

Linguistics/Sociology 273a/263  
**Language and the Body**  
Lerner/Thompson  
Fall 2003

Gene H. Lerner  
<lerner@soc.ucsb.edu>  
2719 Ellison Hall  
893-4458

Sandra A. Thompson  
<sathomps@linguistics.ucsb.edu>  
3518 South Hall  
893-8216

### Course Outline

#### Goals

This interdisciplinary course brings together the methods and findings of interactional linguistics and those of conversation analysis in a dialogue centering on the visible behavior of the body in the organization of talk-in-interaction. The main aim will be to find ways to describe, account for, or at least come to terms with the relationship between various sorts of visible and vocal conduct -- especially prosody, gesture, gaze, and body movement -- and everyday language. A primary goal would thus be the formulations of new understandings of the ways in which spoken language, including "grammar" and "meaning", is intertwined with gesture, gaze, and body movements in face-to-face interactions.

This course will fulfill LISO (and possibly departmental) requirements; please see your advisor and/or the instructors to check on your particular needs.

#### Enrollment

The course can be taken as either a one quarter course or as a two quarter course.

#### Written work

##### 1. *Depiction of visible conduct*

- Find about 5 seconds of video from the course video recordings and attempt to devise a method for depicting the **visible** aspects of the action, while keeping track of your reasons for picking the particular extract, choosing the method of depiction you used and assessing the successes and troubles you **encounter** in the process. Your excerpt should include a pointing gesture (if possible) and/or come from an episode of storytelling (if possible).

- For this assignment, you will find it important to familiarize yourself with the approaches to depiction of visible behavior that will be handed out in class.

- **Assignment 1 is due Oct. 10 (Be prepared to discuss your experience)**

##### 2. *Description of visible conduct*

- Using the same or another short extract of video from the course video recordings (preferably, but not necessarily from storytelling) in which some aspect of the visible conduct seems to be an **integral** part of the action.

Write a two-page description of the course of action the visible conduct is a part of and the part the visible conduct plays in that course of action.

- **Assignment 2 is due Oct 17 (Be prepared to discuss your description)**

##### 3. *Paper Topics*

- Find at least two extracts from the data (either your own or course data) that exemplify two different possible research paper topics (based on the course readings and topics).

Write a one- to two-page analysis and précis for each topic. In consultation with the instructors, choose one of these topics to pursue for your paper.

- **Assignment 3 is due Oct. 31 (Be prepared to present your project proposals to the seminar)**

##### 3. *Term Paper*

a. If you are taking the one-quarter version of the course, you'll write a five- to ten-page paper (not including transcripts) describing the workings of some aspect of the visible component of interaction using examples from the course data (and elsewhere if you like) and its relation to talk-in-interaction in the context of the course readings and topics. You can expand the topic in one of your earlier papers or choose another phenomenon (in consultation with the instructors). **Term papers are due by the last day of Final exams (Dec. 11).**

b. If you are taking the two-quarter version of the course, you'll turn in a rough sketch of your proposed research at the end of the first quarter and spend the first 8 weeks of the second quarter preparing a final research paper. During this period the course will meet *informally*, holding occasional informal data analysis sessions during the scheduled class time for feedback on projects from the instructors and the other course participants. We will resume meeting for the ninth and tenth weeks of the Winter quarter, so that students can present their papers to the class. **Papers will be due at the tenth week session of the Winter Quarter.** Papers should contain both data analysis evidencing the phenomenon and a discussion of its relation to the readings (i.e., at least one of the readings).

### **Class video**

In class we will focus on visible conduct in storytelling from the three course recordings (Chicken Dinner, Auto Discussion, and Game Night). The transcripts are included in your Reading Packet. The videos will be available for watching in an on-campus computer Lab.

### **Class Participation**

We will meet weekly during the Fall quarter (9-11:30 Fridays). Each session will be divided between

- a. Discussion of Readings.
- b. Data session:

- viewing small sections of the class video of conversational interaction and discussing issues of 'language and the body' that emerge from our joint observations of the video (and transcript of the talk)

- the data sessions for weeks 1-6 will be organized thematically, as indicated on the syllabus. The remaining data sessions will be given over to student projects.

Participants will be expected to do the following:

1. Read and be prepared to discuss the weekly readings.
2. Present 1 or 2 of the readings during the quarter, according to the Guidelines below.
3. Spend at least 30 minutes a week previewing the assigned video section before we examine it as a group on Friday.

### **Guidelines for Presenting Reading Assignments**

- assume everyone is familiar with the reading, so you don't want to summarize it
- plan to take only about 5 to 7 minutes for your presentation
- state what you think is important about this reading
- state why you think this reading was assigned
- state how it seems to you to fit into the course, and how it is relevant to other material in the course
- offer 2 or 3 questions that you'd like to see form the basis for the day's discussion of that reading
- if you wish, offer your own alternative analysis or understanding of the point the author is making
- if possible, suggest follow-up research that seminar members might want to consider pursuing

-Optionally, handout a brief outline of your main points, or the author's main points, or important or confusing quotations for discussion.