# LIN 4930: Discourse in Language Learning and Teaching

## Course Information

**Spring 2023:**  R | Periods 3-5 (9:35 AM - 12:35 PM)
                   105 UST

Spring break is March 11-18

**Instructor:**  Paula Golombek, PhD
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                 Office Hours:  TBA
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## Course Description

The **sentence** continues to play a dominant role in language classroom. This has resulted in an approach to language teaching/learning as "slot and filler" ((Handford, 2018), in which language learners slot in verb tenses/forms in decontextualized written sentences and fill in the appropriate vocabulary. Transformative ideas about communicative competence (Hymes, 1971; Canale, 1983) and language as meaning-making, or semiotics, (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) argue for **a discourse-based approach to language teaching**. This course focuses on the essential features of language, such as grammar and vocabulary, as part of larger, discoursal meaning making system, while recognizing differences between spoken and written texts. Through critical **discourse analysis** and corpus analysis of spoken and written texts, you will gain an understanding of language in discourse, that is, in use in context; develop your discourse analysis abilities, focusing on lexical, grammatical, phonologically, and organizational properties of discourse; and develop your ability to then design appropriate materials, activities, and curriculum for language learning/teaching. We will accomplish our goals through discourse-based activities that we do together in and outside class.

> Our guiding questions…
>
> *What is discourse and what is language in a discourse-based approach to language learning/teaching?*
>
> *How do we teach (components of) language as discourse in use, as a meaning making system?*
>
> *How do we analyze discourse for language learning for particular learners?*
>
> *How do design materials that embody the kinds of discourse, and its components, that will support particular students' needs, goals, and interests?*

**Students who successfully complete the module will develop an understanding of:**

Discourse in Language Learning/Teaching

- the concept of discourse and discourse properties
- how cultural, situational and textual contexts influence discourse construction and decoding
- cohesion and coherence
- different modes and types of discourse
- how language is used by teachers and pupils in the classroom
- discourse-based approaches to language teaching
- discourse analysis as a tool for teachers in discourse-based classes

## Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to:
- Make a persuasive case for why discourse-based approaches enhances learner's knowledge, meta-knowledge, agency, especially outside the classroom, and abilities
- Analyze examples of discourse for any number of features that could be taught for a specific group of learners: lexical, grammatical, phonological, and organizational
- Design classroom materials/curriculum embodying the concept of discourse and discourse properties in teaching/learning for particular learners' needs, abilities, and goals
- Integrate your theory of language and learning, as well as other strategies for classroom learning (e.g., corpus) into your discourse-based approach, tasks, and curriculum

## Course Learning Activities

### Discourse-based analysis tasks (45 points total)

You will do a series of discourse analysis tasks of specific texts to identify features of language and how they function in discourse texts, as well as instructional activities that engage student understanding. These analysis activities will be key to supporting your understanding of the concepts presented in the class and will enable you to do the final project. I also hope that you'll learn the value of discourse through these activities and identify an issue you'd like to pursue for your literature review. You will be expected to present your findings in different ways to the class.

### Literature Review (25%)

Good teachers continue to learn about content, strategies, teaching theories, etc. To learn more about a topic that interests you, you will write a literature review of at least 6 articles on a topic of your choosing. The focus, while being connected to discourse-based approaches (DBA), can deal with a range of issues, such as but not exclusive to your theory of learning; how corpus could enhance DBA; genre analysis; how cognitive linguistics could shape a discourse based-approach; how DBA could support specific skills or components of language. We will do this paper over a period of time, meaning you will write multiple drafts and understand how to do a literature review.

**April 1st** – Set up an appointment to discuss your focus
**By April 28th**—send draft (doesn't need to be completed) and set up a time to conference with me
**May 3rd** Submit FINAL paper by noon

Discourse in Language Learning/Teaching

## Discourse-Based Curriculum Unit (30%)

You will collect appropriate texts representing a relevant genre for your students and design a discourse-based curriculum unit. These texts can be written or spoken language, and you will identify learners you may/would like to actually teach. This assignment has two parts. First, you will do an analysis of these texts in order to identify organizational, grammatical, lexical, and/or phonological features pertinent to this genre. Second, on the basis of your findings, you will design a 5-hour instructional unit. We will be doing various analysis tasks IN class, so you develop your ability to do this. Communicating your thinking about what you're doing and why with me will be critical

Identification and Initial Analysis of texts(15%) **Due: March 30th**
Instructional Unit (15%) **Due: April 21st**

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# See below for UF grading.

