

SYLLABUS for “GENDER AND THE LANGUAGE GAME” Email: bonniem@uca.edu
Honors 3310 (#7133): Spring, 2006, 12:00 (Mac 302) Office Hours: MWF 11-12; 1-2
Melchior; Office Irby 317C; Phone 450-5127 TTh 1:00-3:00 (if no meetings)
Website: <http://faculty.uca.edu/~bonniem>

Required Textbooks:

Farb, Peter. *Word Play*. 1993.
Churchill, Caryl. *Top Girls* (Methuen, 1991)
Xerox packet

Grading:

A reading journal (10 pts. each, 200 pts. total)
Three oral reports (50 each)
One 6-7 page paper (100 pts.)
A final examination: a reflection on the reading, 100 pts.
Group presentations (and critiques of oral presentations), 50 pts.
Active, frequent participation in class discussion, 50 pts. (Each absence, after 4 absences, will subtract 5 pts. from this grade.)

The Reading Journal:

This journal is intended to help you reflect on the meaning of the reading in a stress-free environment (so it can be very informal). The idea is to engage actively with the ideas— see what they relate to, how they fit preconceptions or other things you know, or what examples might test their validity. The journal will also be an incentive to keep up with the reading, which is crucial to having productive discussions. Sometimes I'll supply a particular journal question; if not, see the suggestions below. Journals lacking reference to particulars from the reading will get little credit (since the object is to show me you've done the reading and engaged with the ideas.) The journal will count as TWO major grades, so this journal will be a sizable percentage of your total course grade. Getting behind in journals will have a disastrous effect on your grade.

Procedure: Write in ink on 8½x11 paper (or type, double-spacing) one page of journal for each class meeting, and give it to me at the beginning of each class period. Label each page with the author (or abbrev. chapter title & page numbers) and date, so that you can use them as references for future projects. Please use a second sheet if you run over (rather than writing on the back). Each journal will be worth 10 points. I will accept three journals up to one week late and I will drop one.

Read with a pencil! Underline points that seem important. Put comments in the margin that will help you use this material later (e.g. relations to other readings, applications, contradictions, questions for class discussion, ideas for research, and topic labels that will help you find things easily).

When I do not give a specific journal question, do #1 and ONE of the others that follow:

1. Pose a question that will help us explore and get deeper into the material from this reading. (It's easiest to do this toward the bottom of the page after you have written yourself into some ideas.)
2. Think of an example not in the text that tests or illustrates a point made in the reading. (It can be something from your own experience or something you heard or read about.) Explain how it illustrates or tests the idea.
3. Explore how some point from this reading connects with another reading (from this class or another).
4. Think of an implication or think of an objection (if the latter, consider how the author might approach it.)
5. End with a question— see the question sheet.

Syllabus Topics:

- The Game and the Ground Rules
- How Do We Acquire and Understand Language?
- Is the Language Game Fair? (Dialects)
- Change: Is Our Language Decaying?
- Does Language Shape Our Perception of the World? Our Identity?
- Gender Differences and Rules

Schedule (Please do the readings by the date listed; a **journal is due for every reading, unless specified.**)

I (Jan. 16-20): **The Game and the Ground Rules**

M Martin Luther King Day: no class

W Read Sakamoto (“Conversational Ballgames”-- xerox) and Pinker (how conversation works--xerox), p. 226 to end of chapter on p. 230 (xerox). Journal Question on **Pinker**: How does what Pinker says here account for the fact that legal documents are so wordy? Give an ex. not in the reading to illustrate.

F Read Yamada, “Speak for Yourself, Listen to Others” (from *Different Games, Different Rules*), pp. 37-51 (xerox).

Journal Question: How does the difference between speaker and listener talk (which she explains causes mis-communication between Americans and Japanese) relate to talk between men and women in the U.S.? Give examples.

II (Jan. 23-27)

M Read Farb, “The Ecology of Language” and “Speech Situations” (Chaps. 1 & 2, pp. 3-57).

