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ENG 5091-001: Studies in Linguistics

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ENGLISH 5091--Studies in Linguistics
Graduate Seminar: Language and Gender

Dr. Buck, Professor
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Mailbox: English Dept Office, Room 3155 Coleman
Office Hours: 9:00-9:30 MWF and by appointment

Course Objective
In this course, we will investigate how language reflects cultural assumptions about the changing roles of men and women in contemporary society. The following questions will be central to the course:
1) How does language reveal and perpetuate social attitudes?
2) What kinds of power and dominance can we identify, and what role does language play in empowerment or marginalization?

Students will be introduced to different types of linguistic analyses of language used by and about women and men. Furthermore, students will be guided through the research process of data collection and textual analysis. The course will be in seminar format: aside from some introductory background lectures, the semester will be arranged around student-directed discussions of assigned readings.

Textbooks
--Sara Mills, Feminist Stylistics
--Robyn Wiegman and Elena Glasberg, Literature and Gender
--Deborah Tannen, You Just Don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation
--Reading Packet at Copy Express, MLK Union (required). Also on Hardcopy Reserve at Booth Library.

Course Evaluation
Grade for the course will be based on 3 paper projects. You will also be required to informally present readings to the class since this is a seminar. You will not be graded on these presentations, but failure to come to class prepared adequately for 3 presentations will result in a lowering of the final grade by one grade. Your final grade will consist of the following weighted components:
   Paper Project I  33%
   Paper Project II 33%
   Paper Project III 33%

Grading scale in this class is always 100-90% = A; 89-80% = B; 79-70% = C; 69-60% = D; below 60% = F.

Folder Scrapbook
You will need to purchase a manilla folder for this class. Always bring your folder to class.
Over the semester, look around you at all the literacy (printed text) that comes in your view (newspaper text, cartoons, jokes, packaging on products, signs, billboards, song lyrics, printed text--a paragraph or two--in novels, textbooks, editorials, magazine articles, and so forth).
Select items that you find interesting (or disturbing or humorous), photocopy them, and keep them in your folder. Analyze them (just your informal thoughts and notes) in terms of very subtle attitudes they project about language and gender. Using what you’ve learned from the readings in the course, analyze the presuppositions they entail that might be missed by a general uncritically-conscious audience. Bring your items and analyses and folders to class regularly so that we can share your findings with the class. This will help us to build class data of ideas that may lead to possible topics for Paper III.

Think about how these items reflect a response to women or men who believe that women have come a long way--that sexism in language doesn’t really exist anymore.

Paper Projects
A detailed description of the requirements and expectations and objectives of these projects is included in this syllabus. We will have much class discussion while working on these papers in process to help you with your thinking. Always bring in questions you have.

Presentations of Readings
Since this is a graduate seminar, students will carry the discussion of the readings. You should always
read carefully and take notes as you read so that you are prepared for class discussion. 1) Be able to summarize the main points and arguments of the text; 2) be prepared with a personal response, comment, critique of the reading; 3) bring a list of important terms and their definitions that come out of the reading; 4) be ready to discuss the importance of the reading in relation to other texts in your reading history (make connections, in other words, with other classes, books, articles, films, knowledge, you have been exposed to). You should come to class with detailed notes that you have taken from the readings. Coming to class unprepared and with no notes will result in a lowering of your final grade. Since this is a seminar, you will also be doing informal sharing of your paper project results with the rest of the class.

**Active Attendance**
You are expected to attend every class as scheduled because teaching/learning requires dialogue and without you we can have no dialogue. Our class work is a crucial part of this course; you will be required, too, to do individual and group work in class. Come to class ready to articulate your knowledge and formulate your questions for the class.

An absence policy is important 1) so that I can be equitable to all members of the class and 2) so that you will be successful in this class. Please note that more than two unexcused absences in this course is grounds for failing this course.

Definition of an *excused* absence:
1. University obligation, in which case you will need to present me in advance with a letter explaining the purpose and date of your upcoming absence.
2. Emergency or medical illness, in which case you will need to call my voice mail at 581-5012 BEFORE class begins on the day of your absence. Notifying me after class begins will not be considered excused.
--If you must miss class, I will expect you to find out from someone in the class what you’ve missed so that you’ll be prepared for the next class meeting. Handouts will only be distributed once; it is your responsibility to photocopy assignments from another student if you are absent.

