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No office hours will be held on Oct 12 or Oct 19.

**UMass Amherst
Political Science 392H
Tuesday and Thursday, 11:15 -12:30
Fall 2010**

THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICS

“Speech,” the political theorist Hannah Arendt wrote, “is what makes man a political being.” By this view, language is the very stuff of politics, the human faculty that makes politics happen. This course takes that perspective seriously. It explores the various ways in which language constitutes or shapes politics. It examines the multiple roles that language plays in politics.

Among the topics we will cover: Orwellian doublespeak, Black English, hate speech, truthfulness in politics, gender neutral pronouns, partisan word labs, the linguistic construction of the “war on terror,” folk tales as a form of political resistance, and familial metaphors in the 2008 presidential primaries.

More abstractly, this course is organized around three broad themes:

The place of language in political action (Can speaking itself be a form of political action? What about speaking in a particular way?)

Language as a political resource (How is language used as instruments of both domination and resistance? Does the way that women talk, or talk about women, contribute to their domination?)

The language of politics in America (How can we characterize political discourse in the United States? Is there anything distinctive about the ways in which “liberals” and “conservatives” talk? What should we make of the “war on terror”?)

Learning goals

The main goals of the class are for you to be able to:

- Understand the core arguments, tools, and debates we encounter in the course, and see their connection to underlying views of language.
- Apply theories and tools that you learn in class to current events and your own life.
- Make informed judgments about the value of competing arguments or perspectives that we encounter.
- Construct your own answers to the big thematic questions around which the course is organized, and be cognizant of how your own thinking on these questions evolves over the course of the semester.

- Identify for yourself methods, questions, and insights that advance your own intellectual agenda or help you articulate and answer questions that are important to you.

Course requirements

There are seven basic course requirements:

1. ATTENDANCE

To receive a passing grade in this course, you must have no more than four un-excused absences (absences will be excused only for documented illness, documented family crisis, religious observance, and the like). It is also expected that you come to class *on time*. If you have perfect attendance and are never late to class your course grade will be boosted by 1/3 of a grade: say, from A- to A.

2. BRINGING THE READINGS TO CLASS

It is expected that you will *bring a copy of the readings with you to class* since they are the foundation upon which our class discussions will be built. We will be referring to the readings often. Not having the readings with you will impact your “preparation and participation” grade.

3. PARTICIPATION IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS

There will be many class discussions during the course of the semester. Talking, asking questions, and testing your ideas are essential to constructing your own understandings and assessments of the texts that we read and the arguments we encounter. For those who are shy about speaking in public, class participation also provides a safe, supportive environment to gain confidence and experience.

4. PARTICIPATION IN SMALL GROUP WORK

At various points in the semester, you will do in-class work in small groups to provide you with hands-on experience in working through problems and questions. Part of your “preparation and participation” grade will be determined by how well your group functions, and how much you contribute to the group’s work.

5. PREPARATORY ASSIGNMENTS

You will be required for most class sessions to complete short “prep assignments.” You can find the assignments listed below in the class schedule.

Purpose

The assignments are an essential component of the course. They accomplish three core goals simultaneously: (1) they help structure and guide your reading of texts that are sometimes difficult, (2) they give you an opportunity to analyze and assess on your own key arguments about the language of politics; and (3) they establish a shared set of questions that will serve as common ground for our class discussions.

Submission procedures

As a condition of enrollment in this course, you agree to submit both a hard and electronic copy of each prep assignment. Late preparatory assignments will not be accepted without a reasonable excuse (illness, family emergency, or the like).

You will submit the hard copy assignment *at the beginning of class*. You must submit the assignment in person (no emailed assignments will be accepted, and you cannot have a friend bring your assignment to class). Since we will often be using the prep assignments as a basis for class discussion and small group work, it is important that you also bring a copy of your prep assignment for your own use.

The electronic copy of each assignment must be submitted via the Turnitin service on the SPARK course website *by 5 pm the day it is due*. This service performs textual comparison and originality review for the detection of possible plagiarism. All submissions will be included in the UMass Amherst dedicated databases of assignments at Turnitin. These databases will be used solely for the purpose of detecting possible plagiarism during the grading process this term and in the future. A weblink to instructions for how to submit a paper using Turnitin can be found in the Turnitin folder on the course webpage in SPARK. If you have trouble using Turnitin, call the OIT help desk at 545-9400.

Students who do not submit two copies of each assignment paper -- a hard copy at the beginning of class and an electronic copy to Turnitin by 5 pm – will not receive a passing grade for the assignment.

