

# ETHN 185: Discourse, Power, and Inequality

Monday/Wednesday 2:00-4:50pm

Humanities & Social Sciences Building (HSS) 1106A

UCSD Summer Session 1

Professor: Malathi Iyengar

Office: Social Sciences Building (SSB) 240

Office Hours: Monday 5:00-6:00pm and by appointment

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## Overview:

What do everyday conversations have to do with the social hierarchies of race, class, gender, nation, and empire? How do mundane images reproduce structures of inequality? In this course, we will use theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches from Ethnic Studies and linguistic anthropology to analyze the ways in which *discourse* – ranging from everyday speech to legal jargon, from the language of children’s culture to the language of medical journals – grows out of and (re)produces the ideologies that maintain social stratification. We will explore discourse analysis as a valuable technology for evaluating the operations of power in everyday life, and for building a praxis that allows us to intervene in social power structures and work towards dismantling them.

## Discussion Guidelines:

The materials for this course challenge commonly held understandings of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation. Given the nature of the course there will likely be a wide range of reactions to the material. Ideally the course will prompt you to think for yourself and to raise difficult questions. During this process, please engage one another in discussion with respect and consideration. Abusive and harsh language, intimidation and personal attacks will not be tolerated. These norms are reflected in the UCSD Principles of Community that we are all expected to follow (<http://www.vcb.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>).

## Electronics Policy:

No electronics are allowed in class. Please bring a notebook to take notes in. (This notebook will come in handy when you take your open-note exam!) If you are observed using electronics during class, you will automatically lose participation points, and could potentially lose ALL of your participation points for that day. If you have OSD accommodations stating that you need to use a laptop in class, please present these accommodations to me before the end of Week 1 of the session.

## Plagiarism:

Your written assignments must be *in your own words*. Any excerpt of any length – even a single sentence – copied from ANY other source must be properly cited. Copying any excerpt or piece of writing from any individual or institution without proper citation

constitutes plagiarism and will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office, resulting in disciplinary action.

#### Accommodations:

I wish to make this course as accessible as possible to students with disabilities or medical conditions that may affect any aspect of course assignments or participation. If you require any specific accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. If you have a letter from the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) specifying accommodations you will need at any time during the academic term, you must notify me and present the letter during the first week of class.

#### Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies:

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of interest yet do not realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, education, medicine, public health, social work, counseling, journalism, government and politics, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor, please contact:

Daisy Rodríguez, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor  
858-534-3277 or [d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu](mailto:d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu) or visit [www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu](http://www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu)

#### Course Requirements:

##### *Written Assignments: 40%*

- For each week's required readings, you will write a *critical reflection* (at least one page, but there is no upper limit on length) in which you delve into some aspect of the readings that particularly interests you. Your critical reflection may relate the readings to something from your own experience or to some cultural text (a film, novel, poem, artwork, cartoon, etc.), or you may simply engage in a more in-depth exploration of some particular theme that you identify in the readings.
- In grading these reflections, I am primarily interested in how thoughtfully and insightfully you engage with the course content; however, *I also expect clear writing*. Please be aware that if your written assignments are clumsy and ungrammatical, lack punctuation, or are riddled with misspellings, points will be deducted.
- You have the OPTION of replacing ONE of the weekly writing assignments with something in a different medium – for example, instead of doing the written assignment, your reflection on that week's readings may consist of a musical composition, poem, drawing, painting, cartoon, brief spoken-word piece, kinesthetic performance, 3D artwork, etc. This is entirely optional – you may elect to simply do all written reflections, and that's perfectly fine.

*Presentations: 20%*

- Each week you will choose ONE of the “optional readings” to read, and present that reading to the class on Wednesday. These presentations are meant to be stress-free – you don’t need to do any handouts, powerpoint, prezy, or any visuals at all, and you don’t have to lead an activity or do anything else fancy. All you have to do is read the article and then verbally summarize it for the class, in the same way you would summarize any piece of reading for folks who haven’t read it and want to know what it is about.

*Attendance and participation: 20%*

- Attendance is required. If you are ill, please bring a doctor’s note upon your return to class in order to have your absence excused.
- In order to receive full credit for the day, you must arrive ON TIME to class, BRING ALL OF YOUR READINGS WITH YOU, and PARTICIAPTE satisfactorily in discussions and in-class writing activities.
- See section on technology policy. Note that you will lose participation points if you are texting, looking at facebook, web-surfing, or engaged in any other inappropriate technology use during class.

*Open-note exam: 20%*

- This is a give-away; all you have to do is take notes during class, bring your notes and readings to the midterm, and use these materials to answer the questions. Easy.

**Course Schedule**

Week 1: Getting Started: Language & Discourse Studies *Hors D’oeuvres*

Monday, June 30: Greetings and introductions

Wednesday, July 2: Presentations Round I. Discuss Week 1 readings.

*Required Readings:*

Mugane, John. “Necrolinguistics: Linguistic Death-in-Life.” *Du Bois Review*, 2:2 (2005), 159-186.

Woolard, Kathryn. “Sentences in the Language Prison: The Rhetorical Structuring of an American Language Policy Debate.” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 16, no. 2 (May, 1989), pp. 268-278

*Optional Readings:*

Vanderbeck, Robert. “Youth, Racism, and Place in the Tony Martin Affair.” *Antipode*, Vol. 35, Issue 2, pp. 363-384, March 2003.

