

ENGLISH 673: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Syllabus, Spring, 2004:

John P. Broderick

Thursdays 4:20-7 pm, Virginia Beach Higher Education Center, Room 206

Office: BAL 419; Office phone & voice mail: 683-4029; Office hrs.: MWF: 11:00 to 11:45 a.m. on campus and (by previous arrangement) R 3:30 4:15 p.m. in VBHEC 205, and other times by appointment; e-mail: jpbroder@odu.edu Website: <http://www.odu.edu/al/jpbroder>

Course texts: *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time: The Flow and Displacement of Conscious Experience in Speaking and Writing*, by Wallace Chafe (U. of Chicago Press, 1994) and *Studies in Empirical Linguistic Discourse Analysis* (SELDA), by John P. Broderick. Additional articles, handouts, and recorded audio data will be distributed.

Course Objectives: (1) To understand the approach to discourse analysis presented in Wallace Chafe's book (which is rooted in linguistics and psychology), (2) To apply Chafe's approach to the analysis of spoken data. (3) To look at some other approaches to the analysis of information flow in spoken and written discourse.

Quizzes: There will be 11 quizzes at 10 pts. each (counted as 100 points of the course grade, thus allowing you to miss one quiz without a penalty). Quizzes will consist of two terms or sets of terms from the assigned readings, which you will define and exemplify with actual language data (either from the reading or of your own invention). Fifteen minutes at the beginning of each class will be set aside for each quiz. To prepare for these quizzes, you must not only read the assignment but also study it, take notes, and study the notes. I strongly recommend reading the assignment during the previous weekend, so that you will have additional days for study. All quizzes will be written in one 8 & 1/2 by 11 inch blue examination booklet which you should bring to the first quiz on January 22.

Course Plan:

1/15 [NO QUIZ; NO ASSIGNED READINGS] Course Introduction; An Overview of the Functional Approach to Linguistic Analysis; Some (Preliminary) Linguistic Perspectives on Discourse Structure; Erving Goffman's Article: "The Neglected Situation"

1/22 QUIZ #1 (10 pts.) on *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time* pp. ix-50: Preface; Acknowledgments; Symbols Used in Transcription of Speech; Introduction; Understanding Language and the Mind; The Nature of Consciousness; Speaking and Writing

1/29 QUIZ #2 (10 pts.) on Chafe's article, "Cognitive Constraints on Information Flow"

2/5 QUIZ #3 (10 pts.) on *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time* pp. 53-81 and SELDA pp.3-27; Intonation Units; Activation Cost [how active, semi-active, and inactive ideas are verbalized, respectively, as given, accessible, and new information]

2/12 QUIZ #4 (10 pts.) on SELDA pp. 28-50 and Coulthard's article "The Significance of Intonation in Discourse"

2/19 QUIZ #5 (10 pts.) on *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time* pp. 82-92: Starting Points, Subjects, and the Light Subject Constraint.

2/26 QUIZ #6 (10 pts.) on Chafe's article, "Grammatical Subjects in Speaking and Writing" and SELDA pp.62-75.

3/4 FIRST COURSE EXAM (120 pts.) In preparation for this examination, you will be required to transcribe (using the adapted Chafe approach) a three to five minute segment of a recorded spoken discourse assigned by John Broderick (the transcription itself will count as 20 points). You will bring this typed transcription with you to the in-class portion of the exam; during the in-class exam, you will be required to write two essays (in a blue examination booklet -- 50 points each) on aspects of Chafe's ideas, but using examples, as relevant, from the data you have transcribed. You must come prepared to write on any of the following four topics (John Broderick will choose two): (1) Consciousness (What is it, and how does it relate to the flow of ideas and the flow of discourse?); (2) Intonation Units (How are they defined and what types are there?); (3) Activation Cost (Define active, semi-active, and inactive ideas in consciousness and describe how they are verbalized as given, accessible, and new information in discourse.); (4) Starting Points and the Light Subject Constraint (Define the light subject constraint, noting Chafe's percentages of given, accessible, and new-but-trivial subjects; then comment on the relative percentages of each type in your data; what is the status of subjects in written discourse?)

3/11 NO CLASS / SPRING BREAK

3/18 QUIZ #7 (10 pts.) on *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time* pp. 93-107: Identifiability and "Definiteness"; Discussion of Course Paper

3/25 QUIZ #8 (10 pts.) on *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time* pp. 108-119: The One New Idea Constraint; Discussion of Course Paper

4/1 QUIZ #9 (10 pts.) on *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time* pp. 120-145: Discourse Topics; Topic Hierarchies and Sentences; Discussion of Course Paper

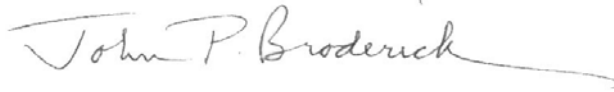
4/8 QUIZ #10 (10 pts.) on *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time* pp. 195-211: The Immediate and Displaced Modes in Conversational Language, and SELDA pp. 51-61; Discussion of Course Paper

4/15 **ALL COURSE PAPERS DUE** (100 pts.) Presentation of Course Papers

4/22 Presentation of Course Papers; QUIZ # 11 (10 pts. – at 6:40 p.m.) on papers presented during the last class and this evening.

