-oriented, but it should seamlessly integrate both.

This assignment will be broken down into 4 components:

   a) Data set – pass/fail (Due 23 January)
   b) Proposal and outline – 5% (Due on or before 13 March)
   c) Presentation – 15% (Due 3 April)
   d) Essay – 30% (Due 11 April)

a) Data Set

The data can be spoken, signed or written discourse (but not "literature" and not scripted dialogue for entertainment). You can either use materials from other research you have done or collect new data for this project. You may also use data collected by another researcher, with permission, and provided you are able to explore the context as necessary for your analysis. I am also open to different kinds of discourse: spontaneous conversations with or without the researcher, interviews, and online discourse. Students should talk with me to discuss potential data sets.

You must use publicly available data or a data set that you already have permission to use and that is accessible to you so that you do not need to seek approval from the Research Ethics Board. There is simply not time to go through the Research Ethics approval process before your data set is due in Week 3. Publicly available data includes talk or text found on public websites (i.e. that do not require you to login to access), television or radio broadcasts, podcasts, in-person public events (e.g. speeches at an outdoor protest) that you attend or similar interactions.

If you are using data from research for which you have already obtained REB approval, nothing further is needed. Just send me a copy of the approved form from the Western Research Ethics Board so I can have it on file.

In Week 3 you will submit a one-paragraph description of your data set, indicating:

   • The type of data (news articles, recorded speech, dating profiles, etc.)
   • How or where you obtained the data; any permissions granted

- The scope of data (number/length of recordings, number of texts, date range for news articles, etc.)

Having your data by Week 3 means that you can begin to apply what you are learning each week to specific discourses. This will also give you a focus for evaluating readings in your weekly response papers.

b) Proposal

To ensure that your topic and analytical approach is approved by the professor (and to receive helpful guidance), you will submit a **5 page proposal** (double-spaced) that describes:

1. your data set (copy your paragraph from the Week 3 assignment with any necessary revisions)
2. the linguistic features or phenomena to be analyzed
3. 1-3 potential analytical models
4. an annotated list of major references to be used
5. an outline of your preliminary argument or research question.

At least 5 scholarly sources must be used, and at least 3 of these must <u>not</u> be from course readings. You will likely need to do some further reading on your chosen analytical method. This proposal can be submitted any time until 13 March and is worth 5% of your final mark. When you are ready to submit, **arrange a meeting with me** and submit your proposal to OWL > Assessments > Assignments at least 24 hours before the meeting so that I can read it and have feedback prepared.

c) Presentation

Each student will make a **15 minute presentation** to the class reporting the main findings of the analysis. Think of this as similar to presenting your work at a conference. In preparing for the presentation, you will essentially be drafting the essay. The introduction should briefly explain which theoretical concepts and analytical models you are using, while the bulk of your presentation should be a summary of the analysis with some key examples. You must use slides or other audio-visual aids, and either a transcript or a handout* for the class. There will be a short time for discussion after each presentation so other class members should think of critical comments or questions provoked by the analysis. The aim of the presentation is to provide an opportunity for feedback on your analysis that you can use to improve your essay.

*A note about the proper use of handouts: (1) If the handout is meant to be a take-away summary of the presentation, you should say so at the beginning so people aren't trying to read it throughout your presentation, thus not paying attention to what you're saying.

In this case, you should state your argument somewhere on the handout, giving relevance to the excerpts provided or the discourse features described. (2) If the handout is intended to be an aid to the presentation, you should direct the audience to look at it in the relevant places. The content on the handout should be supplementary to what is being said and shown on slides, not repeating text on the slides. (3) A transcript is helpful for any audio or video clips you show. You can then point out lines you refer to in your analysis. It's often easier to provide a transcript in a separate document rather than trying to fit it all on slides. The same goes for longer excerpts of text. The transcript should have line numbers and a key of symbols used. Follow transcription conventions as exemplified in course readings (e.g. Zilberman Friedmann and Netz 2022:457 or Jones 2022:570).

