

Gender and Language in Society

Anthropology 149B
UCLA, Winter Quarter 2005

<i>Time and place:</i>	TuTh 11–12:15 PM, Fowler A139
<i>Professor:</i>	Niko Besnier
<i>Office hours:</i>	W 2–4 PM or other times by appointment or anytime via e-mail
<i>Contacts:</i>	Haines Hall 396, besnier@ucla.edu
<i>Final Exam</i>	Tue, March 15, 2005 during regular class time

Aims of the Course

In the last few decades, gender has become one of the most important lenses through which anthropologists have sought to understand society and culture. This course focuses on the role that the study of language and interaction plays in this process. It aims to understand what we can learn about ourselves as social and cultural being by observing how gender is constructed and animated in the conduct of our daily interactions with one another.

The course takes as point of departure the recognition that gender is more than a simple dichotomy between women and men: there are many kinds of women and men (differentiated by social-group affiliation, social class, race, age, national or transnational affiliation, sexuality, religion, etc.); there are also persons about whom society has a hard time deciding whether they are women or men, and who in turn may challenge society's decision; and each of us articulates our gender differently in different contexts. In this complex field of negotiation and contestation, language and interaction play a crucial role, as we will learn in the course of the quarter. Thus, in order to understand how language and gender are interwoven, we must cast our nets wide and investigate the socio-cultural context that gives meaning to both linguistic practices and gender categories. This course investigates how wide we must cast this net.

We will thus learn about a range of other social and cultural categories that at first glance may appear to have little to do with gender, such as power, nationalism, and ethnicity. We will gain an understanding of the working of certain aspects of these categories as they come into play in the complex relationship between language and gender.

Required Readings

- Hall, Kira and Mary Bucholtz, eds. 1995. *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*. New York: London.
- Individual articles downloadable in PDF format (Adobe Acrobat) from the class web site. On the main page of the web site, in the upper yellow band, click on "List of Links"; the articles are listed in the left-hand "Class Links" column, arranged by week. The web site will prompt you for your UCLA ID and password before you can access the files.

Assessment

1. *Research paper (40%)*

You are to conduct a short original fieldwork-based project and write up a report on your research. You are free to use your imagination in your choice of research context, research topic, and method, although you must address issues of language and gender, and must do so from an anthropological perspective. You can find guidelines for this option by clicking on the link "Fieldwork Project" on the front page of the course website. You may collaborate with one another and conduct your research in small groups, but must write your reports individually. You must clear your research project with me by Mon 24 Jan, 2005, using the Fieldwork Project Information Sheet provided with the guidelines. Your research paper is due on Fri 11 Mar, 2005.

2. *Scheduled quizzes (30%)*

There will be four closed-book multiple-choice quizzes during the quarter, scheduled for the last 10 minutes of class-time on the following dates:

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Scope</i>
Quiz 1	Thu 27 Jan	readings for Weeks 1-4
Quiz 2	Thu 10 Feb	readings for Weeks 5-6
Quiz 3	Thu 24 Feb	readings for Weeks 7-8
Quiz 4	Thu 10 Mar	readings for Weeks 9-10

Please bring a Scantron sheet (form 882-E) to quizzes. The questions will be simple enough for you to ace if you have done the readings, and impossible to answer if you have not done the readings. Each quiz will be worth 10% of your final grade for the course, and only your three best scores will be counted. There will be no makeup quiz, so please ensure that you attend all four class meetings on which quizzes will be held. You will not be allowed to sit the quiz if you only show up for it.

3. *Cumulative final examination (30%)*

The examination, scheduled for the last class meeting, will assess your understanding of the materials discussed in the readings and course meetings.

Research Tools

The UCLA library has assembled a very useful research web site, which provides guidance on encyclopedias, dictionaries, bibliographic databases, and web sites for anthropology and other disciplines. You can access this site from the front page of the class web site and clicking on a small box entitled "Research Info" in the upper left-hand corner, or at the following address:
<<http://www.library.ucla.edu/yrl/reference/guides/>>.