4/29 (3:45-6:45 p.m.) **SECOND COURSE EXAM** (80 pts.) You will be required to prepare four essays, of which John Broderick will select two (at 40 points each) to be written during the test in a blue examination booklet. The essays will review the major issues treated in course readings and discussions related to: (1) Identifiability and "Definiteness" (Define, exemplify, and clearly differentiate from activation cost.); (2) The One New Idea Constraint (Define what it is, and find some examples in your own data that correspond to some of the phenomena that Chafe describes.); (3) Discourse Topics and the Structure of Oral Narratives (List and exemplify the typical components of an oral narrative and discuss other related issues, such as point of view.); (4) The Immediate and Displaced Modes in Conversational Narratives (Use examples to support Chafe's definition of the two modes and discuss John Broderick's use of this distinction in SELDA, pp. 51-61.)

Course Policies



A university course is a very special learning experience. To justify the assembly of students and professor at a specified place and time week after week, something must happen there that cannot happen in any other way -- not by reading textbooks, not by reading the notes of others, not by conversing informally with the professor or with other students. What happens is that minds work together: the attention of many is focused on the words of one -- usually, but not always, the professor. It is not the same as viewing a lecture on television or even attending one in a large auditorium. I consider it my responsibility as a teacher to read your reactions to what I and others say. If I do not sense comprehension, I will restate, rephrase, re-exemplify. Your responsibility as students is to *act on* the information between the time it enters your eyes and ears and is stored in your mind. If something is not clear to you, please say so. Force me to make it clear. If enough of you do this, the time we spend together this term will indeed be special.

Throughout the semester, please keep this firmly in mind: Teaching is not just a job to me; it is a vocation (a calling). As a college professor, I am also required to do research and writing, and administrative and committee work, but nothing in my professional life is more important than helping you learn. If you have any problems of any kind related to this course, please talk to me. You may do so after class, you may come during my office hours, you may make an appointment, or you may call me either in my office or at home. I promise to do my very best to help you in every way that I can to get the most from this course.

Please also keep this in mind: If, during the term, you have to miss any classes, remember that you will learn less. A course grade is a measure of knowledge gained through *full* participation in the course experience, and you cannot earn a given grade unless you participate to the degree that grade demands. Even a doctor's appointment or personal crises that keep you from class will necessarily affect how much you learn. In such cases, I will do everything that I can to help you compensate for lost time, but you have to face reality. Just as you cannot physically be in two places at one time, neither can your mind. You have to be here to experience the stimulus and growth necessary to earn university credit. (Please don't make any decisions about dropping the course without first getting my advice.)

And finally, please keep this in mind: Only one person may speak at a time in this class. If you have something to say, please raise your hand, and I will give you the floor. If you need to consult with another student privately, please politely leave the room to do so. I find it impossible to stay focused on what I am teaching if other conversations are going on, even brief and quiet ones. I and your fellow students will greatly appreciate your cooperation on this matter!

In order to assure the intellectual integrity of the course and fairness to all, I will follow these policies:

A. Grading: The final letter grade will be assigned on the basis of a percentage of the total points available. (See the course outline for this total and for the breakdown.) 93-100=A, 90-92.99=A-, 87-89.99=B+, 83-86.99=B, 80-82.99=B-, 77-79.99=C+, 73-76.99=C, 70-72.99=C-, 67-69.99=D+, 63-66.99=D, 60-62.99=D-, 0-59.99=F.

B. No extra credit.

C. You cannot be sure of credit for any test or assignment unless you take the test or hand in the assignment on time. However, you may arrange a make-up with me within one week of the due date. I will accept such make-ups, but I will not grade them, and I do not commit myself to grade them. I will file them and decide at the end of the semester, on the basis of other work you have done, whether to grade them or not and whether to count them as more than zero. If I do decide to grade them, I will do so without prejudice; i.e., you will not be penalized because of lateness. Late tests and assignments, even if I do eventually grade them, *will never be returned*. (Quizzes are an integral part of the class experience, and therefore cannot be made up, no matter what the reason for absence.)

D. You are required to know about all matters treated in every class, whether you are there or not. This includes the lecture, class discussion, handouts, announcements about changes in the course outline, and announcements about changes in test dates or test matter.

E. A reminder about the university policy on withdrawal from classes (please see p. 52 of the 2002-2004 Catalog for details): If you formally withdraw before the end of the 6th day of the semester, no record of the course will appear on your transcript. If you formally withdraw before the end of the eighth week of the semester (or similar fraction of a nonsemester course), the grade of W will be assigned. Withdrawal after that date is not normally permitted. However, you may withdraw after that date if you submit a formal petition (that I and the department chair must both approve and sign) in which you provide evidence of illness or other severe hardship. If you stop attending and do not submit and have the formal petition approved, then the grade of WF will be assigned, unless your performance up to the date you stopped attending was F, in which case F will be assigned. The grade of WF will carry no grade points but will be computed in the grade point average.

F. Please see pp. 14 and 15 of the 2002-2004 Catalog for a complete description of ODU's Honor System. The following honor pledge applies to all work that you do in this course: "I pledge to support the Honor System of Old Dominion University. I will refrain from any form of academic dishonesty or deception, such as cheating or plagiarism. I am aware that as a member of the academic community, it is my responsibility to turn in all suspected violators of the Honor System. I will report to an Honor Council hearing if summoned." (It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and to avoid even the appearance of it.)