Prep assignment grading

A grade of unsatisfactory or satisfactory will be given for each assignment:

PREP ASSIGNMENT GRADING RUBRIC		
	UNSATISFACTORY (ANY OF THE FOLLOWING)	SATISFACTORY (ALL OF THE FOLLOWING)
COMPLETENESS	Does not answer all of the questions	Answers all of the questions
FOCUS	Fails to explicitly and directly answer each of the questions	Explicitly and directly answers each of the questions
EFFORT	Prepared with carelessness or evidences only a cursory and superficial attempt to understand the materials	Demonstrates real effort to understand the materials and contains a careful, thoughtful analysis
GROUNDING	Does not make explicit and specific references to all of the relevant readings or other materials assigned for that day	Makes explicit and specific references to all of relevant readings or other materials assigned for that day, typically by including short quotes or page numbers from which key pieces of information are drawn
WORD COUNT MAXIMUM	Higher than the assigned word count	The word count maximum or below

WORD COUNT SUMMARY	Does not include a word count at the end of the assignment	Includes a word count at the end of the assignment. For instance, the word count for this box would be: (23 words)
TIMELINESS	Either a hard copy is not submitted at the beginning of class or an electronic copy is not submitted to Turnitin by 5 pm	A hard copy submitted at the beginning of class and an electronic copy to Turnitin by 5 pm

There are 19 preparatory assignments during the course of the semester. You must complete at least 14 with grades of “satisfactory” to pass the course.

Two preparatory assignments deemed “unsatisfactory” may be rewritten for a new grade and resubmitted on the day of the next class after each is returned, but if you miss a class without a reasonable excuse (documented illness, documented family crisis, religious observance) you will not be allowed to make up the preparatory assignment for that class. To rewrite a prep assignment, you must submit two copies on the appropriate day – a hard copy at the beginning of class and an electronic copy to Turnitin (submit under “first prep rewrite” or “second prep rewrite” accordingly) by 5 pm. You must also staple the original unsatisfactory assignment (with my comments) to the hard copy of the rewrite that you submit.

I will use the table below to calculate your prep assignment grade for the semester:

Number of “satisfactory” grades	Semester prep assignment grade
19	A
18	A-
17	B+
16	B
15	B-
14	C
13 or less	F, and ineligible for a passing grade in the class

6. JOURNAL

Purpose

I want you to learn deeply – to think about the arguments you encounter, question their assumptions, and make informed judgments about their relative value. This kind of deep learning is most likely to occur if you use the course material to try to solve problems or answer questions that *you yourself* have come to regard as important or intriguing. To encourage this kind of engagement, I ask that you keep a journal in which you chronicle your own reactions to/thoughts about/questioning of/attempts to apply the course material. Entries might include answers to questions like:

- What questions does this particular reading or class discussion raise with regard to my own intellectual interests and concerns?
- How do insights I have gained in this class challenge or connect to my own values and convictions?
- What topic of discussion do I wish we had spent more time discussing in class today, and why?
- Why did I react so positively/negatively to this reading, video, or class discussion?
- How does this reading, video, or class discussion relate to things I'm learning in my other classes?
- How does this reading, video, or class discussion make me see the world differently?
- How did anything I learned in this class affect how I think about some news article, political speech, statement, or the like?
- How has my thinking on a particular topic evolved?
- Which assignments were most/least productive or comfortable for me, and why?
- What are my future plans for using what I have learned?
- Have I changed my mind substantially about anything that I wrote in an earlier entry or said in a class discussion? How and why?

Journal submission procedures

You are required to write between 6 and 9 journal entries during the course of the semester (the more entries you write, the higher your grade will be – more on this below). I will collect journals on each of the ten Tuesdays that we meet between September 14 and November 30 (I will not accept journal entries on our last class, December 7). You can submit only one new entry on each Tuesday. Each journal entry must be a minimum of 300 words in length. Each time you make a submission, you need to give me your entire original journal with my earlier comments (and not just your newest entry). Late journal submissions will not be accepted without a reasonable excuse (illness, family emergency, or the like).