d) Essay

Having done the analysis and prepared the presentation, you will be ready to finish writing the essay. Now you can elaborate more on the introduction, methodology and conclusion which you will already have drafted and summarized in the presentation. Be sure to incorporate any feedback you get from the presentation. The analytical paper will be **18-20 pages**. Your transcript or data set must be appended after the References and is NOT included in the page count. If your data set is large, you may choose to append only relevant sections. See formatting guidelines below. Number the lines of the transcript and use these line numbers for reference in the body of the paper. Transcripts must be done systematically and consistently, reflecting carefully reasoned decisions about how to represent talk in a way that addresses theoretical issues relevant to the topic and data chosen (*hint: reread Taylor 2001:29-38 from Week 1*).

To aid you in organizing and writing the paper, please use the "how to write" guidelines available in **OWL > Content > Reference Documents > Writing Discourse Analysis**, which give tips on writing an outline, an introduction and conclusion, a methodology section and a data analysis section. You are also encouraged to look back at our first reading (Taylor 2001:22-45) for further guidance.

The essays will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- How well you articulate theoretical issues in your argument
- How well you apply the analytical models you choose to your data set
- How closely your essay follows the guidelines for writing provided on OWL
- Your use of appropriate examples from your data set to support your argument
- How well you deal with data that does not fit the models and any other limitations
- How well you make use of your references, which indicates you have researched and understood the topic adequately
- Your overall writing style (Does your argument make sense and is it easy to follow?)

More information will be made available to students on the course OWL site.

Academic Statements and Policies

Statement on Seeking Academic Considerations:

Occasionally illness or other personal issues make it impossible to meet deadlines. Students missing individual assignments worth more than 10% due to medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by consulting the Graduate Chair in their program (Andrea Waters-Rist for Anthropology). Supporting documentation for academic considerations may be required. For assignments worth less than 10% (i.e. response papers, essay proposal), you can approach the professor directly. Note that the lowest grade on the response papers will be dropped to reduce the need to request academic considerations for minor concerns.

Any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. No academic considerations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date.

Any academic considerations must date from the formal due date of any assignment. All missed work must be made up by the end of the exam period in the applicable term.

Accessible Education:

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. Please see Accessible Education for information.

Brightspace:

All course material and grades will be posted to OWL Brightspace. If students need assistance with OWL Brightspace, they can seek support on the OWL Brightspace Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk online or by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical support. Current versions of all popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled. Efforts to seek help from WTS must be documented if you are planning to request considerations due to problems with OWL.

The professor cannot offer any computer-related assistance.

After uploading an assignment, you must click "SUBMIT". Then check that you receive confirmation that your assignment has been successfully "submitted". Troubles with

technology are not grounds for an extension. If something is not working, contact WTS as soon as possible.

Communication Best Practices:

E-mail should not be seen as an alternative to meeting with the professor during office hours; it should be used primarily for administrative purposes, e.g. informing me of prolonged illness, or making an appointment. Please take advantage of office hours. It is the best way for me to attend to your queries.

Sometimes you may be confused about an idea or an assignment. Here is what to do:

- Reread the Course Outline and/or all Instructions for the assignment.
- If you still are unsure, ask a classmate. You should have the contact details for at least two of them.
- If your two classmates don't have the answer, check the Discussions forum on OWL (under Communications) to see if it has already been asked and answered. If not, post your question there. Discussion forum posts will be monitored every couple of days.
- If you have a specific question, email the professor. I will do my best to respond to messages within 48 hours. I do not answer e-mail on evenings, weekends or holidays. If your question is such that I can more efficiently answer it in person, I will ask you to make an appointment to see me.

