



Fall 2017

LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, POWER

ANT 326 / COM 319 (EC)

Professor: Serguei A. Oushakine

T-Th 3:00 pm - 4:20 pm

Language determines our expressive capacities, represents our identities, and connects us with each other across various platforms and cultures. This course introduces classical and contemporary approaches to studying language, focusing on three main areas: 1) language as a system of rules and regulations ("*structure*"), 2) language as a symbolic mechanism through which individuals and groups mark their presence ("*identity*") and 3) language as a means of communication ("*sign*"). In addition to this, the course examines various ways through which language molds our individual selves: from organizing dreams and desires to shaping autobiographies.

Reading/Writing Assignments and Grading:

Class/Precept Participation 20%

This is a seminar. Your active participation has a *direct* and *immediate* impact on the success and effectiveness of our discussions. Read the assigned texts. Prepare your questions. Look through your classmates' position papers. Engage with other people's opinions: argue. comment. elaborate.

Position Paper(s) 10%

Throughout the term, you will have to post on BB six short positions papers (no more than 300 words each), in which you perform a close reading of a sentence or a paragraph from an assigned reading.

Oral Presentation(s) 15%

Each of you will have 15-20 min to present an analytical interpretation of an individual text in class. Do not summarize the text. Instead, tell us what we need to learn from it; describe how we could use it; show the ways we could connect it with things we already learned and discussed.

Paper In Lieu Of Midterm 25%

How Not to Talk About Things. This is a short essay (1500-1800 words), in which you will explore various ways through which language is used to avoid, to obfuscate or even to silence public discussions of a theme (e.g. an event, a person, or an issue) that has a personal or social significance. You could rely on your personal experience but you could also use materials that could be collected during an ethnographic interview. The goal of this assignment is to develop analytical and reflective skills that would allow you to see how language structures our expressive capacities.

Paper in Lieu of Final Exam 30%

Words as Tools: a Study of Verbal Propaganda. This project has two parts. For Part One, you will have to create an effective propaganda text (e.g. a leaflet; a poster, a manifesto, a set of slogans, etc). For Part Two, you will have to produce a critical essay (~1300-1500 words) in which you offer a close analytical deconstruction of a propaganda text created by one of your classmates. (*I will create a site that will exhibit your propaganda texts accompanied with your analytical essays.*)

Please, bring copies of assigned texts to class.

To encourage active exchanges in class, I ask you not to use your laptops and phones; they tend to distract and alienate.

Part 1: THE FUNDAMENTALS



Week 0: Introduction.
Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (excerpts; pp.89-101; 180-183; 187-189). Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1955.

Week One: POLITICS

Frantz Fanon, *The Black Man and Language.* In:

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks.* Trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2008, pp.1-24.

Richard Philcox, On Retranslating Fanon, Retrieving a Lost Voice. In: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth.* Trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004, pp. 241- 251.

Rey Chow, Introduction: Skin Tones – About Language, Postcoloniality, and Racialization (1-19); Ch. 2. Not Like a Native Speaker: The Postcolonial Scene of Linguaging and the Proximity of the Xenophone (35-60); Ch. 4. Thinking with Food: Writing Off Center: The Postcolonial Work of Leung Ping Kwan and Ma Kwok-Ming (79-103). In: Rey Chow, *Not Like a Native Speaker: On Linguaging as a Postcolonial Experience.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Week Two: SELF

Alexander Luria, *The Man with a Shattered World: The History of a Brain Wound.* Trans. Lynn Solotaroff. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972 (excerpts).

Serguei Oushakine, "We're nostalgic but we're not crazy": Retrofitting the Past in Russia. *The Russian Review* Vol. 66, No. 3 (2007), pp. 451-482.

Optional:

Alexander Luria, “Excerpt from Case History No 3712”. In: Alexander Luria, *The Man with a Shattered World*, pp.21-35.

Serguei Oushakine, In the State of Post-Soviet Aphasia: Symbolic Development in Contemporary Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies* 52:6 (2000), pp. 991–1016.

Week Three: STRUCTURE

Sigmund Freud, The Techniques of Jokes (pp.14-105). In: Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966.