Also, you will put in my mailbox (312 Thompson) by 2 pm on Tuesday, December 14, the original copy of your entire journal (with my comments) and submit an electronic version of your journal (without my comments) via Turnitin. *Students who do not submit two copies of the journal - a hard copy in my mailbox and an electronic copy to Turnitin - will not receive a passing grade for the course.*

Journal grading

I encourage you to take risks, explore your own perplexities, and be adventurous. To that end, the each journal entry will be graded as follows:

JOURNAL ENTRY GRADING RUBRIC		
	UNSATISFACTORY (ANY OF THE FOLLOWING)	SATISFACTORY (ALL OF THE FOLLOWING)
FORMAT	Handwritten	Typed
RELEVANCE	Entry does not relate to the course. It resembles a diary entry (“I had a really bad day today...”) more than a course journal entry (an engagement with ideas, questions, debates, or insights encountered in the course)	Entry engages ideas, questions, debates, or insights encountered in the course
ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT	Entry merely summarizes course materials or discussions. No chronicling of your own thoughts about, reactions to, questioning of, attempts to apply course material or discussions	Entry chronicles your own thoughts about, reactions to, questioning of, attempts to apply course material or discussions
INTACTNESS	Submission of either (1) an entry on its own without the rest of the journal, (2) an incomplete journal, or (3) a copy of the journal without my comments	Each entry is attached to the entire original journal that includes my comments to you
WORD COUNT MINIMUM	Less than 300 words	300 words or more
WORD COUNT SUMMARY	Does not include a word count at the end of the assignment	Includes a word count at the end of the assignment. For instance, the word count for this box would be: (23 words)
TIMELINESS	Not submitted at the beginning of class on eligible Tuesdays	Submitted at the beginning of class on eligible Tuesdays

I will use the table below to calculate your journal grade for the semester:

Number of “satisfactory” journal entries by the end of the semester	Semester journal grade
9	A
8	A-
7	B+
6	B
5 or less	F, and ineligible for passing grade in the class

7. END-OF-SEMESTER LETTER

This letter, which should be between seven and nine pages long (double-spaced and paginated), is your opportunity to pull together the various strands of your thinking about the course material. It is an

occasion, in other words, for you to reflect on what you have learned, to wrestle one final time with arguments that you found engaging, to answer with some closure questions that you have come to regard as important, and perhaps, too, to identify issues that you want to think about in more depth after the semester is over. Some questions you should ask yourself as you think about what to include in your letter: How did you make sense of the various and sometimes conflicting arguments we encountered? How has your thinking about the language of politics evolved? How has this course made you see the world differently?

In preparing this letter, I think that you will find it helpful to read over and reflect on your journal entries. Indeed, you should feel free (you are even encouraged) to quote sparingly from your journal entries to illustrate evolution in your thinking. You should avoid, however, quoting extensively from or cutting-and-pasting large sections of your entries. The end-of-semester letter should not, in other words, reproduce what you wrote in your journal. It is a separate piece of writing in which you reflect on the intellectual journey that you documented in the journal.

I will grade your letter using five broad criteria (a more detailed grading rubric will be distributed later in the semester):

- Comprehension (To the extent that you discuss the content of course readings, do you understand well the content that you are discussing?)
- Application (Do you apply theories and tools that you learned in class to current events and/or your own life?)
- Deep thinking (Do you question the assumptions of the authors we have read? Do you make informed judgments about the value of competing arguments or perspectives?)
- Self-reflection (Do you think about the evolution of your own thinking over the course of the semester?)
- Clarity (Do you express your ideas in a way that is easy for me to understand?)

The letter is due on Tuesday, December 14 at 2 pm. You must submit your complete journal with your letter. Put a hard copy of each in my mailbox (312 Thompson Hall) and submit an electronic copy of your letter (and journal) via Turnitin. *Late letters/journals will be penalized one third of a grade (say, from A to A- for each day, or portion of a day, late). Students who do not submit two copies of the letter - a hard copy in my mailbox and an electronic copy to Turnitin - will not receive a passing grade for the course.*

Course grade

The minimum requirements to be eligible for a passing grade in this course are (1) no more than four un-excused absences; (2) satisfactory completion of at least 14 prep assignments – with submission of both hard copies and electronic copies via Turnitin; (3) submission of a journal – adhering to the submission rules above – with at least 6 satisfactory entries; and (4) submission of an end-of-semester letter to me – with submission of both a hard copy and an electronic copy via Turnitin.

If you have successfully completed all of these minimum requirements, your grade will be calculated as follows: preparation and participation (30%), your journal (10%), prep assignments (30%), and your end-of-semester letter to me (30%) – and remember the bonus for perfect, on-time attendance!

Academic honesty

Every written assignment you submit should be entirely your own work. You should not be using or copying information from places like Wikipedia. You are expected, in other words, to adhere to the university's regulations regarding academic honesty, which you can find in the university's Academic Regulations, page 6. Most importantly, you are expected to refrain from plagiarism, which the AR defines as "knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work in any academic exercise. This includes submitting without citation, in whole or in part, prewritten term papers of another or the research of another, including but not limited to commercial vendors who sell or distribute such materials." Sanctions will be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty.