## Grading

| Course Assignments and Grading | |
|---|---|
| **Assignment** | **Points** |
| Discourse-based Analysis Tasks | 45 |
| Literature Review | 25 |
| Curriculum Unit | 30 |

| Grading Scale | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 100—93 | A | 76—73 | C |
| 92—90 | A- | 72—70 | C- |
| 89—87 | B+ | 69—67 | D+ |
| 86—83 | B | 66—63 | D |
| 82—80 | B- | 62—60 | D- |
| 79—77 | C+ | 59—0 | E |

https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx.

# Course Textbook

We will use selected chapters from the following available on CANVAS:

Celce-Muria, M. & Olshtain, E. (2000). D*iscourse and Context in Language Teaching: A Guide for Language Teachers.* Cambridge.

Hillard, A. (2014). Spoken Grammar and its Role in the English Language Classroom. *English Teaching Forum*, 4, pp. 2-13.

McCarthy, M. (1991). *Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers*. Cambridge.

McCarthy, M. (1998). *Spoken Language and Applied Linguistics*. Cambridge.

McCarthy, M. & Carter, R. (1994*). Language as Discourse: Perspectives for Language Teaching*.  Longman.

O'Keefe, A., McCarthy, M., Carter, R. (2007). *From Corpus to Classroom: Language Use and Language Teaching*. Cambridge.

Paltridge, B. (2001). *Genre and the Language Learning Classroom*. Michigan.

# Your responsibilities as a student in this class to yourself and others

## Stay Aware/Comply With Covid Policies on Campus

Campus Briefs are being sent regularly. Here is the latest:

TBA

## Complete the Readings

Reading provide the theory behind the idea of language as discourse. Additionally, the readings will provide a foundation for in-class activities. I don't expect you to understand everything, so come with questions and we will think together!

## Attend and Actively Participate in Class

Attendance and participation go hand in hand. As graduate students, I would expect that that you are willing to create and engage with our community of learners. Class attendance is essential for your success in this course. Come to class **on time**, **prepared,** and **ready to think together**. We are a learning community so be respectful (no texting unless family emergency) or web surfing. Sharing diverse ideas is critical to our learning--listening to each other as we share our ideas and provide evidence for our positions is essential to academic dialogue.

We are experiencing unusual circumstances. If you fall ill or have an emergency, please contact me immediately.

## Submit Work on Time

Deadlines are part of life, and the deadlines in this course were set to help build your knowledge and abilities throughout the semester to help you be successful in the class assignments. Late assignments will be penalized (penalty of 10% of the grade deducted for each day it is late). BUT I will give you extensions without penalty if you let me know **ahead of time** (for example, sickness, religious holidays, emergencies). If you tell me after the fact, your work will be penalized.

## Check Canvas  Regularly

Canvas (https://elearning.ufl.edu/) will be our main online platform for the course. It will be the main way that I communicate with you outside of class. You are welcome to contact me via Canvas or my UF email (pgolombek@ufl.edu). I send out Announcements and reminders about upcoming assignments regularly, so make sure to set up your Canvas notifications.

## Communicate

I am genuinely eager to get to know you as people/students. Your success matters to me. If you are unsure about expectations, need feedback, or must miss class, PLEASE reach out to me. You can email me, Canvas message me, see me during office hours (zoom or in person), or touch base after class.  I tend to have a rapid response time when students reach out. I will ask the class for some feedback at times to get a sense of how things are going.

According to Florida House Bill 233, students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. Please see Canvas for details about when you are allowed to record the class.

## Be a good citizen of our learning community

Do your own work unless working with a partner as specified in certain activities. Follow the University of Florida, you are bound by The Honor Code Student Responsibilities < University of Florida (ufl.edu). Of course not cheating is part of the Honor Code, but it also specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. I take this part seriously in my work: "Only in an atmosphere of equality and respect can all members of the university community grow.".

## Take Care of Yourself

We are in challenging times.  If you feel overly challenged, please contact the Counseling and Wellness Center https://counseling.ufl.edu/  352-392-1575. If you are having difficulty setting something up at the CWC or see a friend in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or (352) 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student. OR, come to me and I will reach out to the Dean of Students office.

## Request Accommodations if Needed

Any student with differing abilities/needs who is requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (https://disability.ufl.edu/). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to me as the

instructor when requesting accommodation. Please do this as early as possible in the semester. If you need any help, let me know.

## Tentative Course Schedule

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary. If deviations are made, I will upload an updated schedule to Canvas.

**Week 1 January 12**

**Course Overview**
**Your Reason to be Here**
**Discourse Activity as Course Preview**

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**Week 2 January 19**

**What is discourse? Text, context, spoken and written discourse**

This session introduces the concept of 'discourse' and 'context' (setting, behavioral environment, language, and extrasituational) and shows the inherent relationship between them.  We'll learn about 'genre' and the way its been studied through different approaches, as well as prototypes. To ground us, we'll engage in a genre-based activity to gain a burgeoning experiential understanding of these ideas, which we'll develop over the course of the semester.