W Read Farb, “The Speakable and the Unspeakable” (Chap. 4, pp. 75-94).

Read from Jay’s “When Children use Dirty Words” (pp. 30-5) and “The Offensiveness of Words” (pp. 178-86) XEROXES. Journal question: 1) How does a central point about profanity from these readings relate to a concept from an earlier reading? 2) What did you find most surprising or interesting and why?

F In-class organization for oral reports and papers. Sign up for three oral presentations. If you are absent when your oral presentation is due and cannot get someone to trade with you, 50 pts. will be an “F”.

III (Jan 30-Feb. 3)

M Read Tannen, “Fighting for Our Lives,” pp. 3-26 (XEROX). Journal question: Give 4 reasons automatic adversarial formats in public settings are counterproductive. Illustrate one of two current examples.

(Set up class oral presentations on profanity, classification of derogatory words for women vs. men, or in-group language)

How Do We Acquire and Understand Language?

W Read Farb, “Man the Talker” and “The Language of Children” (Chaps. 11-12, pp. 221-52)

Journal Question: What’s the difference between animal communication and human language (illustrating with an example not given in the reading)? OR What evidence indicates that children do not learn by imitation (and why is this hard to believe)?

F Oral presentation on “Fighting”-- no journal

IV (Feb. 6-10):

M Oral reports on profanity, classification of derogatory words for women vs. men, or in-group language. (The whole class will be involved in this.)

W Reading on features of “in-group” language– no journal. Paper will be based on this reading.

F Proposal for study due: what group you will study and features (pronunciation/sound, vocabulary, syntax, pragmatics) that you will look for.

V (Feb. 13-17) **Is the Game Fair?**

M Read Farb, “The Spoken Word” and “Making Combinations”(Chaps. 13-14, pp. 253--86)
Journal due on **either** Mon. or Wed. (on that day’s reading)

W Read Farb, “Linguistic Chauvinism” (Chap. 7, pp. 138-64)-- Oral presentation
Read Nunberg, “Testimony Before the State Legislature” (pp. 444-7 *Linguistics at Work*)

F Read Wolfram, “Beyond Black English” (pp. 405-17 *Linguistics at Work*)
Oral presentation

VI (Feb. 20-24)

M **Is Our Language Decaying?**

Read Farb, “Language in Flux” and “Repairing Babel” (Chaps. 15-16, pp. 289-320)
Oral presentation

W Assignment on language change due

F Lloyd and Guth or Leith
Oral presentations on each reading

VII (Feb. 27-Mar. 3)

M **Does Language Shape our Perception of the World? Our Identity?**

Read Farb, “Man at the Mercy of Language” & “How to Talk about the World” (Chaps. 8-9, pp. 167- 202)

W Read Khosroshahi, “Penguins Don’t Care, but Women Do” (pp. 260-79, *Linguistics at Work*)
Journal Question: Consider questions 1, 2, or 3 on p. 282 (you don’t have to do one of these).
Oral presentation

F Progress report on “in-group” language due

VIII (Mar. 6-10)

M Read Loftis, “Language and Memories in the Judicial System” (pp. 3-12, *Linguistics at Work*)
“Voice” exercise introduced. No journal.

Gender Differences

W Read Tannen, “Talk in the Intimate Relationship: His and Hers,” pp. 435-45 (*Language and Gender*).

F Read Yamada, "Role-Models: Working Man, Nurturing Mother" (XEROX from *Different Games, Different Rules*)

IX (Mar. 13-17)

M Read Romaine's chapter on advertizing (from *Communicating Gender*)

W Read Lindsey's "Men and Masculinity," pp. 221-45 (from *Gender Roles*, 2004).
Bring ads to illustrate points from this reading and the last reading (no journal).