Course materials

Material marked with an asterisk [*] is available on the course website in SPARK. The following books are *not* available online, so I recommend that you purchase them. They are available at the Textbook Annex. They are also on reserve at the circulation/reserves desk located at the lower level of Du Bois Library.

J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd edition (Harvard University Press, 1975).

Randall Kennedy, *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word* (New York: Vintage, 2003).

George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*, 2nd edition (University of Chicago Press, 2002).

James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (Yale University Press, 1990).

Spark

We will be using a SPARK course website for this class. Among other things, you will find many course readings and videos posted there and you will use it to submit your prep assignments, end-of-semester letter, and complete journal.

If you have not used SPARK before, you can find instructions here:

<http://www.oit.umass.edu/spark/students/index.html>

If you are already familiar with SPARK, you can log directly into the SPARK course website by using the following URL: <https://spark.oit.umass.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct>

Video troubleshooting

There are two video files in mov format (Bill Richardson, Real Time with Bill Maher) and three video files in mp4 format (All About Love, And Nothing But the Truth, Mike Huckabee) posted to the course website. Students on occasion have trouble accessing or playing them. *At the beginning of the semester*

you should verify that you are able to play all five files so that you do not find yourself unable to view them the night before a prep assignment is due. If you experience trouble, first try a different browser. Chrome tends to be particularly buggy for playing mp4 files. If after trying more than one browser you still cannot play a file, contact the OIT help desk at 545-9400. If the help desk is unable to help you, bring a flash drive or blank recordable CD to my office during my office hours, and I will transfer/burn the files for you.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday, September 7. Course introduction

No readings

Thursday, September 9. Class introduction, continued

No readings

PART I: THE PLACE OF LANGUAGE IN POLITICAL ACTION

Speaking as form of (political) action

Tuesday, September 14. Speaking as acting

Prep assignment 1

How to Do Things with Words is the most difficult book we will read this semester. It is also the reading that many students, come the end of the semester, consider to be the most important we have done because it teaches us fundamental things about the nature of language and its relationship to action, including political action. It also offers a set of tools to analyze political language that most students find very useful. We will be returning to the ideas developed in the book repeatedly during the semester. Understanding the argument and importance of this book will take some work on our part since Austin builds his analysis in a roundabout way, and he has absolutely nothing to say explicitly about politics.

The argument of the book has two main parts. Today's reading covers the first part. The prep assignment questions focus your attention on the crucial ideas developed in this part.

Part A. In 150 words or less: what is the difference between a "constative" and a "performative" utterance? Give an example of each.

Part B. In 300 words or less: Austin tries to find a way to distinguish cleanly the two types of utterances. Why, in the end, does he conclude that it is not possible to make such a clean distinction? Hint: it has to do with the *overlapping* ways in which constative and performative utterances can go wrong.

Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, pp. 1-7 (including footnote 2 on page 6), 12-20, 47 (start with “We shall next consider...” to 52, 55 (start with “We have then to take...” - 59 (stop before “But maybe it is not impossible”), 68 - 78 (stop before “We shall consider two...”), 91 (stop before “Perhaps some clarification...”)).

Thursday, September 16. Speaking as acting, continued

Prep assignment 2

Today’s reading covers the second part of Austin’s argument. He makes “a fresh start on the problem” (p. 91) by examining different ways in which saying is doing. The prep assignment questions focus your attention on the crucial ideas developed in this part.

Part A. In a sentence or two define, in your own words, each of the following: locutionary act, illocutionary act, perlocutionary act.

Part B. In 200 words or less: what are some possible illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects of the “Taliban is here” note left in the plane’s restroom?

Part C. In 300 words or less: at the end of the “American Apparently” segment, Jon Stewart makes an Austinian observation about the illocutionary force of “American people” when uttered by politicians (“used as a cudgel to project whatever provincial concerns a particular interest group may want to advance”). Do you think he is right, and why? What do you think are the likely perlocutionary effects of politicians uttering that phrase?

Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, pp. 91-92 (paragraph that begins “It is time then to make...”), 94-108, 133-47.

* “Taliban Note Grounds Boston-Bound Plane,” *Yahoo News* December 1, 2005.

* “American Apparently” Daily Show segment, 2010 (9 minutes):

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-may-5-2010/american-apparently>

Tuesday, September 21. “The N word” [in-class video]

Prep assignment 3

In 300 words or less: what, to use Austin’s language, are the different illocutionary forces of using the n-word that Kennedy identifies? Be sure to identify as many different illocutionary forces as you can.

Randall Kennedy, *Nigger*, pp. 3-44.

Thursday, September 23. “Mere” words or “fighting” words?