- Giroux, Henry A. "Spectacles of Race and Pedagogies of Denial: Anti-Black Racist Pedagogy Under the Reign of Neoliberalism." *Communication Education*, 52: 3-4, 191-211.
- Baquedano-Lopez, Patricia. "A Stop at the End of the Bus Line: Nannies, Children, and the Language of Care." 2002 Center for Working Families, University of California, Berkeley.
- Nopper, Tamara K. "The Wages of Non-Blackness: Contemporary Immigrant Rights and Discourses of Character, Productivity, and Value." *Intensions Journal*, Issue 5 (Fall/Winter 2011).

## Week 2: Signs and Signification

Monday, July 7: Reflection 1 due (based on Week 1 readings).  
 Wednesday, July 9: Presentations Round II.

### *Required Readings:*

- de Saussure, Ferdinand. 1966. "Nature of the linguistic sign." Pp. 63-70 in *Course in general linguistics*, edited by Charles Bally, Albert Riedlinger, Wade Baskin and Albert Sechehaye. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- de Saussure, Ferdinand. 1966. "Immutability and mutability of the sign." Pp. 71-78 in *Course in general linguistics*, edited by Charles Bally, Albert Riedlinger, Wade Baskin and Albert Sechehaye. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Fjord, Lakshmi. "Disasters, Race and Disability: [Un]seen through the lens of disaster." *The Journal of Race and Policy*. 3(1):46.

### *Optional Readings*

- Ticktin, Miriam. "Sexual Violence as the Language of Border Control: Where French Feminist and Anti-immigrant Rhetoric Meet." *Signs*, Vol. 33, no.4 (Summer 2008), pp. 863-889.
- Reyes, Angela. "'Are you losing your culture?': poetics, indexicality, and Asian American identity." *Discourse Studies* 2002 4:183.
- Dorsey, Peter. "To 'Corroborate Our Own Claims': Public Positioning and the Slavery Metaphor in Revolutionary America." *American Quarterly*, Vol. 55, no. 3 (Sep, 2003), pp. 353-386.
- Poorebrahim, F. and Zarei, G. "How is Islam portrayed in Western media?: A Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective." *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, Article 5, Volume 1, Issue 2, Winter 2012, pp. 45-62.
- Vang, Ma. "The Refugee Soldier: A Critique of Recognition and Citizenship in the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 1997." *Positions* 20:3, Summer 2012.

### Week 3: Speech Acts

Monday, July 15: Reflection 2 due.

Wednesday, July 16: Presentations Round III.

#### *Required Readings:*

Austin, J.L. *How To Do Things With Words*. Second edition, edited by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa. pp. 1-38.

Faudree, Paja. "How To Say Things With Wars: Performativity and Discursive Rupture in the *Requerimiento* of the Spanish Conquest." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, Vol. 22, Issue 3, pp. 182-200, December 2012.

#### *Optional Readings:*

Walters, Karina. "Dis-placement and Dis-ease: Land, Place, and Health Among American Indians and Alaska Natives." In L.M. Burton et al. (eds.), *Communities, Neighborhoods, and Health: Expanding the Boundaries of Place*. New York: Springer Science and Business Media, 2011.

Patel, L. and Ares, R. "The Politics of Coming Out Undocumented." In Tuck and Yang (eds.), *Youth Resistance and Theories of Social Change*. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Hill, Jane. "Language, Race, and White Public Space." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 100, no. 3 (Sept. 1998), pp. 680-689.

Solorzano, Daniel, et al., "Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate: The Experiences of African American College Students." *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 69, no. 1/2, Winter-Spring 2000.

### Week 4: Methods and Details

Monday, July 21: Reflection 3 due.

Wednesday, July 23: Presentations Round IV.

#### *Required Readings:*

Brown, G. & Yule, G. *Discourse Analysis*. pp. 2-3, and 19-26 (from Chapter 1); Chapter 2, "The Role of Context in Interpretation," pp. 27-67.

Brewer, Rose M. "Thinking Critically about Race and Genetics." *Race & Ethnicity*, Fall 2006.

#### *Optional Readings:*

St. Louis, Brett. "Sport, Genetics, and the 'Natural Athlete': The Resurgence of Racial Science." *Body & Society* 2003. 9:75.

Shohat, Ella. "Lasers for Ladies: Endo Discourse and the Inscriptions of Science." In Treichler, P. et al. (Eds.), *The Visible Woman: Imaging Technologies, Gender, and Science*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Da Silva, Denise. "Tropical Democracy." In *Toward a Global Idea of Race*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Lee, Sandra Soo-Jin, et al. "The Meanings of 'Race' in the New Genomics: Implications for Health Disparities Research." *Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics* 33, 2001.

#### Week 5: Reading the World

Monday, July 28: Reflection 4 due; Open-note exam.

Wednesday, July 30: Presentations Round V; wrapping up.

Goodwin, Charles. "Professional Vision." *American Anthropologist* 96(3): 606-633.

Bucholtz, M. and Hall, K. "Theorizing Identity in Language and Sexuality Research." *Language in Society* 33, 469-515.

Shohat, Ella. "Rupture and Return: Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab Jews." *Social Text* 75, Vol. 21, No. 2, Summer 2003.

Haviland, J. B. (2003). Ideologies of Language: Some Reflections on Language and U.S. Law. In *American Anthropologist*, 105(4), pp. 764-774.

## **Student Consent for Release of Student Information**

I hereby authorize the UCSD Ethnic Studies Department to return my graded final examination/research paper by placing the examination/research paper in a location accessible to all students in the course. I understand that the return of my examination/research paper as described above may result in the disclosure of personally identifiable information, that is not public information as defined in UCSD PPM 160-2, and I hereby consent to the disclosure of such information.

Quarter:

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Course:

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Instructor:

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Student I.D.#:

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Print Name:

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Signature:

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