F Paper on "in-group" language due
Organize into groups for group presentations (bring more ads)-- the whole class will participate

Spring Break

X (Mar. 27-31)

M Read Jolliffe, Lee. "The Disposable Sex," pp. 97-103 (XEROX)
Read Nilsen, "Sexism in English: A 1990 Update," pp. 1-6, **OR** Miller, "Semantic Polarization," pp. 59-75 (XEROXES)-- journal on two readings— Jolliffe and one of the others.
Oral presentation

W Read Desy, Jeanne. "The Princess Who Stood on her Own Two Feet," pp. 260-7 (XEROX)
Journal Questions: 1) In what ways does this story conform to the fairytale genre and in what ways does it not? 2) What's the difference between the two kinds of sacrifice in Desy (i.e., what makes one kind destructive and the other redemptive)?

F Read Leiberman, Marcia. "Some Day My Prince Will Come," pp. 248-59 (XEROX)
Modern fairy tale adaptations— Oral presentation

XI (Apr. 3-7)

M Read Tannen, "The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why," pp. 242-57 (*Linguistics at Work*)

W Read Cameron, "Performing Gender Identity: Young Men's Talk and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity," pp. 270-82 (*Language and Gender*).
Oral Presentation

F Group presentations on gender roles, as indicated by advertising

XII (Apr. 10-14)

M Read poems by Jo McDougall
Video

W Read *Top Girls* "Commentary" (pp. xxi-liii); bring *Top Girls* to class
In-class reading of Act I and video

F Read *Top Girls*, Acts I and II
For journal question, see separate xerox

XIII (Apr. 17-21)

M Read *Top Girls*, Act III (see separate xerox for journal questions)

W Group work on *Top Girls* oral reports
Organize for closing “skits”/exercises

F Oral presentations on *Top Girls*

XIV (Apr. 24-28)

M Skits or exercises— something to illustrate and make vivid some point from this semester’s reading

W Final Preparation

F Reading Day

Final Examination— open-book essay

Sign up for three oral presentations (no more than two people per presentation)

1. Illustrate Tannen’s point in “Fighting for Our Lives” with examples from current newspapers, books, or TV discussions (F 2/3)
2. Demonstrate that dialect is logical and not sloppy (Farb’s “Linguistic Chauvinism”). W 2/15.
3. How would the ebonics debate benefit from more linguistic knowledge (use points made by Farb, Wolfram, Nunberg, and any other sources you wish)? F 2/17
4. Demonstrate that language change does not constitute decay (finding interesting examples), .M 2/20.
5. A panel report by three people, each demonstrating interesting points from Leith, Guth, and Lloyd (essays which will not be read by the rest of the class). F 2/24
6. Design a couple possible experiments to test whether “he” is indeed generic (try to trap the class). Khos, W 3/1.
7. Respond to (extend, give examples from current use, criticize?) points made by Joliffe and Nilsen M 3/27
8. Test points from Leiberman on several recent versions of fairy tales. F 3/31.
9. Oral presentations on Cameron, “Performing Gender Identity.” W 4/5

Readings Not in the Two Main Texts (* indicates that reading is from *Linguistics at Work* or *Language and Gender*, both of which are on reserve in the library. Readings from these books are not in the xeroxed packet; # indicates that these books are on reserve and the readings are not in the packet.)

Yamada, Haru. “Speak for Yourself, Listen to Others” (from *Different Games, Different Rules*), pp. 37-51.

Jay, Timothy. “When Children use Dirty Words” (pp. 30-5) and “The Offensiveness of Words” (pp. 181-6), in *Cursing in America*, 1992.

Tannen, Deborah. “Fighting for Our Lives,” in *The Argument Culture*, 1999, pp. 3-26.

*Nunberg, Geoffrey. “Testimony before the State Legislature on California Proposition 63,” in *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*, ed. Dallin Oaks, 1998, pp. 444-47.