Prep assignment 4

Part A. In 250 words or less: What is the “fighting words doctrine” (summarized on page 54) established by the Supreme Court in 1942? What do you think Austin would say about this doctrine? That is, would he think this is a good or bad doctrine, and why?

Part B. In 250 words or less: What is the criminal law “mere words doctrine” (summarized on pages 60-61)? What do you think Austin would say about this doctrine? That is, would he think this is a good or bad doctrine, and why?

Part C: After reflecting on the analysis of the two doctrines offered by Kennedy and the Austinian analysis you conducted in parts A and B of this prep assignment, take your own stand, in 250 words or less, on these doctrines. Which do you think is better and why?

Randall Kennedy, *Nigger*, pp. 45-82.

Code choice as a form of (political) action

Tuesday, September 28. Diglossia

Prep assignment 5

For our purposes, we can define diglossia as a language situation in which there is a clear functional separation between two codes (a code is a language, dialect, or way of speaking). One code, the “high” code, is used mostly for written, learned, or formal purposes; and the other code, the “low” code, is used in more popular or intimate domains. The high code might be used to deliver religious sermons, formal lectures, speeches in parliament, or arguments in court. It is for writing fine literature or newspaper editorials. The low code is for family chats, soap operas, giving orders to household helpers, telling earthy folktales, and the like. The term diglossia is indifferent as to whether the entire population commands both codes, and in many situations at least a portion of the population does not.

We can consider “mainstream US English” to be a high code and “Black English” (what some linguists also call “African American Vernacular English” - or AAVE for short) to be a low code.

Part A. In 300 words or less: what are the range of illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects of speaking AAVE identified by Lippi-Green and implicit in the Fox news report and gloriousmandestroya videos? Be sure to identify as many different illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects as you can.

Part B. In 300 words or less, what do you think are the likely illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects of the code choices made by Obama and Clinton in the “Talk this Way” CNN news report video. Be sure to consider the content of the “Inarticulate Kickoff” article in crafting your answer.

Diglossia and low politics in the USA

* Rosina Lippi-Green, “The Real Trouble with Black English” in *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 1997) pp. 176-201. [Note that MUSE = Mainstream U.S. English]

* “Ax or Ask?” Fox news report video (4 minutes):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_KKLkmfrDk

* “Ebonics/African American Vernacular” Youtube video posted by gloriousmandestroya (9 minutes):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZC3M-BvcBM>

Diglossia and high politics in the USA

* “An Inarticulate Kickoff,” *Washington Post*, February 2, 2007.

* “Talk this Way” CNN news report video (3 minutes):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSGx2CoLh0U>

Thursday, September 30. Codeswitching

Prep assignment 6

We can define codeswitching as the use of more than one code in the course of a *single* communicative episode.

Part A. In 300 words or less, what do you think are the illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects of Wesley’s code switches in *All About Love*? Back up your analysis with a specific example of his codeswitching.

Part B. In 300 words or less, what do you think are the illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects of Bill Richardson’s 2005 and 2008 code switches? Back up your analysis with at least two examples of his codeswitching.

| *An everyday example of codeswitching*

* Video clip from *All About Love*, 2006 (5 minutes, mp4 file).

All About Love is a typical romance movie from the Philippines. It contains much codeswitching between the Tagalog and English languages: Tagalog is a low code and English is the high code. This clip includes four scenes. In the first scene, Badz (a poor horse carriage “kalesa” driver) and Wesley (a rich model) talk while in Badz’s home. In the second scene, Wesley is at home with his parents. In the third scene, Wesley returns to Badz’s home. In the fourth scene Wesley takes Badz to a charity event. Compare Badz’s language use with Wesley’s. Also compare the language used by Badz’s father with the language used by Wesley’s parents. What motivates the codeswitching you see?

Some instances of codeswitching in the political realm

* “Bill Richardson,” *Time*, August 3, 2005.

* Bill Richardson, March 21, 2008 video clip (2 minutes, mov file).

Clips of a speech in which Richardson, who had already withdrawn from the Democratic primary, endorses his formal rival Obama to be the Democratic nominee.

PART II. LANGUAGE AS A POLITICAL RESOURCE

The language of domination

Tuesday, October 5. Doublespeak

Prep assignment 7

This week we begin our examination of Orwellian “doublespeak” – language deliberately used to control, deceive, or manipulate. Note, though, that Orwell himself never wrote of “doublespeak.” In 1984, he describes “Newspeak” – that fictional, greatly reduced and simplified language designed by the totalitarian Party to make any alternative thinking or speech impossible. He also wrote of “doublethink” – a simultaneous belief in two contradictory ideas that was a hallmark of Newspeak. But “doublespeak” appears nowhere in his writings. Indeed, doublespeak was apparently coined only in the 1950s, after his death, as a shorthand to describe the real-world abuse of language to which Orwell altered us. There are many examples of doublespeak in this week’s readings: “pacification,” “transfer of population,” “enemy combatant,” “debriefing,” “self-injurious behavior incidents,” “Gestapo,” “Comintern,” “democracy,” “socialism,” “freedom,” “homeland security,” and “terrorism” to name just a few.

