

COM 4704: Language & Social Interaction

Syllabus: Spring 2025

Instructor: Dr. Emily Rine Butler (erbutler@ufl.edu)
Meeting Time: MWF 5th (11:45-12:35pm), Rolfs 207
Classroom: Rolfs 207
Office: Rolfs 402
Office Hours: Mondays 2-3pm (in-person drop-in); Wednesdays 2-3pm ([by appt](#) only)
Office Phone: 352-273-2743

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS:

The purpose of this course is to increase your understanding of the role of language in social interaction and the construction of identity and to heighten your awareness of language choices and their consequences. Topics include different approaches to the study of language in social interaction (theories and research methodologies), ways in which language is used to construct social identity (e.g. race, gender, status), and issues concerning language and culture (e.g. code-switching and stance). In addition to providing a conceptual framework with which to think about language and interaction, this course will provide experience in observing and analyzing how verbal and nonverbal conduct are enacted and understood in social situations.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

Junior status. This course is not for Freshmen or Sophomores. It is geared towards advanced undergraduates.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe, and explain social institutions, structures, or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

SUBJECT AREA	CONTENT	COMMUNICATION	CRITICAL THINKING
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES			
Social & Behavioral Sciences	Identify, describe, and explain key themes, principles, & terminology; the history, theory and/or methodologies used; and social institutions, structures and processes. Understand different approaches to the study of language in social interaction (i.e. theories and research methodologies), ways in which language is used to construct social identity (e.g. race, gender, status), and issues concerning language and culture (e.g. code-switching and stance). Describe the conceptual frameworks with which to think about language and interaction Tracy & Robles, Ch. 1-10	Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively. Describe the role of language in social interaction and articulate the ways in which language choices are used to construct identity in interaction	Apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis effectively to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions. Assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions. Observe and analyze how verbal and nonverbal conduct are enacted and understood in social situations to create different social identities <i>in situ</i> using various qualitative analytical techniques. Tracy & Robles, Ch. 1-10

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Assessment of Social Science SLOs	Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Reaction papers 1-3 Politeness HW Speech Acts HW Conversation Analysis HW Stance HW Narrative HW	Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Classroom discussions Reaction papers 1-3 Breaching Experiment Group Project & Paper	Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Politeness HW Speech Acts HW Conversation Analysis HW Stance HW Narrative HW Breaching Experiment Group Project & Paper
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TEXTBOOK & COURSE MATERIALS:

Tracy, K. and Robles, J. S. (2013). *Everyday Talk: Building and Reflecting Identities* (2nd Ed.) NY: Guilford Press.

A copy of this textbook will be put on reserve in Library West. All other supplementary materials will be available on the class *Canvas* site. Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor(s). The instructor(s) is only responsible for these instructional materials.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

Your attendance and participation in class is significant to your success in the class. **Attendance will be taken daily via a sign-in sheet.** **YOU** are responsible for signing the attendance sheet. If you do not sign the sheet, you will be counted as absent for that class period. Requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

How absences affect your grade:

A student is allowed to have **three unexcused absences** without incurring a penalty. **For each unexcused class missed beyond the three allotted, 20 points** will be deducted from your participation grade (i.e. 4 hours absent= -20pts; 5 hours absent= -40pts) up to a total of 80 points lost. **If a student has more than six 'unexcused' absences during a semester, they will fail the entire course.** Any absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor **prior** to the date that will be missed and will require official documentation.

How tardiness affects your grade:

If students are not on present at the start of class, this disrupts the entire class, and students will be considered late. If a student leaves class early, this will also be considered as a 'tardy.' Three instances of tardiness count as one absence. If a student is only in attendance for under 40 of the 50 minutes of class, the student will be counted as 'absent' and not just 'tardy.'

GRADING POLICIES:

"No Name": Any and all assignments that do not have your full name on each document will receive an automatic 2-point penalty.

Late Assignments: You are permitted to submit **1** late assignment during the semester without penalty (to be turned in no later than **1 week** after the due date in order to receive credit). Except for this one-time allowance, no assignments or make-up exams will not be accepted (*even for partial credit*) without a University-approved absence.

"Re-Do" Assignments: I do not allow students to "re-do" an assignment once it has been graded or to do an additional assignment in place of another assignment (e.g. homework, extra credit).

CLASS RECORDINGS: While this is a face-to-face course, some of our sessions may occur over Zoom, around campus, or will be in the form of a pre-taped lecture for you to watch. The dates for these lectures are indicated on the day-by-day part of the syllabus.

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Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

STUDENT CONDUCT:

The Dial Center for Speech and Communication Studies strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. Students are expected to behave according to the UF student code of conduct in their classes. This means treating their instructors and fellow classmates with respect. To ensure a positive learning environment, students should not: make complaints publicly (in front of other students); attack the instructor verbally, physically, or in written form; or express reactions in the classroom that would bring harm to other students. Failure to meet the UF code of conduct can impact a student’s class participation grade or result in referral to the UF judicial office. Class atmosphere can be made or broken by the approach that students take to the challenges of the course. Students that support others, show good humor in the face of obstacles, show dedication in the face of setbacks, and show grace when others are not doing as well will help to create a positive communication climate.