*Wolfram, Walt. “Beyond Black English: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision for Non-Mainstream.” in *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*, ed. Dallin Oaks, 1998, pp. 405-17

#Lloyd, Donald J. “Our National Mania for Correctness.” From *Essays on Language and Usage*, second edition, eds. Leonard F. Dean and Kenneth G. Wilson (NY: Oxford UP, 1963), 306-11.

#Leith, Dick. *A Social History of English*. 1983— either of the following chapters:

Chapter Three: “Words and Meanings,” 61-86 (why and how the meanings of words change).

Chapter Four: “Grammar,” 87-113 (misconceptions about the meaning of grammar; how our grammar has changed). (PE1075.L44 1983)

- #Guth, Hans. *English for a New Generation*. 1973. Chapter 3: "Teaching Standard English," 89-123 (on whether teachers should try to teach students "good" English in the classroom). (PE65.G8)
- *Khosroshahi, Fatemeh. "Penguins Don't Care, but Women Do: A Social Identity Analysis of a Whorfian Problem," in *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*, ed. Dallin Oaks, 1998, pp. 260-79.
- *Loftis, Elizabeth. "Language and Memories in the Judicial System," in *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*, ed. Dallin Oaks, 1998, pp. 3-12.
- *Tannen, Deborah. "Talk in the Intimate Relationship: His and Hers," in *Language and Gender*, ed. Jennifer Coates, 1998, pp. 435-45.
- Yamada, Haru. "Role Models: Working Man, Nurturing Mother" (from *Different Games, Different Rules*), pp. 121-37.
- Romaine, Suzanne, chapter on advertizing from *Communicating Gender*, 1999.
- Lindsey, Linda. Chapter 9 ("Men and Masculinity," pp. 221-45) from *Gender Roles*, 2004.
- Joliffe, Lee. "The Disposable Sex: Men in the News" (from *Images that Injure: Pictorial Stereotypes in the Media*, ed., Paul Lester, NY: Praeger, 1996), pp. 97-103.
- Nilsen, Alleen. "Sexism in English: A 1990 Update," (from *Language Awareness*, eds. Paul Eschholz, Alfred Rosa, Virginia Clark, 4th ed., 1986), pp. 1-6.
- Desy, Jeanne. "The Princess Who Stood on her Own Two Feet" (from *Gendered Voices*), pp. 260-7.
- Leiberman, Marcia. "Some Day My Prince Will Come" (from *Gendered Voices*, ed. Karen Costello, 1996), pp. 248-59.
- *Tannen, Deborah. "The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why," in *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*, ed. Dallin Oaks, 1998, pp. 242-57.
- *Cameron, Deborah, "Performing Gender Identity: Young Men's Talk and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity" (from *Language and Gender: A Reader*, ed. Jennifer Coates, 1997), pp. 270-82.
- Poems by Jo McDougall

From *Language and Gender: a Reader* (on reserve in library: P 120 .S48 L338 1998)

- Tannen, Deborah. "Talk in the Intimate Relationship: His and Hers," pp. 435-45.
- Cameron, Deborah. "Performing Gender Identity: Young Men's Talk and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity," in *Language and Gender*, ed. Jennifer Coates, 1998, pp. 270-82.

From *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications* (on reserve in library: P 125 .011 1998)

- Loftis, Elizabeth. "Language and Memories in the Judicial System," in *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*, ed. Dallin Oaks, 1998, pp. 3-12.
- Khosroshahi, Fatemeh. "Penguins Don't Care, but Women Do: A Social Identity Analysis of a Whorfian Problem," in *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*, ed. Dallin Oaks, 1998, pp. 260-79.
- Tannen, Deborah. "The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why," in *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*, ed. Dallin Oaks, 1998, pp. 242-57.
- Wolfram, Walt. "Beyond Black English: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision for Non-Mainstream." in *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*, ed. Dallin Oaks, 1998, pp. 405-17.
- Nunberg, Geoffrey. "Testimony before the State Legislature on California Proposition 63," in *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*, ed. Dallin Oaks, 1998, pp. 444-47.