In addition, the staff of Powell Library has developed two handouts guiding you through the use of bibliographic databases. These two handouts are posted on the course website, along with another handout entitled "Identifying Sources."

The Course Website

- On the main page, in the top horizontal yellow band, you will find PDF copies of the syllabus, fieldwork project guidelines, and other useful tools for the course
- On the main page, in the top horizontal yellow band, you will a link to the Discussion Board, which you should use extensively
- On the “List of Links” page, under “Class Links,” you will find PDF copies of all the required and optional readings not in the bookgh, ordered by weeks of the quarter
- On the “List of Links” page, under “Class Links,” you will find PDF copies of all overheads used in class meetings (I will make every effort to post them ahead of time, but I reserve the right to change their content without notice)
- On the “List of Links” page, under “Anthropology Links,” you will find links to bibliographic databases and other resources with which you should familiarize yourself

Summary of Important Dates for this Course

M	Tu	W	Th	F	Week
			6 Jan		1
	11 Jan		13 Jan		2
	18 Jan		20 Jan		3
<i>Info sheet due</i>	25 Jan		27 Jan <i>Quiz 1</i>		4
	1 Feb		3 Feb		5
	8 Feb		10 Feb <i>Quiz 2</i>		6
	15 Feb		17 Feb		7
	22 Feb		24 Feb <i>Quiz 3</i>		8
	1 Mar		3 Mar		9
	8 Mar <i>Evaluations</i>		10 Mar <i>Quiz 4</i>	<i>Paper due</i>	10
	15 Mar <i>Final</i>				11

Basic Courtesy Reminders

- Please turn off mobile phones before classes and section meetings
- Please remember that arriving late and leaving early disrupts your teacher and classmates
- Students who show up only at quiz time will not be allowed to take the quiz
- Please observe basic standards of courtesy during classes and section meetings (e.g., refrain from reading and keep conversation with classmates to a minimum)

Schedule of Topics and Readings

The readings have been chosen to provide ethnographic case studies on particular topics, demonstrating how anthropologists go about studying these topics in specific situations. Class presentations will provide a general context for these case studies. It is therefore essential that you attend class meetings, because materials presented in them complement the readings, but do not repeat them. In order for you to follow the materials discussed in class, you must do the readings ahead of time. The timing specified in the following may be subject to slight revisions. All reading can be found in Hall & Bucholtz, eds., 1995, or downloaded from the class web site, under “Class Links.”

Week 1 (6 Jan): Introduction to the practicalities and intellectual aims of the course

Optional supplementary readings: The following two short articles (one from a North American perspective, the other from a British perspective) tackle the frequently-asked question, “What does one do with a degree in anthropology?” Even though they do not focus specifically on linguistic anthropology, these articles may nevertheless be useful in your future endeavors.

- Omohundro, John T. 1998. Career Advice for Undergraduates. *General Anthropology* 4(2):1-6.
- Coleman, Simon and Bob Simpson, eds. 1998. Anthropology and Careers. *In Discovering Anthropology: A Resource Guide for Teachers and Students*. 5th ed. Pp. 93-99. London: Royal Anthropological Institute.

Week 2 (11-13 Jan): Gender and its socio-cultural context. Sex vs. gender, gender role vs. gender identity, female vs. male, women vs. men, nature vs. culture, domestic vs. public, and the trouble with dichotomies. The place of gender in society, culture, and history.

- Di Leonardo, Micaela. 1991. Introduction: Gender, Culture, and Political Economy: Feminist Anthropology in Historical Perspective. *In Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. Micaela di Leonardo, ed. Pp. 1-48. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Gal, chapter 7 of Hall & Bucholtz, eds.
- Ortner, Sherry. 1991. Reading America: Preliminary Notes on Class and Culture. *In Recapturing Anthropology: Writing in the Present*. Richard G. Fox, ed. Pp. 163-189. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Week 3 (18-20 Jan): “Women are from Mars, men are from Uranus”: The two-culture model, its critics, and its defenders; Do we bring the whole wide world into our intimate lives? Are difference and dominance fundamentally opposite categories or two poles of a continuum?