In a communication class, it is especially important for each of us to:

- Display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students;
- Pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
- Avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom;
- Avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.).

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Please inform me if I can do anything to make sure physical circumstances don’t get in the way of your work. UF’s official statement on ADA issues includes: " Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester." I’d appreciate your paperwork the first week of class.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

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U MATTER, WE CARE:

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

HONOR CODE:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult the instructor for this class.” For more information, refer to UF’s Student Conduct & Honor Code, <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>

COURSE EVALUATIONS:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

COMMUNICATION STUDIES MINOR:

The Dial Center offers a minor in Communication Studies (CMS). Our CMS minor is consistently one of the largest minors within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Employers increasingly want to see oral communication skills, and students find the minor pairs well with any major or even fulfills their requirement for an outside concentration. The total minor is just 18 credit hours. Your Public Speaking course counts as one of the core courses for the minor. You can find more information at https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/colleges-schools/UGLAS/CMS_UMN/.

GRADING SCALE: (TOTAL: 625 PTS)

<u>Scale for Final Grades:</u>	<u>Scale for Final Grades</u>
A=579-625	A=93-100%
A-=560-57	A-=90-92%
B+=541-559	B+=87-89%
B=516-540	B=83-86%
B-=497-515	B-=80-82%
C+=479-496	C+=77-79%
C=454-478	C=73-76%
C-=432-453	C-=70-72%
D+=416-431	D+=67-69%
D=393-415	D=63-66%
D-=373-392	D-=60-62%
F=0-372	F=0-59%

The course homepage on *Canvas* (<https://elearning.ufl.edu/>) will be central to the class. You will be able to access readings, worksheets, and the class discussion boards through the homepage. I will update it regularly with news and syllabus changes. Although I will make announcements in class and/or send e-mails regarding the assignments and schedule, it is your responsibility to check the homepage for updates.

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ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Class attendance/participation (100 pts)

- Attendance (see attendance policies for how unexcused absences could negatively affect your grade)
- Syllabus welcome quiz (10 pts)
- Student information sheet (10 pts)
- *Participation in in-class activities & discussions (2 pts per class session x 40 = 80 pts)
 - *Note: Excused absences will not detract from your participation grade that day

Homework (Complete 3 of the 6 assignments x 50 pts each) (150 pts)

1. Politeness **OR** Speech Acts
2. Conversation Analysis (CA)
3. Stance **OR** Narrative

Reaction papers (25 pts x 3) (75 pts)

Breaching Experiment Group Project & write-up (100 pts)

Exam 1 (100 points)

Exam 2 (100 points)

TOTAL: 625 Pts

Extra Credit: 15 pts. possible

Homework

Each assignment will involve data analysis focusing on the themes learned in the chapter. Students must complete 3 HW assignments throughout the semester. Note that you have an *either/or* choice for some assignments, but everyone will do the conversation analysis (CA) assignment.

Reaction Papers

On Canvas, I provide an array of articles relevant to each chapter that you may find interesting for further reading. Students are required to write 3 reaction papers (25 pts. each) throughout the semester from the array of articles that I have posted. Reaction papers should be approximately 2-4 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-pt, Times New Roman font, 1" margins). **Eligible articles will be bolded and have an asterix** next to them on Canvas. Reaction paper 2 is the only one on a specific topic, and it will have specific article(s) and questions you need to address in it.

In each paper, you need to accomplish 3 things for full credit: (1) summarize the main points of the article (10 pts); (2) explain how the article ties into the themes we have been talking about in the current chapter (10 pts); (3) explain what you liked and/or didn't like about the paper and why (5 pts). You will be expected to utilize the terminology we have learned on a given topic to talk about the article in your paper. Reaction papers are always due by midnight and will be submitted to CANVAS by the due date listed on the weekly schedule.

Exams

Exams 1 & 2 will be given in class on your laptop during class time (using Honorlock) and will cover material from Chapters 1-5 and 6-10, respectively. They will be composed of T/F, multiple-choice questions, and 2 essay questions.

Breaching Experiment Project

I will introduce this project in more depth in Week 9, but you will be split into groups and will study study the role of verbal communication in maintaining social order. You will work with your partners to (1) devise "breaches" of social norms and observe their effects, as well as (2) find examples online of social breaches. Together, you will put together a presentation with video and narration of your experiments, observations, and online findings, as well as

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individually submit a ~2-page report outlining your part of the project and what personal observations you have made and learned from the experiments.

Extra Credit

Students may earn up to 15 points of extra credit in 2 different ways in this course:

Exam Questions (10 points): You may create 20 multiple choice (with 4 options) or T/F questions for each exam. Indicate the answers by **bolding** or **highlighting** correct answer. (Note: Separate and label questions by chapter for full credit.) You may choose to submit questions for Exam 1 OR Exam 2, but NOT both. Extra credit is always due 1 week prior to the exam on CANVAS (no exceptions & **no** late submissions).

Pop Culture Examples (5 points): I am always looking for real-world examples of language use in articles, video clips, etc. to use in class to demonstrate a particular theme. You may email me examples at any time, or upload to this “assignment” on Canvas examples that you find that you think will be interesting to the rest of the class. If I use it, you will receive 5 extra credit points.