Introduction to Discourse Analysis
Ed 737-001/Ed 835-125

Fall 2009
Mondays 1-4 pm (seminar) & Wednesdays11-1 pm (Lab)
2328 SEB
UM CTools

Version 2, 8-18-09

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Who should take this course?

The course is applicable for you if you are a graduate student who has taken an introductory qualitative research course and/ or you have experience with analyzing discourse in a particular field (e.g., literary studies, linguistics, rhetoric). You will find the course most useful if you wish to apply either discourse analysis and/or qualitative research in your doctoral work. Since you will conduct mini-studies that engage a self-selected DA approach, you should meet in advance with me to arrange to collect, borrow, or share data for the course.

I assume that if you are beginning your doctoral studies you are most likely producing your first research report in the course, one that you could develop into a scholarly benchmark paper. If you are further along in your program—for example, on the threshold of your dissertation—you may apply this methodology to a pilot study or to your dissertation data.

The course workload

This is a five credit hour course with both a weekly seminar and lab. Prior students advise that you think of this as an intensive two-course workload. We read discourse theories from a number of traditions, approaches to discourse analysis, and discourse analytic research and you select methods for working with your own data. In addition to writing page-long, informal "think pieces" about a concept or technique from the reading, you select a study from the library's electronic data base and explain its method of discourse analysis to the class; you also explain a sample analysis of your own data before writing up a complete analysis, which you will do in the last few weeks of the course.

Course objectives

The term "discourse analysis" has an extensive range of meanings. There is wide variance among the assumptions and interests of discourse analysts, and among the

models of discourse analysis they apply, which precludes generalizations about what they have in common. Any introductory course in discourse analysis is necessarily only a partial view, and therefore, a particular perspective. This course, because of its interest in the applications of discourse for studying education, focuses on theories of language in structuring social behavior, activities, and identities as well as social institutions, and on how discourse refers to particular methods of analyzing spoken and written language texts.

Aware of the need to establish boundaries on what can be represented as discourse analysis and what can be learned within one introductory course, I have designed this one for beginning researchers to focus on approaches and methods of discourse analysis that describe language-in-use in social life related to researchable issues in education. The materials for the course were chosen in response to the question, "What would a beginning researcher in education benefit from knowing about discourse analysis?" Each time I teach the course, I update the readings to reflect important new publications, and developments in theories and methods, as well as the interests of the students in the current class.

The design of the course evolved from considering a corollary question: "What learning phases would first time discourse analysts in a doctoral program go through in applying discourse analysis to their own research project?"
My answers to these questions produced a course with the following objectives:

- To read and discuss descriptions and illustrations of leading approaches, methods, and applications of discourse analysis, both outside and within the field of education. (See list of books and related readings below.) From these readings, class members will focus on those approaches and methods best suited to their individual research interests. These they will apply to a research project for the course.
- To transcribe and analyze data according to the discourse methods they have selected to support a mini research study. For the study they will frame an orienting question, select appropriate data, evolve questions to guide data transcription and analysis, and complete an analysis that produces study results.
- To present and write up the study in a format suitable for a beginning scholar.

The organization of the course

We will meet on Mondays from 1-4pm and Wednesdays from 11am-1pm in SEB 2328 to discuss the readings and workshop your data. Though Wolverine Access distinguishes these sessions as seminar and lab, discussions of the readings and workshop activities tend to be distributed as needed over the two days, with more reading at the beginning of the semester and more workshop at the end. I will also be available outside of class through individual appointments, scheduled through email, to confer with you about your projects.

The design of this course, which is to say its chronology of events and participation structures, is based on three assumptions about learning: 1) that knowledge is learned more thoroughly and meaningfully when it has an authentic purpose, hence you will conduct a mini-study with a question and data you select; 2) that problem-solving interactions with others involved in similar learning issues enriches and reinforces as well

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as expands learning, hence you will work in small study groups as well as full class discussion; and, 3) that the learning of abstract, complex, context-related knowledge requires redundancy and variety over an extended time period, hence we will revisit and reapply foundational discourse analysis knowledge as the class engages with it through three chronological stages: reading and discussion; application to data; and, presentation in study reports.

In concrete terms, that means the class will spend the first nine weeks reading, discussing, and writing about ways of observing and analyzing made possible through discourse analysis. During the first weeks, you will be encouraged to review and refer to your data through multiple new lenses from the readings. You will also form a question to drive your study and begin to evolve more focused questions for transcription and analysis. Please keep in mind that only a small portion of what is read can be discussed, and that I will make an effort to recommend further readings in your area of interest. The material will also usefully shape your individual project and your later research work. A third purpose for the extent of the readings is to provide a field of knowledge from which we can draw as a class to address particular issues that arise as class members' studies develop.

