

Linguistics 367.01
Language, Sex and Gender in American Culture
Course Syllabus

Instructor: XXXXX
Office: XXXXX
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Email: XXXXX
Office Hours: XXXXX

WebCT URL: <http://class.osu.edu/>

Instructor's Mailbox: Entryway of 222 Oxley Hall. Accessible 8am-5pm Monday-Friday.

Course Objectives: It is well-established that men and women may differ in the language that they use as well as in the way that they use language. In this course we will examine the ways that sex, gender and language interact, specifically in speech communities in the United States. Specifically, we will:

- evaluate various explanations for differentiated language use between men and women including gender- and sex-based explanations
- evaluate issues of gender inequality in language use
- examine various theories of gender, sex and sexuality
- consider how concepts of gender, sex and sexuality are shaped by discourse
- use linguistic analyses of conversational interaction to examine some of the ways that gender, sex and sexuality influence language use
- examine and evaluate a diverse body of research from sociolinguistics, anthropology, gender studies and psychology that bear on these issues

This course is designed to fulfill the GEC second writing course requirement. As a result, an additional important objective of this course is to help you further develop your skills of written and oral expression. This will be done through specific instruction on writing and presenting by the instructor, informal and formal writing assignments, an oral presentation, and short homework assignments focusing on language usage. Feedback on your writing from the instructor and other members of the class is incorporated into the course but you should feel free to ask for additional input if needed. These writing-related assignments make up 65% of the grade (see below for more details regarding grading in this course).

Required Texts: The textbook for this course is *Language and Gender: A Reader* edited by Jennifer Coates, ©1998 Blackwell Publishers. Additionally, there are other required reading materials that must be obtained from the main library's closed reserve desk, a course packet, or from this course's WebCT site. These materials are listed on the course schedule. Another extremely important text for this class is the online edition of *The American Heritage Book of English Usage* at <http://www.bartleby.com/64/>.

Requirements:

1. *Reading Assignments:* You should read each article (at *least* once) before the date listed on the syllabus. Discussion of these readings is the main focus of learning in this course, and so being prepared is extremely important. The class will be much more informative, substantive, and yes, even fun if every person arrives having read and is ready to discuss the assigned article.
2. *Class Participation:* In a discussion-based class, each person's insights, questions and thoughts are extremely valuable. You are expected to contribute to the discussion on a daily

basis, and your level of participation will be reflected in your grade. Note that class attendance is not included in your grade per se, but if you are not in class, you cannot participate.

3. *Response Papers*: You are to write short, informal papers (1-2 pages each, double spaced 12-point font) responding to each of the two prompts indicated below. The purpose of these two assignments is to give you an opportunity to express your own views about the course material. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Instead, you will be graded on how well you followed the instructions (wrote the right amount, addressed the actual topic, etc.) and connected your response to the course reading and class discussion.

- a. Prompt:** Listen to the “Testosterone” episode of the radio program *This American Life* at <http://thislife.org/pages/descriptions/02/220.html> (requires RealAudio; click the "RA" icon to listen) **or** read “The Case of Joan/John” at <http://www.infocirc.org/rollston.htm>. How can what you just heard or read be reconciled, if at all, with the classroom reading and discussion so far? Do you think this material weakens the “social construct” view of gender we have discussed in class? Why or why not?

Due by Friday of Week 1 at 5:00 PM via WebCT.

- b. Prompt:** In “*Yanyuwa: 'Men speak one way, women speak another'*” (Coates Ch. 1), John Bradley describes the gender exclusive pattern in an Australian aboriginal language. Which of these linguistic phenomena described by Bradley do you think fits best: (a) an essentialist view of gender, (b) a social construct view of gender, or (c) a performance view of gender? Why do you think so?

Due by Friday of Week 2 at 5:00 PM via WebCT.

4. *Presentation*: This is a group project (2-3 students) which involves reading a particular article and then presenting the article to the class. Your group is to meet with the instructor outside of class at least two days before your presentation to discuss any questions that you may have, the structure of your presentation, etc.

5. *Article Review*: Each group member is to write a critical review of the article that your group presented (see 4, above). The paper should be 3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font. Your review needs to be more than a simple restating of what appears in the article. In preparing your review consider questions such as the following:

What is the main point of the article?

Are the arguments that the author brings in to support his or her point of view convincing?

What are some of the implications of the author's proposals?

Is the article clearly written?

Before writing up your review, consult the handout (to be distributed) entitled *Article Review* which provides additional details on formatting and content.

The actual writing of your review is a three-step process:

a. Draft review: Write a draft review of the article.

b. Peer feedback: Give your draft review to at least one other person in your group for comments and suggestions.

c. Final review: Write the final version of your review taking into account the feedback

that you have received. Consult the *Article Review* handout to make sure that you have followed the instructions correctly.