Simon Weaver, A Rhetorical Discourse Analysis of Online Anti-Muslim and Anti-Semitic Jokes. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36:3 (2013), pp. 483-499.

Christie Davies, The Comparative Study of Jokes. *Society* 47:1 (January 2010), pp 38–41.

Optional:

Mary Douglas, Jokes. In Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology*. London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 146-164.

Week Four: MESSAGE

Tzvetan Todorov, How to Read. In Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose*. Trans. Richard Howard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977, pp.234-246.

Stanley Fish, How To Recognize a Poem When You See One. In Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretative Communities*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980, pp. 322-337.

Roman Jakobson, Linguistics and Poetics (62-94); Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances (95-120) In: Roman Jakobson, *Language in Literature*, ed. by Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Week Five: METAPHOR

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Chs.1-13 (3-68); 15-18 77-114; 22-23 (147-158); 25 (185-194); 29 (226-228). In George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

PART 2: PEOPLE & WORDS

Week Six: EXPRESSIVITY

Jean Piaget, Chapter One:
The Function of Language
in Two Children of Six
(pp. 25-69). In: Jean
Piaget, *The Language and
Thought of the Child*. Trans.
Marjorie Gabain. New
York: The World
Publishing Company,
1962.



Julia Kristeva, The Inexpressible Child (pp.103-112). In: Julia Kristeva, *New Maladies of the Soul*. Trans. Ross Mitchell Guberman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

Murthy, D., Bowman, S., Gross, A. J. and McGarry, M. Do We Tweet Differently From Our Mobile Devices? A Study of Language Differences on Mobile and Web-Based Twitter Platforms. *Journal of Communication* 65 (2015), pp.816–837.

Ana Deumert and Kristin Vold Lexander, Texting Africa: Writing as Performance. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 17/4 (2013), pp. 522–546.

Optional:

Dorothy G. Singer and Tracey A. Revenson, How Language Develops (pp. 57-72). In Dorothy G. Singer and Tracey A. Revenson, *A Piaget Primer: How a Child Thinks*. New York: Penguin Books, 1996.

Week Seven: STYLE

Aristotle, Book 3: Delivery, Style and Arrangement (pp.137-183). In Aristotle, *Rhetoric*. Trans. W. Rhys Roberts. Megaphone eBooks 2008.

Jacky Lumby and Daniel Muijs, Corrupt Language, Corrupt Thought: the White Paper “The Importance of Teaching.” *British Educational Research Journal* 40:3 (2014), pp. 523–538.

Mikhail Bakhtin, The Problem of Speech Genres (pp.60-102). In Mikhail Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986.

Cynthia Dickel Dunn, “Then I Learned about Positive Thinking”: The Genre Structuring of Narratives of Self-Transformation. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 24:2 (2014), pp. 133–150.

Optional:

Vahid Sadeghi and Moses Samuel, Genre Analysis of the Letters of Appeal. *Discourse Studies* 15:2 (2013), pp. 229–245.

Week Eight: DISCOURSE

Michel Foucault, Part One: We “Other Victorians” (pp. 1-14); Part Two: “The Repressive Hypothesis” (pp. 15-50). In Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction. Vol.1*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

Miyako Inoue, An Echo of National Modernity: Overhearing “Schoolgirl Speech” (pp. 37-74). In Miyako Inoue. *Vicarious Language: Gender and Linguistic Modernity in Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Scott Fabius Kiesling, Homosocial Desire in Men's talk: Balancing and Re-creating Cultural Discourses of Masculinity. *Language in Society* 34: 5 (2005), pp. 695-726.

Optional:

Anderson, Moji and Nadine McLean, "Straighten Up Yu Argument": Language as Shibboleth of Jamaican Masculinity. *Caribbean Quarterly* 60:3 (2014), pp.19-38, 113-114.

Week Nine: TESTIMONY

Dori Laub, An Event without A Witness: Truth, Testimony, and Survival (pp.75-92). In Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, eds. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Dan Bar-On, Silenced Facts from the Victimizers' Perspective (pp. 155-196). In Dan Bar-On, *The Indescribable and the Undiscussable. Reconstructing Human Discourse after Trauma*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999.