In 400 words or less, use “Politics and the English Language” and “The Principles of Newspeak” to identify at least three different *types* of doublespeak. What are the *different ways*, in other words, in which Orwell believes that our real-world political language can be deliberately used to control, deceive, or manipulate? Give a concrete example from this week’s readings of each type of doublespeak you identify.

* George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language.” In *A Collection of Essays* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1954) pp. 162-177.

* George Orwell, “The Principles of Newspeak.” In *1984* (New York: Signet, 1983) pp. 246-256.

* Timothy Lynch, “Doublespeak and the War on Terrorism,” Cato Institute Briefing Paper No. 98, September 6, 2006.

Thursday, October 7. Doublespeak today

Prep assignment 8

Find an example of current political doublespeak (that we have not yet encountered in class or in the readings). In 300 words or less explain why it is doublespeak, and what type of doublespeak it is using the categories we developed in class on Tuesday. You will be asked to present your findings to the class, so bring in two copies of your prep assignment: one for me, and one for you to use as a reference.

No readings

Tuesday, October 12. No class (Monday schedule of classes)

Thursday, October 14. Doublespeak questions

Prep assignment 9

Orwell argues that “if you simplify English, you are freed from the worst follies of orthodoxy” (PEL 177). After reflecting on this week’s materials, answer in 400 words or less: Do you think he is right? Can we really improve our politics by simplifying our language? Be sure to explicitly discuss the video, article, *and* speech excerpt in crafting your answers.

* George W. Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, September 20, 2001 (excerpt). {Do you see any doublespeak here?}

* “Japan Expresses Regret of a Sort for the War,” *New York Times*, June 7, 1995. {Can ambiguity serve any positive political function?}

* “And Nothing But the Truth,” *This American Life*, 2007 (7 minutes, mp4 file). {Is strict adherence to truth always good in politics?}

Tuesday, October 19. No class (I’ll be out of town)

The language of resistance

Thursday, October 21. Folktale analysis

No readings

Tuesday, October 26. Language of resistance

Prep assignment 10

Part A. Scott distinguishes between “public,” “hidden,” and “disguised public” transcripts. Explain in 300 words or less what the difference is between these three transcripts.

Part B. What purposes, according to Scott, does the public transcript serve for the dominant? Answer in 300 words or less.

James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, pp. ix-xiii, 1-28, 45-58, 66-69.

Thursday, October 28. Language of resistance, continued

Prep assignment 11

Part A. In 250 words or less: A key claim in this section of the book is that both the thick and thin versions of the hegemony argument are wrong, and that only a “paper-thin” version (which Scott describes on pages 82-83) makes any sense. What is Scott’s paper-thin version of hegemony, and do you think he is right?

Part B. What are the various “arts of disguise” used by the subordinate? Answer in 250 words or less.

Part C. Marx describes how he thinks domination works within the market. On page 21 footnote 3, Scott calls this kind of domination by market forces “impersonal” and contrasts it to the “personal” forms of domination that he is writing about. How is the impersonal domination described by Marx different from the personal domination described by Scott? Do you think Scott’s paper-thin account of hegemony holds for impersonal domination as well? Answer in 250 words or less.

Part D. Scott’s book was written about slaves, serfs, and untouchables. Do you think that his arguments about the limits of hegemony and the arts of resistance are relevant to *our* (American) world today? Answer in 250 words or less.

James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, pp. 70-85 (be sure to read page 82, footnote 33), 136-72.

* “A Dirty Pun Tweaks China’s Online Censors,” *New York Times*, March 12, 2009.

* Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume One* (New York: Vintage, 1977) pp. 279-80, 719.

Debates about women's language

Tuesday, November 2. Talking like a lady: dominance or difference?

Prep assignment 12

There is much debate today about whether the way women talk contributes to their domination in contemporary American society. After reading the various positions staked out in this week's readings, explain in 400 words or less where you stand in this debate. Which of the authors we read this week do you agree and disagree with, and why? Be sure to discuss all four readings.

Women's talk: the original argument

* Robin Lakoff, "Language and Woman's Place" in *Language and Gender*, volume 1, edited by Susan Ehrlich (New York: Routledge, 2008) pp. 11-24.