**Tardiness**
Please be on time for class; habitual tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful of other class members. I will be taking roll as soon as class begins. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to notify me after class so that I take your name off the absence sheet. If you fail to notify me immediately after class on the day you are late, you will be recorded as absent.

**Late Assignments**
All written assignments must be submitted when due; no late assignments will be accepted. Papers are due when class begins on the designated dates. Make-up work will be permitted for excused absences only.

**Typing and Presentation**
All formal papers must be typed (double-spaced) in MLA format.

**Where to Go For Help with this Course**
Come to see me in my office in 3040 Coleman Hall during my office hours or by appointment.

**Students with Disabilities**
If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

**Plagiarism**
The English Department requires that instructors quote to all students the university's policy on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' ([Random House Dictionary of the English Language](http://randomhouse.com))—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

**What to do in Case of Emergency**
If we have an emergency in class, go promptly to inform Jean Toothman, Department Secretary (Room 3135) and Dana Ringuette, Chair (Room 3341). If they are unavailable, use phone in the English Department office (Room 3135) to dial 911.
**This schedule should be used as a guideline, but we are likely to make changes as we go along depending on the needs of the class.

Course Readings for English 5091 Studies in Linguistics
Language and Gender--Graduate Seminar

UNIT I: INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGE AND GENDER

Week One
Introduction to the course.

Week Two
Feminist Philosophy
--Alice Walker, "Am I Blue?"

Introduction to Primary Research Methods--The Interview/ The Survey

Week Three
Why is Language a Feminist Issue?
--Mills
  --Generic Pronouns, pp. 87-88
  --Generic Nouns, pp. 89-93
  --Women as Marked Term, pp. 93-95
  --Effects of Sexist Language, p. 95
--Mills, pp. 102-127
  --Naming--what we call things
  --Semantic derogation of women
  --Endearments and diminutives
  --Euphemism and taboo
  --Lexical gaps for female experience
  --Dictionaries, gatekeepers, strategies
--Eugene August, "Modern Men' or Men's Studies in the 80s." College English 44.6 (1982): 583-96.

Film: One Man's Struggle with Gender-Biased Language
Film: Men and Masculinity: Changing Roles, Changing Lives

**Week Ten:** Spring Break

**Week Eleven:** Workshop--Paper II Conversational Data Due--Present Analysis to the Class. Paper II Revised due Week Twelve.

**UNIT III: GENDER POSITIONING IN READING AND WRITING**

**Week Twelve**

Women's Language?
--Mills, pp. 44-65
--Robinson, "Treason our Text"
--Kolodny, "Dancing Through the Minefield"

"The Things They Carried"

**Week Thirteen**

Reading Gay / Lesbian Voices
--Faderman,"What is Lesbian Literature"
--Mills, 66-79
--Collecott, "What is Not Said: A Study in Textual Inversion"

--"A Clack of Tiny Sparks"

**Week Fourteen**

Individual Conferences
Workshop--Analyzing Conversational Data

**Week Fifteen**

Paper III due: Reading to the Class

**Week Sixteen:**
Final Revised Paper III due
**Week Four**

**Stereotypes and Categorizations**

--Mills, pp. 128-158, Proverbs, Jokes, Presuppositions
--Mills, pp. 96-102, Gender Free Writing Guidelines
--Debbie Cameron, "What has Gender Got to Do with Sex?". Language and Communication 5.1 (1985): 19-27.

**Week Five:** Paper I due. Reading of Paper I to the class. Comments for Revision. Paper I Revised due Week Six.

**UNIT II: ANALYZING GENDERED CONVERSATIONAL / DISCOURSE**

**Week Six**

**Conversations and Speech: The Deficit Model**


**Week Seven**

**Conversations and Speech: The Cultural Difference Model**

--Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand*

Introduction to Primary Research Method: Conversation / Discourse Analysis
Model: Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"; "Cat in the Rain"

**Week Eight**

**Conversations and Speech: The Cultural Difference Model (continued)**

--Deborah Tannen, "'I'll Explain it to You': Lecturing and Listening"
--Deborah Tannen, "The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why"

Film: Men and Women Talking Together (Tannen and Bly)

**Week Nine**

**Men's Studies in the 90s**

Edley and Wetherell, *Men in Perspective*. 1995. "Feminism and the Politics of Masculinity" (pp. 169-180 and 195-205) and "Masculinity and Social Relations" (pp. 96-110 and 120-125).