After the first six weeks, while you transcribe and analyze your data, you will be looking for examples of DA studies about topical issues in the field of discourse research. From among these studies, you will select an article from library accessible electronic journal archives, such as *Discourse and Society or Linguistics and Education*, to closely observe the use of discourse analysis relevant to your particular area of interest. Each student will talk about his/her article and its DA methods with the class. At this point assigned reading for the course will discontinue, although references to readings will be a regular occurrence as work on your study evolves. As a precursor to writing your paper, you will prepare a mini-presentation of your study-in-progress for the rest of the class. This involves presenting your question(s) and data corpus, explaining your methodology (logic of inquiry) and DA method, and walking the class through a transcript and analysis from your data to represent the current condition of your study. Finally, to assist you in writing up your project, we will walk through an analysis of the rhetorical and argument structure of a published study. During the final two weeks of the course, we will focus completely on assisting each other with the drafting of your study reports.

Reading Responses: "Think Pieces"

For each reading assignment, write a 1-page response in which you analyze, apply, and critique the text. Begin with a brief excerpt that resonates most with you. Then paraphrase the excerpt and explain what you think it means. Next, explore how these ideas may be helpful for your research study. Conclude with questions about the ideas or how they apply to your study to prompt class discussion and consider in the future. Post your response to CTools by 9:00 A.M. the day of class. Do your best to read your classmates' responses before class to enhance discussion.

Access to support technology

The course relies for its effectiveness upon a number of technological resources for managing and transcribing data, searching for literature, and working with your drafts. All those you will need are available through UM library, the Duderstadt Center or

in the School of Education. Technological Services on the 2nd floor of SEB checks out equipment such as audio and video recorders and transcribing machines for working with your data. The 3rd floor SEB Media Lab and the Duderstat Center (http://www.dc.umich.edu/) on North Campus have well equipped media stations. If you have questions, SEB Technology Services can assist you during regular hours of operation. As all the material for the course, except the two books, are digital, I highly recommend bringing a lap-top to our class meetings. If you do not have a lap-top or forget yours, you can check one out from SEB tech services for use in class.

Course readings

We will read five articles, two books, a collection of articles from debates among discourse analysts about the value and quality of various schools of DA, research articles using DA (to be determined once we know each person's interest), and selections from electronically archived journals in the order listed below. Electronic journal archives can be accessed on the web immediately through UM library data bases via Mirlyn. The two books (both new and used paperback copies) are immediately available on line at http://www.amazon.com and other web-based book dealers.

Required Books

Erickson, Frederick (2004). *Talk and Social Theory*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

We will begin by reading Erickson so that we can become familiar with the social theories that inform the application discourse analysis. The book lays out a relationship between local talk and general societal processes. It uses examples of local discourse practices situated within the circumstances of society and history in which they take place. Erickson is an eminent scholar in this area and writes in an engaging and readable style that makes complex concepts quite accessible.

Johnstone, Barbara (2007). *Discourse analysis*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. [Please note this is the 2nd and most recent edition]

I selected Johnstone's text because she explains discourse analysis by treating it as a systematic way of thinking to address research questions in the social sciences and humanities. Since your first step will be to formulate a research question for analyzing your data, understanding DA as ways of thinking that implicate particular phenomena and methods for studying them is a useful way to begin. Johnstone draws from work done by scholars in linguistics, anthropology, sociology, education, and rhetoric who study discourse as kinds of texts that can be analyzed. She synthesizes their DA scholarship by using six "heuristics" and provides a multitude of richly illustrated examples to explain how discourse texts are shaped and can be analyzed to render meaning.

Recommended Books

Mills, Sara (2004 edition). *Discourse*. (The New Critical Idiom) New York: Routledge.

This popular compact book is in its fifth printing. Be sure to get the latest 2004 paperback edition. Mills' representation of Discourse, through a more critical and postmodern lens, provides a provocative complement to Johnstone's version.

Articles & Chapters

I have selected readings that relate to the interests of the class members—in higher education, composition, and English Teacher education—and have provided copies on the course CTools site. We will begin by reading and discussing the following five articles. These articles provide an international, historical and conceptual frame for considering the pursuit of research in education in this day and age.