All three parts of this assignment (draft review, peer feedback and final review) are to be submitted via WebCT within one week of your presentation. The grade will be based on clarity of expression, format, content, and the correct use of grammar and punctuation. The other two parts of the assignment will not be graded.

6. *Position Paper*: Choose a position on a social or theoretical issue involving language and gender, sex or sexuality (10-15 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font). Define that position and defend it using current literature in the field or even data that you have collected yourself. Progress reports on your paper are due throughout the quarter (see below). I will distribute a *Position Paper* handout with details on formatting and content for you to consult before you begin to write your paper. The grade will be based on clarity of expression, correct use of vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, the format, content and organization of the paper.

Wednesday, Week 4: Bring ideas related to your paper topic to class for feedback.

Wednesday, Week 8: Rough draft of your paper is due.

Wednesday, Week 9: Commented drafts are returned to students.

Wednesday, Week 10: Bring questions regarding your paper to class for feedback.

7. *Homework*: A few short homework assignments relating to language usage will be assigned and collected during the early part of the quarter. Please see the course schedule for due dates.

8. *Quizzes*: There are two quizzes which are to be taken online via the course's WebCT site. They will be scheduled during weeks 5 and 10. Quizzes will be based on material covered in the readings, lectures and class discussions.

Course Grade:

Class Participation	15%	Article Review	10%
2 Response Papers	10%	Homework	10%
2 Quizzes	20%	Position Paper	25%
Presentation	10%	Total	100%

Letter grades are assigned according to the following scale:

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

Submitting Assignments: All assignments should be submitted on the course's WebCT site. In the event of a computer problem, a print version of the completed assignment may be put in my mailbox to avoid late penalties but the assignment must still be submitted via WebCT before it will be graded. A late assignment may be turned in up to one week after its due dates for half credit. After one week it will not be accepted.

Classroom Etiquette: It is important to respect not only the instructor, but also your fellow classmates. The study of language and gender is inherently political. Personal feelings can be very strong, and can lead to intense emotional responses during discussion. You are expected to respect your classmates' rights to their opinions and beliefs. This includes not interrupting people, dominating the floor, raising your voice, insulting, threatening, etc.

Academic Misconduct: To state the obvious, academic dishonesty is not allowed. Cheating, or suspicion of cheating, on tests or on other assignments will be reported to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct. The most common form of misconduct is plagiarism. Remember that any time you use the ideas or the materials of another person or persons, you must acknowledge that you have done so in a citation. This includes material that you have found on the Web. The University provides guidelines for research on the Web at <http://gateway.lib.ohio-state/tutor/>.

Students with Special Needs: Everyone is welcome in my classroom. Please let me know within the first week of class if you are registered with the Office of Disability Services and have any physical impairments or learning needs that I should be aware of in order to assist you in better taking advantage of and/or meeting the requirements of this class. I will work with ODS to provide special accommodations to students who require such assistance. Students who feel that they might benefit from services offered by this office but have not yet been assessed should contact them as soon as possible (292-3307, ground floor of Pomerene Hall).

Disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to change (with sufficient notice). The most up-to-date version of this syllabus can be found on the course website.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Monday *Course basics.*
Introduction to linguistics.

Wednesday *Sex and Gender: Essence, Construct or Performance?*

Reading assignment:

Course packet: “Constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing gender.” (excerpt from Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2003. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 9-32.)

Homework assignment: Choose three items listed in chapter 1 (“Grammar”) of *The American Heritage Book of English Usage* at <http://www.bartleby.com/64/> that are or have been problematic for you in your own writing and write a sample “incorrect” (in the prescriptive sense) sentence and a corrected version of that same sentence for each one. Due: Monday, week 2 by 9a.m.

Writing workshop: 1. Written English as a foreign language. 2. Writing an effective article review.

Week 2

Monday *Sex and Gender continued.*

Reading assignment:

Course packet: Mendoza-Denton, Norma. 1996. “‘Muy Macha’: Gender and Ideology in Gang-Girls’ Discourse and Makeup”. *Ethnos* 61(1-2), 47-63.

Wednesday *Sex and grammatical variation across cultures.*

Reading assignment: Coates, ch. 1: “Yanyuwa: ‘Men speak one way, women speak

another.” by John Bradley. 13-20.

Homework assignment: Choose three items listed in chapter 3 (“Word Choice”) of *The American Heritage Book of English Usage* at <http://www.bartleby.com/64/> that are or have been problematic for you in your own writing and write a sample “incorrect” (in the prescriptive sense) sentence and a corrected version of that same sentence for each one. Due: Monday, week 3 by 9 a.m.