Women's talk: just a gender-lect

* Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (New York: Harper, 2007) pp. 23-31, 42-48.

Women's talk: powerless language

* William M. O'Barr and Bowman K. Atkins, "'Women's Language' or 'Powerless Language'?" in *Language and Gender*, volume 1, edited by Susan Ehrlich (New York: Routledge, 2008) pp. 56-71.

Women's talk: a myth

* Deborah Cameron, *The Myth of Mars and Venus: Do Men and Women Really Speak Different Languages?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 41-58.

Thursday, November 4. Talk about women: can language reform change behavior?

Prep assignment 13

Part A. In 300 words or less: How, in Robin Lakoff's eyes, does talk about women reflect their place in contemporary American society? Do you agree or disagree with her? How?

Part B. In 300 words or less: Do you think we can change attitudes about women by changing how we speak? In answering this question, be sure to take into account (i) the specific changes proposed in the University of Minnesota Style Manual (which are very typical), and (ii) the analyses offered by Ehrlich and King as well as Pinker.

Talking about women

* Robin Lakoff, "Talking about Women" in *Language and Gender*, volume 1, edited by Susan Ehrlich (New York: Routledge, 2008) pp. 36-54.

Talking about Hillary Clinton

* Real Time with Bill Maher, HBO, March 3, 2008 (2 minutes, mov file).

Can language reform change behavior?

* University of Minnesota Style Manual.

* Susan Ehrlich and Ruth King, "Feminist Meanings and the (De)politicization of the Lexicon." *Language in Society* 23,1 (March 1994) pp. 59-64 only.

* Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (New York: Penguin, 2002) pp. 211-13.

PART III. THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICS IN AMERICA

The Persuaders

Tuesday, November 9. The Persuaders [in-class video], part 1

No readings

Wednesday, November 10. The Persuaders [in-class video], part 2 (Thursday schedule of classes)

* "Barack Obama's Super Marketing Machine," Salon.com, July 16, 2008.

Thursday, November 11. No class (Veteran's Day holiday)

Tuesday, November 16. Persuaders discussion

Prep assignment 14

Part A. In the Persuaders documentary, Douglas Rushkoff asks what it means when we begin to merge our once separate roles as consumers and citizens. In 300 words or less, what do you think the consequences are of this merging of roles? Draw examples from the Persuaders video and the readings (including “Barack Obama’s Super Marketing Machine”) to support your argument.

Part B. In 300 words or less: do you think that the terms and phrases developed by Frank Luntz clarify issues or mislead voters? Be sure to discuss at least one specific example from each of the two readings as well as from the Persuaders video.

* Frank Luntz, “Political Case Studies.” In *Words That Work: It’s Not What You Say It’s What People Hear* (New York: Hyperion, 2007) pp. 149-78.

* Frank Luntz, “The Language of Health Care 2009” (prepared for the Republicans)

| *Worth a look, but not required:*

The website of maslansky luntz + partners: <http://www.maslansky.com/>

The linguistic construction of conservative and liberal world views

Thursday, November 18. Moral politics - the framework

Prep assignment 15

Part A. In 200 words or less explain in your own words what George Lakoff means by “frame” in his “Frames and Brains” and “The notion of framing sounds manipulative...” pieces.

Part B. In “Frames and Brains” Lakoff distinguishes (among other things) “deep” frames from “surface” frames. Explain in 300 words or less what the difference is between a “deep” frame and a “surface” frame, and give an example of each.

Part C. The “liberal” and “conservative” worldviews that Lakoff describes in *Moral Politics* are built upon deep frames of family-based moral reasoning. In 300 words or less, describe the main features of the “strict father” and “nurturant parent” frames (or what he calls in this book “models”) of moral reasoning.

A short primer on framing

* George Lakoff, “Frames and Brains.” In *Thinking Points: Communicating Our American Values and Vision* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006).

* George Lakoff, “The notion of framing sounds manipulative. How is framing different from spin or propaganda?” In *Don’t Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green, 2004) pp. 100-101.

Lakoff's theory

George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*, pp. 3-8, 11-27, 32-37, 65-71, 108-13, 153-69.

Tuesday, November 23. Moral politics - applications

Prep assignment 16

Part A. In 300 words or less: does Lakoff's framework explain what Kucinich has to say? Back up your answer with an example or two of specific word choices that Kucinich makes, and tether your claims to specific passages in Lakoff's book.

Part B. In 300 words or less: does Lakoff's framework explain what Huckabee has to say? Back up your answer with an example or two of specific word choices that Huckabee makes, and tether your claims to specific passages in Lakoff's book.