Altbach, P. G. (2005). Globalization and the university: Myths and realities in an unequal world. *Tertiary Education and Management, 10*(1), 1573-1936.

Atkinson, E. (2000). The promise of uncertainty: education, postmodernism and the politics of possibility. *International Studies in the Sociology of Education, 10*(1), 81-98.

Best, S., & Kellner, D. The postmodern turn in philosophy: Theoretical provocations and normative deficits.

(Optional: Kellner, D. The Postmodern turn: Positions, problems, prospects. In G. Ritzer (ed.). Frontiers of social theory: The new syntheses. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
http://books.google.com/books?id=fQI0osZRcC&pg=PA255&dq=Best+Kellner+postmodern+turn+in+philosophy&lr=#v=onepage&q=&f=false)

Ninnes, P., & Burnett, G. (2003). Comparative education research: poststructuralist possibilities. *Comparative Education, 39(3), 279–297.*

Porter, J. E., Sullivan, P., Blythe, S., Grabill, J. T., & Miles, L. (2000). Institutional Critique: A Rhetorical Methodology for Change. College Composition and Communication, 51(4). 610-642.

Additional readings:
I will also select readings that present multiple, sometimes contested views among discourse analysts, some of which are already available on the CTools site:

Fairclough, N. (2000). Discourse, social theory and social research: The discourse of welfare reform. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 4*(2), 163-195.

Lather, Patti (2006). 'Paradigm proliferation as a good thing to think with: teaching research in education as a wild profusion', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education,19*:1,35 — 57.

Shi-Xu (2006). Mind, self and consciousness as discourse. *New Ideas in Psychology, 24*, 63-81.
Wortham, S. (2001). Language ideology and Education. *Linguistics and Education, 12*(3), 253-259.

Wetherell, M. (2001). Debates in discourse research (Chapter 27: pp. 380-399). In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. Yates (Eds.). *Discourse theory and practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wetherell, M. (2001). Themes in Discourse Research: The Case of Diana (pp. 14-28). In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. Yates (Eds.). *Discourse theory and practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Taylor, S. (2001). Locating and Conducting DA Research (pp. 5-38). In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. Yates (Eds.) *Discourse as Data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Taylor, S. (2001). Evaluating and Applying DA Research (pp. 311-330). In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. Yates (Eds.) *Discourse as Data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Archived Electronic Journal

To provide you with an opportunity to study discourse analytic research that can directly inform your own unique work, the remainder of the course readings will come from library accessible on-line journal archives. For example, *Linguistics and Education* is a premier international journal in education devoted entirely to studies whose methods involve discourse analysis. Other available journals besides *Linguistics and Education*—volumes from 1991/ full text from volume 7 (1995)—include:

Journal of Sociolinguistics--volumes from 2002 full text
Discourse and Society--volumes from 1998 full text
Discourse Processes--volumes from 2000 full text
Discourse Studies--volumes from 1999 full text
Language in Society--volumes from 1998 full text

At the beginning of the course, education librarian, Marija Freeland, will demonstrate how to access the journal archives through the new Mirlyn and search for specific articles. At the designated point in the course, you will select an article whose discourse analysis most usefully relates to your own research, and lead the class in an analytical read through of the method.

Supplementary texts

Though we will not read them as a class, I recommend you consider additional texts that specialize in traditions, methods, or studies that may be informative for your particular area of study. Some of these are as follows.

Bloome, D., Carter,S. P., Christian, B. M., Otto, S. (2004). *Discourse Analysis & the Study of Classroom Language & Literacy Events: A Microethnographic Perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Cameron, Deborah (2001). *Working with Spoken Discourse*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cazden, Courtney (2001). *Classroom discourse, The language of teaching and learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Gee, James P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis*. New York: Routledge.

Graesser, A., Gernsbacher, M., Goldman, S. (2003). *Handbook of discourse processes*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Locher, M (2004). *Power and politeness in action.* New York: deGruyter.

Rex, L. A. (Ed.). (2006). Discourse of Opportunity: How Talk in Learning Situations Creates and Constrains. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Rex, L., & Schiller, L. (2009). Using discourse analysis to improve classroom interaction. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis/Routledge.

Rex, L. Thomson Bunn, H., Bunn, M., Carpenter Ford, A., Davila, B., Dickinson, H., Gerben, C., & McBee Orzulak, M. (in press). A review of discourse analysis in literacy research at the start of the millenium: Equitable access. *Reading Research Quarterly*.