Academic Integrity - Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author or text-generating AI, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):

It is essential that you submit your own original work. You are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering. Written assignments should be based on your own data analysis, close examination of materials assigned for this course, and other credible

sources from your research. The outputs of generative AI tools are often flawed and unreliable, reproducing bias, containing factual errors, and providing only superficial or generic texts. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, but you must uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and generated text to avoid plagiarism. Your assignments should be a product of your own thoughts and words because the purpose of the assignments is to demonstrate your critical thinking and understanding of the course material. Spell-checkers and grammar-checkers are allowed but you should not change whole phrases or sentences. Avoid using AI tools that generate text (e.g. ChatGPT). If you are concerned about your mastery of academic English, please know that linguistic diversity is appreciated in this course. You will not lose marks for non-standard English or dialectal variations if the ideas are clear. It is much preferred that you write in your own linguistic style, even with non-standard grammar, rather than copying text generated by another person or machine.

Course Specific Statements and Policies:

Computer-related Problems:

Make sure to frequently back up all your work and the materials you download on an external site (such as an external hard drive, cloud, an e-mail to yourself) in case your computer crashes or is damaged or stolen. A system of making regular back-ups should be standard practice for anything you do on your computer. No extensions for any assignments will be granted for computer-related problems or lost files. It is your responsibility to solve any problems you encounter with the OWL system on your device, including access to the site or uploading and downloading files. The OWL Help Desk can be reached at 519-661-3800 or through this web form.

Missed Deadlines:

Writing assignments will always be **due by class time on Thursdays**. Weekly response papers are part of your preparation for the seminar so you should have them ready and accessible in class for your reference. Late papers will lose 1 point per day. The lowest grade will be dropped from your final course grade.

All students will make their presentations on the same day. If there are extenuating circumstances that make it impossible for you to attend, you should request academic consideration (see p. 8 above). Likewise, if you are unable to lead the seminar on your assigned day, you will need approval for academic considerations. Any late written assignments should be submitted to the **Drop Box** on the wall outside the Anthropology Office (near room 3326).

Response papers should be submitted electronically to **OWL > Assessments > Assignments**. All other written assignments (i.e. synthesis, proposal, essay) must be submitted both in a **hard copy** (paper) and also **electronically** through OWL. Any

assignments sent by e-mail will not be accepted. The professor will not print student assignments.

Format for Written Assignments:

While I strive to make expectations and requirements clear in this syllabus, in project instructions and in verbal instructions given in class, gaps and misunderstandings are inevitable. Partly this has to do with the interdisciplinary and multinational composition of our class. This section makes explicit some things which I assume to be general knowledge shared by graduate students in Canada. If you think some of these things are obvious, great. If it is news to you, please take note for assignments in this course. Sometimes questions come up in class. Any other instructions, requirements or reminders mentioned in class should be written down and consulted. If you have any doubts or questions about any aspect of your assignments, you should clarify with the professor before it is due.

All written assignments must follow the formatting guidelines below.

- Staple the pages of your assignment in the top left corner (no paper clips, no plastic covers).
- You may print on both sides of the paper.
- Weekly response papers should be single-spaced. All other assignments should be double-spaced.
- Use a 12 point font in black ink with 2.5 cm margins on all sides.
    - Use the same font throughout the assignment unless there is a theoretical reason, which you explain, for using different fonts.
- Indent the first line of paragraphs (unless under a major heading) and do not leave a blank line between paragraphs.
- Always include page numbers.
    - Number all pages consecutively, including References, Appendix, Transcripts or anything else that comes after the main text.
- Name your document with your last name and a short descriptive title.
    - E.g. « Pennesi-conversational laughter.docx »
    - Do NOT simply use the course number and the type of assignment. That is not an effective identifier because it would be the same for all your classmates.
        - E.g. « 9215-essay.pdf »
- All assignments should have a title and your name.
    - A title page is not necessary if you include title page information on the first page.
    - Include name, title, date, course number, professor's name