Writing workshop: Giving an effective presentation. Topics include:

- how to present your material with clarity
- how to keep your audience interested in your topic
- preparing a handout for the audience, if needed
- how much material to cover

Week 3

Monday *Sex and gender in sociolinguistic studies.*

Reading assignment:

Course packet: Cameron, Deborah and Jennifer Coates. 1989. “Some Problems in the Sociolinguistic Explanation of Sex Differences”. In Jennifer Coates and Deborah Cameron (eds.), *Women in Their Speech Communities*. London: Longman, 13-26.

Presentation:

Coates, ch. 5: “Black Women in the Rural South” by Patricia C. Nichols. 55-63.

Wednesday *Sociolinguistic studies and beyond: Gender as practice.*

Reading assignments:

Coates, ch. 31: “Communities of Practice: Where Language, Gender, and Power All Live” by Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 484-494.

Ch. 3 of *The American Heritage Book of English Usage* at <http://www.bartleby.com/64/3.html>

Presentation:

Coates, ch. 6: “Gender and Sociolinguistic Variation” by Penelope Eckert. 64-76.

Writing workshop: General guidelines for writing or presenting research. Topics include plagiarism, citing sources, developing an outline, preparing an annotated bibliography.

Homework for next Wednesday:

Write down the following points and bring them to class next Wednesday to get feedback from the instructor and your classmates. You only need to write one or two sentences for each point. 1. State what the topic of your position paper is. 2. State as clearly as you can what your position is on this topic. 3. Write down some of your thoughts and arguments that you may be using to support your position. 4. Write down any questions that you have about your topic or writing a position paper.

Week 4

Monday *Women's language?*

Reading assignment:

Course packet: Lakoff, Robin. 1975. *Language and Woman's Place*. New York: Harper & Row. 8-19.

Presentation:

Cameron, Deborah, Fiona McAlinden, and Kathy O'Leary. 1989. "Lakoff in Context: The Social and Linguistic Functions of Tag Questions". In Jennifer Coates and Deborah Cameron (eds.), *Women in Their Speech Communities*. London: Longman. 74-93.

Wednesday *Sex, gender or power?*

Reading assignment:

Coates, ch. 24: "'Women's Language' or 'Powerless Language'?" by William M. O'Barr and Bowman K. Atkins. 377-387.

Homework assignment: Choose one item listed in chapter 6 ("Names and Labels") of *The American Heritage Book of English Usage* at <http://www.bartleby.com/64/> that you consider to be insensitive and explain why you think so, taking into account the arbitrary nature of language we discussed in the second week of class. Due: Monday, week 5 by 9 a.m.

Writing workshop: Developing the ideas in your Position Paper.

Bring in a sheet of paper with your position paper ideas (see entry under Writing Workshop for Wednesday, Week 4 for details). Students will divide into small groups to get feedback on the ideas for their position paper. At the end of the class, each student will hand in their sheet of paper to the instructor for additional comments.

Week 5

Monday *Women and men in conversation.*

Reading assignment:

Coates, ch. 26: "When the Doctor is a 'Lady': Power, Status, and Gender in Physician-Patient Encounters" by Candace West. 396-412.

Presentation:

Coates, ch. 11: "Women's Place in Everyday Talk: Reflections on Parent-Child Interaction" by Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman. 165-175.

Wednesday *Conversation and dominance.*

Reading assignments:

Coates, ch. 12: "The Sounds of Silence: How Men Silence Women in Marital Relations" by Victoria Leto DeFrancisco. 176-184.

Presentation:

James, Deborah and Sandra Clarke. 1992. "Interruptions, gender, and power: A critical review of the literature." In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz and Birch Moonwomon (eds.),

Locating Power: Proceedings of the 2nd Berkeley Women and Language Conference.
Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California,
Berkeley. 286-299.

Writing workshop (position paper ideas returned to students with comments):

- how to write an effective position paper
- organizing your thoughts in written form

Week 6

Monday *Conversational dominance or cultural difference?*

Reading assignment:

Coates, ch. 27: “A Cultural Approach to Male-Female Miscommunication” by Daniel N. Maltz and Ruth A. Borker. 417-434.

Presentations:

Tannen, Deborah. 1990. *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation.*
New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc. (excerpt). 49-74.

Coates, ch. 9: “Cooperation and Competition Across Girls’ Play Activities” by Marjorie Harness Goodwin. 121-146.

Wednesday *Dominance or difference, continued.*

Reading assignment:

Course packet: Freed, Alice. 1992. "We Understand Perfectly: A Critique of Tannen's View of Cross-Sex Communication". In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz and Birch Moonwomon (eds.), *Locating Power: Proceedings of the 2nd Berkeley Women and Language Conference.* Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California, Berkeley, 144-152.