Rogers, Rebecca (2004). *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Wetherell, Margaret, Taylor, Stephanie, Yates, Simeon (2001). *Discourse theory and practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wetherell, Margaret, Taylor, Stephanie, Yates, Simeon (2001). *Discourse as Data, A Guide for Analysis*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

The following studies from my program of research illustrate a variety of discourse analyses. They demonstrate how different studies can be generated from the same data corpus in reference to different meta-theories by applying different epistemological approaches, research methods and methodologies in response to unique "conversations" in education. They can be downloaded from my web page link at http://www.umich.edu/~rex/publications.htm

Rex, L., Brown, D., Denstaedt, L., Haniford, L., Schiller, L., (2005). Understanding and exercising one's own grammar: Four applications of linguistic and discourse knowledge. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 4*(3): 110-139. http://education.waikato.ac.nz/research/journal/view.php?current=true&p=1

Rex, L. A. & Nelson, M. C. (2004). How teachers' professional identities position high-stakes test preparation in their classrooms. *Teachers College Record, 106*(6): 1288–1331.

Rex, L. & McEachen, D. (1999)."If anything is odd, inappropriate, confusing, or boring, it's probably important": The emergence of inclusive academic literacy through English classroom discussion practices. *Research in the Teaching of English, 34*(1), 65-129.

Rex, L. A. (2001). The remaking of a high school reader. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36*(3), 288-314.

Rex, L. A. (2002). Exploring Orientation in Remaking High School Readers' Literacies and Identities. *Linguistics and Education, 13*(3), 271-302.

Rex, L., Murnen, T., Hobbs, J., & McEachen, D. (2002). Teachers' Pedagogical Stories and the Shaping of Classroom Participation: "The Dancer" and "Graveyard Shift at the 7-11". *American Educational Research Journal, 39*(3), 765-796.

Proposed Course Schedule
Version 8-17-09

Date	Seminar activities	Research activity	Homework reading & writing
1. Wed. 9/9	9/9Introductions of class members, their data, and goals for the course. Analysis of transcript and text	Explain data corpus and purpose.	READ for 9/14: Altbach, Atkinson, Best & Kellner, Ninnes & Burnett, Porter et al. WRITE: A think piece (See syllabus for guidelines)
2. Mon. 9/14	Discuss "big" ideas in readings and their relevance for your work. Raise questions, issues.		READ for 9/16 Erickson: PART I WRITE: A think piece
2. Wed. 9/16	Readings discussion: Considering the paradox—talk is unique to the local context and profoundly influenced by external contexts.	Begin to shape orienting research question.	READ for 9/21 Erickson: PART II WRITE: Draft your research question(s) Summarize an approach and/or method and its relationship to your research question(s)/interest (email to class members)
3. Mon. 9/21	Readings discussion: What social theories connect local and global ecologies in talk?	Review data. Shape study's orienting question and design suited to data collection and analysis	READ for 9/23 Johnstone: Introduction Johnstone: Discourse and World WRITE: Draft your research question(s) Summarize an approach and/or method and its relationship to your research question(s)/interest (email to class members)
3. Wed. 9/23	Reading discussion: How can approaching discourse analysis as a heuristic inform a methodology—or, how to proceed with a logic of inquiry? How is discourse shaped by the world, and how does discourse shape worlds?	Review data. Shape study's orienting question and design suited to data collection and analysis.	READ for 9/28 Johnstone: Discourse Structure Johnstone, Participants in Discourse WRITE: Draft your research question(s) Summarize an approach and/or method and its relationship to your research question(s)/interest (email to class members)
4. Mon. 9/28	Reading discussion: How is discourse influenced by structural conventions, and how are structural conventions influenced by what speakers use discourse for? How does identity influence discourse, and how does discourse position identity?		READ for 9/30 Johnstone, Prior Texts, Prior Discourses Johnstone, Discourse and Medium WRITE: Draft your research question(s) Summarize an approach and/or method and its relationship to your research question(s)/interest (email to class members)
4. Wed. 9/30	Readings discussion: How is discourse shaped by prior discourses, and how does current discourse project future ones? How is discourse shaped by its medium, and how does the choice of medium influence the discourse that is produced?	Review data. Shape study's orienting question and design suited to data collection and analysis.	READ for 10/5 Johnstone: Intention and Interpretation Johnstone: Some General Themes WRITE: Draft your research question(s) Summarize an approach and/or method and its relationship to your research question(s)/interest (post to CTools)

