

Language, Thought & Action: CMST 4200 (Fall 14)

Professor Brad Hall
Office Hours: W 2:30-3:30 & by appointment
(Or just drop by)

Office Phone: 797-8757
Old Main 204
E-mail: brad.hall@usu.edu

General Course Objectives

Welcome to Language, Thought and Action. The focus of this class is on how communication, particularly the language we use, is connected to our thoughts and actions. Most of us simply take for granted the language we use as if it were a neutral container for our thoughts and simply a tool to be used in our actions. This class will focus on how language is much more than an innocent bystander as we go about our daily thoughts and actions. Language is a powerful part of what it means to be human, and everything we do and every relationship we have is changed because of it. Taking the time to understand how language, and our use of it, impacts the way we think and act empowers us to make more informed choices. The course integrates a variety of learning methods, including lecture, discussion, small group work, simulations, and films.

We don't describe the world we see; we see the world we describe. Language has the power to alter perception. We think in words. These words have the power to limit us or to set us free. They can frighten us or evoke our courage. Similarly, the stories we tell ourselves about our own life eventually become our life. We can tell healthy stories or horror stories, the choice is ours. - Dan Baker & Cameron Stauth --- versus --- Would a rose by any other name smell as sweet?

Some of the specific goals of this course include:

1. To explore the relationship between language and the human experience and to better appreciate the important role of language in our perceptions, thoughts, and actions.
2. To increase awareness of our own language habits and their potential effect on ourselves and those around us.
3. To be more critically aware of the communication choices of others (i.e., family, friends, co-workers, advertisers, politicians, and so forth) and how these may influence our decisions and desires.

Required Texts

Online articles listed in CANVAS under files.

Grading

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 11 quizzes (drop the two worst) | = 90 points (10 each) |
| 5 Connection Papers | = 75 points (15 each) |
| 4 'Teaching Times' | = 20 points (5 each) |
| Promotion Assignment (due 11/12) | = 20 points |
| Presentation & Report | = 35 points |
| Final | = 50 points |
| Participation | = 30 points (5 from initial "self" paper) |
| Total | = 320 points |

The participation score includes active participation in class discussions and activities. The "self-paper" is a 2-3 page paper (typed and double-spaced) that tells me about you and why you would be a good person to hire. **Due Sept. 3rd**

Quizzes may not be made up. If you are late that day, talk with me after class and you may be able to take part of the quiz at the end of class.

End of semester grades will be assigned based upon the following percentages of the total number of points:

| | | | |
|----|--------------|----|-----------------|
| A | = 93 - 100% | C | = 73 - 76.9% |
| A- | = 90 - 92.9% | C- | = 70 - 72.9% |
| B+ | = 87 - 89.9% | D+ | = 65 - 69.9% |
| B | = 83 - 86.9% | D | = 60 - 64.9% |
| B- | = 80 - 82.9% | D- | = 55 - 59.9% |
| C+ | = 77 - 79.9% | F | = 54.9% or less |

Connection papers (2-3 pages) are **due on the Monday of the week on which the readings you discuss are assigned**. Connection papers need to be tied to the readings assigned for the week, but should *not* simply be review papers or personal journals. They should be an illustration of how concepts from the readings connect to your own life and demonstrate how you can use the concepts to think about life events in new or deeper ways. These papers often involve a mix of personal examples and well-reasoned commentary. You need to do five of the twelve possible connection papers. Which you choose is up to you, but I encourage you not to leave all of these to the end. Scores on late papers will be reduced 10% for the first day late and 5% for each additional school day.

Teaching Times are 11+ minute explanations of weekly class discussion concepts that you give to an individual not taking this class (sibling, friend, parent, spouse, roommate, etc.). I will need the person's name & phone number and I will periodically call them to see what you have been talking to them about. These must be done during the week after the class discussion. Once a week has passed the material may not be used for a teaching time discussion. For a teaching time to count, you **must** let me know in writing on the following Monday that you have done it for that previous week (no make ups). Any class discussion from Sept. 3 through Nov. 19 may be used for teaching times.

Presentation and report will consist of a 3 to 4 minute "sticky" presentation and a 5 to 8 page written report. Your presentation and report will be the outcome of personal "mini-study" in which you will apply class concepts to better understand one of the following: 1) a particular speech act (such as complain, flirt, promise, or reprimand); 2) an identifiable communication situation (such as dinner talk, a sales call, a funeral, or a first date); 3) a named social identity that has expectations for certain types of communication (such as, mother, brother, salesperson, friend, or judge), or 4) instances of past communication that impact the way we think and act (such as a series of advertisements, a public debate, popular songs, a conflict between friends). This study will involve original research where you interview and/or observe others or examine certain examples of communication to learn how the language used or the expectations about the language that could be used impact what happens and what is understood. *Your analysis will need to explore connections between your speech act/situation/identity or particular example(s) and appropriate concepts from class.* You will identify the answers to the where, when, how, what, and why associated with your chosen topic, along with any rules or meaningful choices and consequences associated with your topic. **At its core this paper should demonstrate that you have learned course concepts well enough that you can use them bring insight into a communication event or practice.**

The topics chosen need to be approved by me. The written report for this paper will be written in a study format, including introduction, short literature review, research questions or hypotheses, methods section, results, and conclusion. *A key to this assignment is to demonstrate a clear understanding of how concepts from class can be used to provide new understanding of communicative behavior.* It is better to show a deep understanding of two or three concepts than a superficial understanding of seven or eight concepts. Always remember to include both general principles and very specific examples in your discussion. Further information will be given as the semester goes along.

All written material should be typed and double-spaced and will be due Dec. 1st. Be sure to credit all your sources, including the names and phone numbers of any informants. Use APA style format for referencing your sources. Proofread. Appearance/delivery is always part of any presentation.

Students with ADA-documented impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. Accommodations are coordinated through DRC in Room 101 of the University Inn, 7-2444 voice, 7-0740 TTY, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact DRC as early as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print or digital) are available with advance notice.

Reading Schedule

Reading assignments should be read before the Monday class period for which they are assigned.

| Date | Topic | Reading |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Aug. 25/27 | Language as Ruler | Deutscher, Telushkin-1 |
| *Sept. 3 | Language as Magician | Langer, Postman |
| *Sept. 8/10 | Language as Press Agent Q | Haidt, Holtgraves, Tannen-1 |
| *Sept. 15/17 | Language as Interpreter Q | Hayakawa, Lutz-1, |
| *Sept. 22/24 | Language as Personal Aide Q | Pearce, Wilson, |
| *S/O. 29/1 | Language as Guide Q | Birk & Birk, Lutz-2, Kahneman, |
| *Oct. 6/8 | Language as Trainer Q | Sanders, Dweck |
| *Oct. 13/15 | Language as Judge Q | Condon-2, Allport |
| *Oct. 20/22 | Language as Teacher Q | Hall, Stone, Simmons, Lakoff & Johnson |
| *Oct. 27/29 | Language as Mediator Q | de Waal, Tannen-2, Wood & Reich |
| *Nov. 3/5 | Language as Salesperson Q | Heath & Heath, Ogilvy, Luntz (pp.1-28), |
| *Nov. 10/12 | Language as Politician Q | Jackson & Jamieson, Hinkle, Scott |
| *Nov. 17/19 | Language as Musician Q | Telushkin-2, Johnson, Heath & Heath-2 |
| Nov. 24 | Class Presentations | None |
| Dec. 1/3 | Class Presentations & Review | None |

Final Exam is on Wednesday *Dec. 10th (11:30 am - same room)*

If the class as a whole has a response rate of 80% or above on the IDEA evaluation survey all students will get 2 additional points.