- Roberto Avant-Mier & Marouf A. Hasian Jr.**, Communicating “Truth”: Testimonio, Vernacular Voices, and The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy, *The Communication Review* 11:4 (2008), pp. 323-345.
- Sue Vice**, Translating the Self: False Holocaust Testimony. *Translation and Literature* 23:2 (2014), pp. 197-209.
- Sophie Tamas**, Biting the Tongue that Speaks You: (Re)writing Survivor Narratives. *International Review of Qualitative Research* 4:4 (2011), pp. 431-459.

Optional:

- Howard Levin**, Authentic Doing: Student-Produced Web-Based Digital Video Oral Histories. *Oral History Review* 38:1 (2011), pp. 6-33.
- Adam Brown** Witnessing Moral Compromise: ‘Privilege’, Judgement and Holocaust Testimony. *Life Writing* 14:3 (2017), pp. 327-339.

Week Ten: PROPAGANDA

- Edward Bernays**, 1. Organizing Chaos (pp. 37-46); 2. The New Propaganda (pp. 47-58); 3. The New Propagandists (pp. 59-70); 6. Propaganda and Political Leadership (pp. 109-128). In Edward Bernays, *Propaganda*. New York: H. Liveright, 1928.
- Leonard W. Doob**, Goebbels' Principles of Propaganda. *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 14:3 (1950), pp. 419-442.
- Janet Martin-Nielsen**, ‘This War for Men’s Minds’: the Birth of a Human Science in Cold War America. *History of the Human Sciences* 23:5 (2010), pp. 131–155.
- Ian Lavan**, NLP in Business - or More than a Trip to the Zoo. *Industrial and Commercial Training* 34.4/5 (2002), pp.182-187.
- Paul R Baines, Nicholas J O’Shaughnessy**, Al-Qaeda Messaging Evolution and Positioning, 1998–2008: Propaganda Analysis Revisited. *Public Relations Inquiry* 3:2 (2014), pp.163–191.
- Megan Boler and Selena Nemorin**, Dissent, Truthiness, and Skepticism in the Global Media Landscape: Twenty-First Century Propaganda in Times of War (pp. 395-417). In Jonathan Auerbach and Russ Castronovo, Eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Optional:

- Murray Dick**, Just Fancy That, *Journalism Studies* 16:2 (2015), pp.152-174.

Week Eleven: HATRED

- Victor Klemperer**, Chapters: 1. LTI (pp. 9-16); 3. Distinguishing Feature: Poverty (pp. 19-24); 5. From the Diary of the First Year (pp. 29-40); 8. Ten Years of Fascism (pp. 51-58); 11. Blurring Boundaries (pp. 69-74); 12. Punctuation (pp. 75-76); 17. ‘System’ and ‘Organization’ (pp. 101-106); 25. The Star (pp. 171-186); 30. The Curse of the Superlative (pp. 221-230); 31. From the Great Movement Forward... (pp. 231-237); An Afterward: “ ‘Cos of Certain Expressions” (pp. 291-283). In Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI- Lingua Tertii Imperii. A Philologist’s Book*. Trans. Martin Brady. London: Bloomsbury, 2000.
- Predrag Dojčinović**, The Chameleon of *Mens Rea* and the Shifting Guises of Culture-Specific Genocidal Intent in International Criminal Proceedings, *Journal of Human Rights* 15:4 (2016), pp. 454-476.
- Lidija Milic**, From Serbia with Hate: A Case Study in Globalization, Trauma, and Language. *Dialectical Anthropology* 27 (2003), pp. 331–353.

Week Twelve: RESISTANCE

Pierre Bourdieu, Authorized Language: The Social Conditions for the Effectiveness of Ritual Discourse (pp.107-116). In Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*. Trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Harvard: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Vincent Crapanzano, The Postmodern Crisis: Discourse, Parody, Memory. *Cultural Anthropology* 6:4 (1991), pp. 431-446.

Homi Bhabha, On Mimicry and Man. The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse. In Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 85-92.

Geoffrey Baym & Jeffrey P. Jones News Parody in Global Perspective: Politics, Power, and Resistance, *Popular Communication* 10:1-2 (2012), pp. 2-13.



Images: Maxim Gurbatov.