- If you use a title page, it does not have a page number. The first page of the essay should be p. 1 (not p.2)
- If you use a title page, do not repeat the title on page 1.
- Bibliographic references should follow a common style from Anthropology. When in doubt, follow the style used in the list of our class readings from Course Readings on OWL.
  - List all references cited in the paper alphabetically, under "References", following the text
  - Do not use footnotes for citing references
  - Do not include citations in the References which were not cited in the paper
  - Only include a URL for a book or journal article if it is a DOI number.
- Check grammar and spelling. Points will not be deducted for dialect variation or non-standard language unless the meaning becomes unclear.
- Provide a key for transcription symbols. Typically, this is in an Appendix if excerpts are included in the text. See examples in our course readings (Zilberman Friedmann and Netz 2022:457; Jones 2022:570). If you have a longer transcript as an Appendix, the key should come at the beginning of the transcript.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Readings listed below may be changed. Check the Syllabus on OWL for the latest version of this course outline. The complete list of citations for all readings is posted in OWL > Course Readings > ANTH 9215 Readings. You can download the readings from Course Readings. Unless otherwise indicated, all readings are required. It is recommended to read them in the order they are listed. In some cases, I have recommended short explanatory videos to replace or complement a particular reading. In those cases, you can choose whether to watch the video and/or read the article.

Wk	Date	Topics and Readings	Assign-ments
1	9 Jan.	*Theoretical Foundations:* Approaches to Discourse Analysis • Read entire syllabus for this course • Roth-Gordon (2020) • Taylor (2001) • Philips (2013)	
2	16 Jan.	*Theoretical Foundations*: Performativity and Language Ideologies • Mike Mena "Performatives" videos Part 1 and 2 explain Austin (1962) *How To Do Things With Words* [no reading, just watch] Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc4JHPSu--s Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hi22_Ldxw5k	Response paper

		• Mike Mena "Language Ideology: A Masterclass (Irvine & Gal 2000)" [no reading, just watch] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHf1cpL6Rjc • Kroskrity (2021) [required reading] • Johnston (2011) [required reading]	
3	23 Jan.	*Identity Essentials*: Identity and Indexicality • Khor (2021) • Liang (1999) • Muehlmann (2008) • Mena and García (2020) [and/or watch this video] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vU3ti9KE3vY	Response Paper Obtain data set
4	30 Jan.	*Identity Essentials*: Raciolinguistics • Mena's video on Flores and Rosa (2015): [no reading, just watch] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5oPWMEJjGbk • Mena's video on Rosa (2016): [no reading, just watch] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahMAAKNCDNM • Roth-Gordon (2017) Ch. 1, 2, 5 • Alim and Smitherman (2020)	Response Paper
5	6 Feb.	*Identity Essentials*: Stance-taking and Style-shifting • Kiesling (2019) • Slobe (2018) [And/or watch this video] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcfcN-8agJI] • Snell (2018) • De Fina (2022)	Response Paper
6	13 Feb.	*Identity Essentials:* Co-construction of Roles and Relationships • McIntosh (2020) Part III Introduction • Cameron (2020) • Mannheim (2020) • Sierra and Shrikant (2020) • Trester (2015)	Response Paper
	20 Feb.	READING WEEK – NO CLASS	
7	27 Feb.	*Focus on Method*: Models of Discourse Analysis (Readings in Course Content > Week 7)	
8	6 Mar.	*Focus on Method*: Critical Discourse Analysis • Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) • Mendoza-Denton (2020) Part II Introduction • Mendoza-Denton (2020) Ch. 18 • Martin and Fozdar (2022) • Caimotto (2023)	Response Paper
9	13 Mar.	*Focus on Method*: Multimodal Discourse Analysis • Kress and Bezemer (2023)	Response Paper

		• Goldstein, Hall and Ingram (2020) • Seargeant, Giaxoglou & Monaghan (2023) • Calhoun (2019) [And/or watch this video] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fFAqbg_FHM	Essay proposal
10	20 Mar.	*Agency and Power*: Agency in Narratives • Arnold (2015) • Jones (2022) • Zilberman Friedmann and Netz (2022) • Rymes (2001: Ch. 2 and Ch. 5)	Response Paper
11	27 Mar.	*Meaning-Making*: Co-Construction of Cultural Categories • Berman (2014) • Dumas (2012) • Mendoza-Denton (2020) Part I Introduction • McIntosh (2020) Ch. 4 [And/or watch this video] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzhRb3W6Seo	Response Paper
12	3 Apr.	Presentations	Presentation Essay due by 11 April