Lakoff's applications

George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*, pp. 179-96, 210-21, 271-80.

Does the theory fit the following?

* Dennis Kucinich (liberal Democrat), speech at School of Americas Watch event at the gates of Fort Benning, Georgia, November 18, 2007 (4 minutes):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cYaAIXSBI>

* Mike Huckabee (conservative Republican), speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference, February 9, 2008 (10½ minutes, mp4 file).

Thursday November 25. No class (Thanksgiving break)

Tuesday, November 30. Moral Politics - Assessment

Prep assignment 17

Find an op-ed piece, interview, speech, or press release of a politician or some other public figure on some issue of the day (taxes, some social program, crime, the death penalty, the environment, affirmative action, abortion, health care, Iraq, etc). Try to apply Lakoff's model of family-based moral politics to the position staked out in that op-ed/interview/speech/press release. In 400 words or less: does that position conform to either the liberal or conservative family-based models of moral reasoning that Lakoff lays out? If so, how? If not, in what ways do Lakoff's models fail to fit? Be sure to focus on and quote specific words and phrases from the op-ed/interview/speech/press release in answering these questions. Be sure, too, to tether your claims to specific passages in Lakoff's book.

Bring the op-ed piece, interview, speech, or press release with you to class.

No readings

The war on terror

Thursday, December 2. The Bush administration's "war on terror"

Prep assignment 18

Reflect on this week's materials, and analyze "the war on terror" from the perspectives of Austin, Orwell, and George Lakoff. Specifically, answer these four questions, drawing on *all* of this week's readings for arguments and examples:

A) In 300 words: From the perspective of Austin, what were the likely illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects of President Bush uttering "the war on terror"? Do you think the perlocutionary effects were the ones he intended?

B) In 300 words: From the perspective of Orwell, is "the war on terror" a form of doublespeak? If yes, what kind? What is its effect? What wording would Orwell prefer in its place?

C) In 300 words: From the perspective of George Lakoff, to what deep frame does the "war on terror" belong? Are there other ways that the same phenomena might be framed?

D) In 300 words: Which of the three authors (i.e. Austin, Orwell, and Lakoff) provides the most insightful or important framework for thinking about the "war on terror"? Why?

* The "war on terror" - selected speeches and statements by George W. Bush.

* Christopher Hitchens, "Wanton Acts of Usage. Terrorism: A cliché in Search of a Meaning." *Harper's Magazine* (1986) pp. 66-70.

* NPR, "Defining the War on Terror" November 1, 2006. [7 minutes]:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6416780>

* “Shifting Use of ‘War on Terror’” - material compiled by Frederic Schaffer

* U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Terminology to Define the Terrorists: Recommendations from American Muslims,” January 2008.

* U.S. Department of State, Counterterrorism Communications Center, “Words that Work and Words that Don’t: A Guide for Counterterrorism Communication,” March 14, 2008.

Tuesday, December 7. The Obama administration - anything new?

Prep assignment 19

Part A. In 500 words or less: In what ways do you think that the Obama administration has either continued to use or departed from the ways that the Bush administration talked about the “war on terror”? Answer this question from the perspectives of Austin, Orwell, and Lakoff. Thus, are the illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects the same or different? Is there more or less use of doublespeak (and what kind of doublespeak)? Is the “war on terror” frame retained or jettisoned (if you think it is jettisoned, what is the new frame)? Be sure to include, in each part of your analysis, specific words and phrases used by the Obama administration and compare them to specific words and phrases used by the Bush administration.

Part B. In 400 words: Which of the three authors (i.e. Austin, Orwell, and Lakoff) provides the most insightful or important framework for thinking about the ways in which the Obama administration has either continued to use or departed from the ways that the Bush administration talked about the “war on terror”? Why?

* “The Obama Administration and ‘The War on Terror’ - Interview excerpts from February and March 2009 compiled by Frederic Schaffer

* “‘Global War On Terror’ Is Given New Name,” *Washington Post*, March 25, 2009.

* Barack Obama, March 27, 2009 speech, Executive Office Building, Washington, DC.

* Barack Obama, May 21, 2009 speech, National Archives Museum, Washington, DC.

* Barack Obama, June 4, 2009 speech, Cairo, Egypt.

* Barack Obama, December 11, 2009 speech, Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, Oslo, Norway.

CONCLUSION

Thursday, December 9. Concluding discussion: lessons learned, questions raised

No readings, but bring a copy of the syllabus with you to class.

Tuesday, December 14, 2 pm.

End-of-semester letter due. Put a hard copy in my mailbox (312 Thompson Hall) and submit electronically via Turnitin.