Presentation:

Coates, ch. 13: “Talk Control: An Illustration from the Classroom of Problems in Analysing Male Dominance of Conversation” by Joan Swann. 185-196.

Writing workshop: Grammar. Review of some problematic areas of grammar. Bring in your favorite candidates including those that you addressed in your homework assignments from *The American Heritage Book of English Usage.*

Week 7

Monday *Same-Sex Talk and Gossip.*

Reading assignment:

Coates, ch. 16: “Gossip Revisited: Language in All-Female Groups” by Jennifer Coates. 226-253.

Presentations:

Coates, ch. 17: “‘Don’t try and make out that I’m nice!’ The Different Strategies Women and Men Use when Gossiping” by Jane Pilkington. 254-269.

Johnson, Sally and Frank Finlay. 1997. “Do Men Gossip? An Analysis of Football Talk on Television”. In Sally Johnson and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof (eds.), *Language and Masculinity*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 130-143.

Wednesday *Same-Sex Talk and Gossip, continued.*

Reading assignment:

Coates, ch. 18: “Performing Gender Identity: Young Men’s Talk and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity” by Deborah Cameron. 270-284.

Writing workshop: Writing with style. Some general tips for writing with clarity and style.

Week 8

Monday *Online Communication.*

Reading assignment:

Course packet: Herring, Susan C. 2003. “Gender and Power in On-line Communication” In Janet Holmes and Miriam Meyerhoff (eds.), *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 202-228.

Presentations:

Coates, ch. 14: “Participation in Electronic Discourse in a ‘Feminist’ Field” by Susan C. Herring, Deborah A. Johnson and Tamra DiBenedetto. 197-210.

Bucholtz, Mary. 2002. “Geek Feminism”. In Sarah Benor, Mary Rose, Devyani Sharma, Julie Sweetland and Qing Zhang (eds.). *Gendered Practice in Language*. CSLI Publications: Stanford. 277-308.

Wednesday *Workplace Communication.*

HAND IN DRAFT OF YOUR POSITION PAPER FOR FEEDBACK.

Reading assignment:

Coates, ch. 21: “‘I don’t smile much anymore’: Affect, Gender and the Discourse of Pittsburgh Police Officers” by Bonnie S. McElhinny. 309-327.

Presentations:

Coates, ch. 23: “Women’s Ways: Interactive Patterns in Predominantly Female Research Teams” by Marie Wilson Nelson. 354-372.

Case, Susan Schick. 1992. “Organizational inequity in a steel plant: A language model.” In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz and Birch Moonwomon (eds.), *Locating Power: Proceedings of the 2nd Berkeley Women and Language Conference*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California, Berkeley.

Week 9

Monday *The history of sexist language.*

Reading assignment:

Course packet: Baron, Dennis. 1986. *Grammar and Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 112-136.

Presentation:

Khosroshahi, Fatemeh. 1989. "Penguins Don't Care, but Women Do: A Social Identity Analysis of a Whorfian Problem." *Language in Society* 18(4), 505-525.

Wednesday *Sexist language and language reform.*

Reading assignment:

Course packet: Ehrlich, Susan and Ruth King. 1992. "Feminist Meanings and Sexist Speech Communities." In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz and Birch Moonwomon (eds.), *Locating Power: Proceedings of the 2nd Berkeley Women and Language Conference*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California, Berkeley. 100-107.

Ch. 5 of *The American Heritage Book of English Usage* at <http://www.bartleby.com/64/5.html>

Presentation:

Crawford, Mary and Linda English. 1984. "Generic Versus Specific Inclusion of Women in Language: Effects on Recall." *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 13(5). 373-381.

Writing workshop (commented Position Papers returned to students):

- discussion of aspects of papers that need further refinement
- suggestions for improving your papers
- your questions regarding your paper

Week 10

Monday *Language and sexuality.*

Reading assignment:

Course packet: Jacobs, Greg. 1996. "Lesbian and Gay Male Language Use: A Critical Review of the Literature." *American Speech* 71, 49-71.

Presentations:

Gaudio, Rudolf. 1994. "Sounding Gay: Pitch Properties in the Speech of Gay and Straight Men." *American Speech* 69(2), 30-57.

Moonwomon-Baird, Birch. 1997. "Toward a Study of Lesbian Speech." In Anna Livia and Kira Hall (eds.), *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 202-213.

Wednesday *Sex and gender revisited: the effect of assumptions on research.*

Reading assignment:

Coates, ch. 32: “The Question of Questions: Beyond Binary Thinking” by Janet M. Bing and Victoria L. Bergvall. 495-510.

Writing workshop: Bring in your Position Papers—last chance for feedback on your drafts!