

**Communication 530:  
Conversational Interaction**

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*Office Hours: T & Th: 9:00-9:30; 1:30-2:00,*  
*and by appointment*

**Readings:** Available from Aztec Copy Center/second floor (data handouts and articles).  
Optional readings on reserve at Love Library; recordings on 4th floor/Media Center.

**Purpose:** Introduction to analysis of naturally occurring conversations. Attention will be given, in some detail, to direct observations of recordings and transcriptions of talk and social interaction: Participants' orientations to social occasions as evident in the methods (practices, techniques) artfully employed by interactants as they collaboratively construct social realities and achieve social order.

This semester emphasis will be given to **storytelling activities**. Data will emerge from various segments of everyday talk, most of which involve telling and receipting stories, examined for their sequential organization and achieved character. Both short and extended fragments of conversation will be inspected as a means of understanding how communication is a practical and routine accomplishment. Considerable in-class time will be spent listening to recordings, examining transcripts, developing an "analytic orientation" to conversational materials, and integrating class readings.

**Requirements:** Regular class attendance; contribution to class discussions/data sessions; collection, transcription, and analysis of naturally occurring conversations (when required).

**Exams:** Two take-home exams; analysis of data segments and conceptual/theoretical issues arising from examinations of **storytelling activities** in conversation.

**Grading:**

Exams 1 & 2:	45% each
Participation:	10%*
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	100%

\*--More than 2 absences will result in 1/3 grade discount per absence; exceptions granted for medical/family emergencies and related problems.

*The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts.*

C.S. Lewis, 1947

**I. Introduction and Methodology**

1. Transcription Notation Symbols
2. SDCL: San Diego Conversation Library
3. "Structure discovered in chit chat", LA Times
4. Harvey Sacks, "Notes on methodology," in John Heritage & J. Maxwell Atkinson, Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis, London: Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 21-27.
5. Wayne A. Beach, "Sequential organization of conversational activities," Foreword to Special Issue (same title) of Western Journal of Speech Communication, 1989, 53, 85-90.

## **II. Storytelling: Basic Issues and Perspectives**

6. Marjorie H. Goodwin, "Chapter 9: Perspectives on stories," in He said she said: Talk as social organization among black children, 1990, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 229-238.
7. Harvey Sacks, "On doing being ordinary," in J. Maxwell Atkinson and John Heritage (eds.), Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis, London: Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 413-429.
8. Gail Jefferson, "Sequential aspects of storytelling in conversation," in Schenkein (Ed.), Studies in the organization of conversational interaction, 1978, New York: Academic Press, pp. 219-247.
9. Anita Pomerantz, "Extreme case formulations: A way of legitimizing claims," Human Studies, 1986, 9, 219-229.

## **III. Speakers and Recipients**

10. Emmanuel A. Schegloff, "Discourse as an interactional achievement: Some uses of "uh huh" and other things that come between sentences," in D. Tannen (Ed.), Analyzing discourse: Text and talk -- Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics, 1982, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, pp. 71-93.
11. Chuck Goodwin, "Between and within: Alternative sequential treatment of continuers and assessments," Human Studies, 1986, 9, 205-224.
12. Jenny Mandelbaum, "Interpersonal dimensions of conversational storytelling. Western Journal of Speech Communication, 1989, 53: 114-126.
13. Wayne A. Beach, "Language as and in technology: Facilitating topic organization in a Videotex focus group meeting," in Martin J. Medhurst et al. (Eds.), Communication and the culture of technology, 1990, Pullman: Washington State University Press, pp. 197-219.
14. Gene Lerner, "Assisted storytelling: Deploying shared knowledge as a practical matter," Qualitative Sociology, 1992, 15:247-271.

#### IV. Reported Speech: Voicing Thoughts and Behaviors

15. Elizabeth Holt, "Reporting on talk: The use of direct reported speech in conversation," Research on Language and Social Interaction, 1996, 29, 219-245.
16. Wayne A. Beach, "Inviting collaborations in stories about a woman," Language in Society, 2000, 29, 379-407.

#### V. Participation Frameworks (e.g., Disputes)

17. Marjorie H. Goodwin, "Chapters 10 & 11: Stories as participation structures; Instigating," in He said she said: Talk as social organization among black children, 1990, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 239-279.
18. Wayne A. Beach, "Avoiding ownership for alleged wrongdoings," Research on Language and Social Interaction, 1991, 24: 1-36. (Chapter 5 in Conversations about illness: Family preoccupations with bulimia, New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996).
19. Jenny Mandelbaum, "Assigning responsibility in conversational storytelling: The interactional construction of reality," Text, 1993, 13: 247-266.

#### V. Variations and Alternative Concerns

20. Harvey Sacks, "Some technical considerations of a dirty joke," in J. Schenkein (Ed.), pp. 249-270.
21. Anita Pomerantz, "Telling my side: 'Limited access' as a 'fishing' device", Sociological Inquiry, 1980, 3-4: 186-198.
22. Wayne A. Beach & Anna K. Lindstrom, "Conversational universals and comparative theory: Turning to Swedish and American acknowledgment tokens in interaction," Communication Theory, 1992, 2:24-49.

#### Sampling of Readings on Reserve\*

- Wayne A. Beach, "Transitional Regularities for 'Casual' 'Okay' Usages," Journal of Pragmatics, 1993, 19, 325-352.
- Wayne A. Beach, "Preserving and constraining options: 'Okays' and 'official' priorities in medical interviews," In G. H. Morris & R. Cheneil (eds.) (1995), Talk of the clinic (pp.259-289). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Charles Goodwin, "Notes on Story Structure and the Organization of Participation," in Atkinson & Heritage (Eds.), pp. 225-246.
- Howard Kamler, "How stories work", Ch. 2, Communication: Sharing our stories of experience, 1983, pp.27-58, Seattle: Psychological Press.
- Neal R. Norrick, "Twice-told tales: Collaborative narration of familiar stories," Language in Society, 1997, 26, 199-220.

\*(Additional readings will be added, as needed/requested, throughout the semester.)