5. **Mon.** **10/5**	Readings discussion: Tackling the problem of agency and determinism. What is the role of purpose in discourse analysis? Closure with Johnstone: What general themes about discourse seem important?		READ for 10/7 Wetherell: Themes in Discourse Research: The Case of Diana WRITE: Summarize an approach and/or method and its relationship to your research question(s)/interest (post to CTools)
5. **Wed.** **10/7**	Readings discussion: Observing DA research themes in Diana's data.	Begin transcription of data	READ for 10/12 Taylor: Locating and Conducting DA Research Taylor: Evaluating and Applying DA Research WRITE: Summarize an approach and/or method and its relationship to your research question(s)/interest (email to class members)
6. **Mon.** **10/12**	Taylor readings discussion: How does one locate and conduct discourse analytic research? How do we evaluate DA research?		Find and read an e-article. Post in CTools file by Wednesday 10/21class time.
6. **Wed.** **10/14**	Workshop on your study	Transcribe and analyze data.	READ for 10/19 Wetherell: Debates in Discourse research Lather WRITE: Summarize an approach and/or method and its relationship to your research question(s)/interest (email to class members)
7. **Mon.** **10/19**	Wetherell readings discussion: What are the intellectual traditions that have evolved into particular approaches to DA? How do debates among research paradigms/traditions influence our work?	Transcribe and analyze data. Take a deep breathe	
7. **Wed.** **10/21**	"Talk Through" discussion of examples of DA Studies What purposes, questions, and DA methods drove the studies?		READ for 10/28 Designated e article(s) WRITE: Summarize an approach and/or method and its relationship to your research question(s)/interest (post to CTools) Literature analysis grid (supplied), which summarizes an e-study related to your research interests. (Post to CTools) Prepare a "talk through" of one of the articles.
8. **Mon.** **10/26**	**STUDY BREAK**		

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8. **Wed.** **10/28**	Discussions of e-articles (4) 1. 2. 3. 4.		READ for 11/2 Designated e article(s) WRITE: Literature analysis grid (supplied), which summarizes an e-study related to your research interests. (Post to CTools) Prepare a "talk through" of one of the articles.
9. **Mon.** **11/2**	Discussions of e-articles (2) 1. 2.		READ for 11/4 Designated e article(s) WRITE: Literature analysis grid (supplied), which summarizes an e-study related to your research interests. (Post to CTools) Prepare a "talk through" of one of the articles.
9. **Wed.** **11/4**	Discussions of e-articles (4) 1. 2. 3. 4.	Complete analysis.	READ for 11/9 Designated e article(s) WRITE: Literature analysis grid (supplied), which summarizes an e-study related to your research interests. (Post to CTools) Prepare a "talk through" of one of the articles.
10. **Mon.** **11/9**	Discussions of e-articles (2) 1. 2.	Prepare presentation	WRITE: Prepare presentation.
10. **Wed.** **11/11**	Present study in progress for feedback by seminar members. (4) 1. 2. 3. 4.	Prepare presentation	WRITE: Prepare presentation.
11. **Mon.** **11/16**	Present study in progress for feedback by seminar members. (2) 1. 2.	Prepare presentation	WRITE: Prepare presentation.
11. **Wed.** **11/18**	Present study in progress for feedback by seminar members. (4) 1. 2. 3. 4.	Prepare presentation	WRITE: Prepare presentation.
12. **Mon.** **11/23**	Present study in progress for feedback by seminar members. (2) 1. 2.		

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12. **Wed.** **11/25**	Structural and rhetorical analysis of a published article.		READ for 11/30: Read Michaels article to observe its rhetorical structure and argument. WRITE: Analyze article's structure and rhetorical features using handout.
13. **Mon.** **11/30**	<u>Discussion:</u> What are the rhetorical structure and argument of Michael's article?		WRITE: Write zero draft of transcript analysis and findings.
13. **Wed.** **12/2**	Individual meetings with Lesley		
14. **Mon.** **12/7**	Responding to zero drafts	Organize study for write up	WRITE: Draft write up of mini-study
14. **Wed.** **12/9**	Responding to paper drafts	Drafting paper	WRITE: Revise draft of mini-study Make appointment to meet with Lesley about your finished paper.
15. **Mon.** **12/14**	Responding to paper drafts	Complete study paper	Email your paper to Lesley at least two days before your meeting.
12/15 **through** **12/18**	Meet with Lesley to discuss her response to your paper.		

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