- Tannen, Deborah. 1998. Talk in the Intimate Relationship: His and Hers. *In Language and Gender: A Reader*. Jennifer Coates, ed. Pp. 435-445. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Freed, Alice F. 1992. We Understand Perfectly: A Critique of Tannen’s View of Cross-Sex Communication. *In Locating Power: Proceedings of the Second Berkeley Women and Language Conference*. Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz, and Birch Moonwomon, eds. Pp. 144-152. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California at Berkeley.
- Tannen, Deborah. 1994. The Sex-Class Linked Framing of Talk at Work. *In Gender and Discourse*. Pp. 195-221. New York: Oxford University Press.



Week 4 (25-27 Jan): Gender-based dominance and inequality through language and interaction.

- Mendoza-Denton, chapter 2 of Hall & Bucholtz, eds.
- Herring, Johnson & DiBenedetto, chapter 3 of Hall & Bucholtz, eds.
- Ochs & Taylor, chapter 4 of Hall & Bucholtz, eds.

Week 5 (1-3 Feb): The complexities of power: Accommodating to power, resisting dominance, and asserting agency through language and interaction; The politics of resistance within and without power structures; The limits of resistant action.

- McElhinny, chapter 9 of Hall & Bucholtz, eds.
- Okamoto, chapter 12 of Hall & Bucholtz, eds.
- Briggs, Charles L. 1992. "Since I Am a Woman, I Will Chastise My Relatives": Gender, Reported Speech, and the (Re)production of Social Relations in Warao Ritual Wailing. *American Ethnologist* 19:337-361.

Week 6 (8-10 Feb): Gender on the edge: Gendering the meaning of linguistic resources in bi- or multilingual settings; redefining ethnic, racial, and national identities through gendered language use; "passing."

- Besnier, Niko. 2002. Transgenderism, Locality, and the Miss Galaxy Beauty Pageant in Tonga. *American Ethnologist* 29:534-566.
- Bucholtz, chapter 14 of Hall & Bucholtz, eds.
- Gonzales Velasquez, chapter 17 of Hall & Bucholtz, eds.

Week 7 (15-17 Feb): Socializing gender through language, gendering language through interaction: girls and boys become women and men in the playground, at home, and at school.

- Goodwin, Marjorie Harness. 1998. Constructing Opposition within Girls' Games. *In Reinventing Identities: The Gendered Self in Discourse*. Mary Bucholtz, A.C. Liang, and Laurel A. Sutton, eds. Pp. 388-409. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, chapter 19 of Hall & Bucholtz, eds.
- Re-read Ochs & Taylor

Week 8 (22-24 Feb): "Doing gender": The performative construction of gender through language and interaction; Shifting and multiple manifestations of gender and their embedding in social contexts and cultural dynamics.

- Kiesling, Scott Fabius. 2001. "Now I Gotta Watch What I Say": Shifting Constructions of Masculinity in Discourse. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 11:250-273.
- Kulick, Don. 1993. Speaking as a Woman: Structure and Gender in Domestic Arguments in a New Guinea Village. *Cultural Anthropology* 8:510-541.

Week 9 (1-3 Mar): Gender and literacy: Writing and reading as gendered activities.

- Kataoka, Kuniyoshi. 1997. Affect and Letter Writing: Unconventional Conventions in Casual Writing by Young Japanese Women. *Language in Society* 26:103-136.
- Cohen, Erik. 1986. Lovelorn Farangs: The Correspondence Between Foreign Men and Thai Girls. *Anthropological Quarterly* 59:115-127.
- Radway, Janice. 1991. Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies: The Functions of Romance Reading. *In Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*. Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson, eds. 465-486. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Week 10 (8-10 Mar): Sexism in language: Authority and semiotics. Conclusion to the course.

- Graddol, David and Joan Swann. 1989. Language, Communication, and Consciousness. *In Gender Voices*. Pp. 135-173. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Cohn, Carol. 1987. Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals. *Signs* 12:687-718.

Week 11 (15 Mar): Final exam.