**Readings:**
McCarthy and Carter, 1994 (M&C), Chapter 1
McCarthy (1998) Chapter 2
Paltridge, Chapter 1

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**Week 3 January 26**

**Discourse Analysis for Teachers**

This session briefly overviews types of discourse analysis (DA), but our focus will be on doing some DA activities for the language classroom in order for you to practice DA and realize its potential in language teaching. Those of you with a corpus background will be encouraged to help us think about using this in our analyses.

**Readings:**
McCarthy (1991), Chapter 1

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**Week 4 February 2**

**Spoken Language and Discourse Realized through Genre**

We begin our focus with the larger scale phenomenon of discourse by focusing on genre with spoken language. We work through some examples of spoken genres considering function and communicative goals; work through adjacency pairs and turntaking; and identify components of a 'spoken grammar'.

**Readings:**
Paltridge, Chapter 2
McCarthy (1998) Chapter 4

**Week 5 February 9**

**Observing and exploiting patterns: Grammar and spoken language**

We'll explore how grammar can be explored through a macro perspective or macropragmatical approach (beginning with a speech event and then characterizing the macrostructure and relevant grammatical features) or a microanalytic approach (beginning with forms/constructions of interest, exploring the distribution across the speech event). We'll explore some specific grammar constructions to show how they operate across discourse through pedagogical activities you could do with your students. We'll consider how to address this issue across proficiency levels.

**Readings:**
Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, Chapter 4
Hillard (2014) https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1050242.pdf

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**Week 6 February 16**

 **Observing and exploiting patterns: Vocabulary and idioms and the spoken language**

Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, Chapter 5

We'll explore how words not only express semantic content but serve a discourse function (think 'so' as an utterance starter or ender). We'll work through some of the characteristics of spoken language, such as repetition, relexicalization, shared knowledge. We'll work through idioms, not as disembodied and decontextualized, but as having an evaluative function in everyday storytelling.

**Week 7 February 23**

**Discourse and Pragmatics**

**Readings:**
O'Keeffe, McCarthy, & Carter, Chapter 6
Using the CARLA website from the University of Minnesota, we'll explore how student analysis and work with 'speech acts' can provide meaningful insights into lexicogrammatical, macrostructural, and pragmatic aspects of goal-oriented spoken language.

**Week 8 March 2**

**Linking grammar, lexis, and discourse: Spoken to written language**

**Readings:**
McCarthy & Carter, Chapter 3

Depending on what we have accomplished so far, we will complete or extend particular topics or engage in a discourse analysis of spoken language for pedagogical goals.

**Week 9 Spring Break March 9**

**Week 10 March 16**

**Discourse, genre, and the written language**

This session will deepen our understanding of how discourse and genre has transformed our understanding of teaching/learning written language. We'll explore these ideas through varied written forms including media and emails, as well as more formal and academic forms of writing.

**Readings:**
McCarthy (1991) Chapter 6

**Week 11 March 23**

**Written discourse: cohesion and coherence**

This session focuses on the two main properties of discourse, namely cohesion and coherence. How cohesive devices unify a stretch of discourse, and how sentences and parts of discourse are

linked coherently to form a larger organisational structure, will be illustrated. Having an understanding of cohesion and coherence will profoundly shape your understandings of teaching writing (and speaking). By participating in various discourse-based activities, you'll begin to understand why a sentence may be grammatical but not a good 'fit' in a piece of writing, leaving to confusion. You'll understand the many ways we achieve cohesion and coherence that enables readers (listeners) to understand what we're trying to say and accomplish.

**Readings:**
McCarthy (1991), Chapter 2

**Genre/discourse analysis activity for written language**

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**Week 12 March 30**

**The discourse syllabus**

By considering the learning context, we'll go through a curriculum design process to identify the specific needs and goals of a specific group of students through a discourse-based lens.

**Readings:**
CM & O, Ch 10

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**Week 13 April 6**

Project workshop

We'll use class time to work on and get peer/prof feedback on the discourse-based curriculum unit.

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**Week 14 April 13**

**Final project presentations**

We'll spend time sharing what we've learned with each other through literature reviews/curriculum projects.

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**Week 15 April 20**

**Final project presentations and course wrap-up**

We'll spend time sharing what we've learned with each other through literature reviews/curriculum projects. AND we'll discuss how we've developed our thinking and doing about a discourse-based approach to language teaching. How will you respond to fill in the blank exercises in the language classroom after this class?!