

DePaul University
Honors Seminar PSC 393
Language and Politics
Winter Quarter 2020

Faculty Information:

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Course Description:

For most men most of the time politics is a series of pictures in the mind, placed there by television news, newspapers, magazines, and discussions. The pictures create a moving panorama taking place in a world the mass public never quite touches, yet one its members come to fear or cheer, often with passion and sometimes with action.

Murray Edelman

The Symbolic Uses of Politics, 1967

The Edelman quote above points to the way in which language mediates our political and social realities since most of us do not experience political events directly. In this way, language is more than a mere tool of communication or an interesting side note to political discussions—it is the means by which our political and social world is experienced and constructed, and therefore, an integral part of political understanding. In this course, we will examine this relationship between language and politics. First, we will explore the significance of language to politics, then examine theories concerning language, analyze the ways in which social and political identities are constructed through various discourses, and finally, utilize current events in order to better comprehend the dynamic interplay between language and politics.

Required Texts:

Murray Edelman, *Symbolic Uses of Politics*

George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*

Mark Thompson, *Enough Said: What's Gone Wrong With the Language of Politics*

Note: Students will also be responsible for all reading materials posted on D2L

Class Participation

I will conduct this class like a graduate seminar; that is, students will come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings of the day. All students will participate regularly in class discussions. The reading load for this course is quite extensive; therefore, students must keep up with the readings if they are to pass this course successfully. If I find that students are not reading and not participating, I reserve the right to move to a more traditional format that may include quizzes and examinations on the assigned readings.

Research Paper

Students will be required to write a 10-15 page final research paper for this course. From my experience, students often require assistance with keeping on task with their research during the quarter and often have difficulties constructing a thesis and developing a well-supported argument. Therefore, your writing assignments connect to the final research paper. Students will be required to create a topic proposal, write an annotated bibliography, construct a thesis, and write a rough draft prior to the due date of the final research paper. Each of these components to the research paper will be worth 5 points for a total of 20 points. There will be no late assignments accepted for credit on the research components; that is, if you miss the due date for your thesis, I will accept your paper, give you feedback, but you will not receive any credit for the assignment. The final research paper will be due during our scheduled final exam on **Monday, March 16, 2020**. You must submit your paper to the D2L drop box; I will not accept your paper unless you submit it through D2L. See research paper guidelines at the end of the syllabus.

Additionally, you must schedule an appointment with me to come up with a paper topic that engages key aspects of language and politics. This meeting must occur before the topic proposal due date scheduled on the syllabus.

Reflection Papers

Students will be required to write three reflection papers for the course. The papers will allow you to apply the theories of language to contemporary politics. The papers should be approximately 3-5 pages in length, doubled-spaced and typed. These essays must include a thesis and synthesize readings and concepts discussed in class. These papers ought to attempt at applying these theories to the political world. In addition, depending on your research topic, I would highly suggest that you use these reflection papers as drafts to your final research project. In that way, all of your writing may be oriented towards the final paper. Due dates and the specific nature of the reflection essays is located at the end of the syllabus.

Examinations

There will be no midterm or final examinations for this course; however, if I find that students are not participating or doing the assigned readings for the class, I reserve the right to schedule a midterm or final examination for the course. Therefore, it is in your best interest to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings for the day.

Grading Criteria

Class participation: 10%
3 Application Papers 30%

Research assignments: 20%
Topic proposal (5 points)
Annotated bibliography (5 points)
Thesis statement (5 points)
Rough draft (5 points)

Final Research Paper 40%

Plagiarism

The University's **Academic Integrity Policy** in your student handbook defines plagiarism and the sanctions against those students who plagiarize. Plagiarism is a serious offense and could result in possible expulsion from the University. Plagiarism is not be tolerated in this course. *Any student who hands in an assignment in which all or part of the words or ideas have been copied from a source--quoted, paraphrased, or summarized--without proper documentation or which have been borrowed from another student will receive a failing grade for the course.*

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 Introduction

January 6

Introduction to the course

January 8

Read Kay and Kempton, *What is the Sapir Whorf Hypothesis?* (D2L)

Read Deutscher, *Does Your Language Shape How You Think?* (D2L)

Read Cameron, *Linguistic Relativity* (D2L)

Week 2 What is Political Language?

January 13

Read Orwell, *The Politics of the English Language* (D2L)

Read Orwell, *The Principles of Newspeak* (D2L)

Read Arendt, *Lying in Politics* (D2L)

Read Sachs, *Lost Mariner* (D2L)

January 15

Read Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, chapters 1-3

Week 3 Political Language and Political Reality

January 20- No Class MLK Holiday

January 22

Read Edelman, chapters 4-6

- Week 4** **Political Language and Political Reality**
January 27
Read Edelman, chapters 7-9
January 29
Read Edelman, *Political Language, Political Reality*, (D2L)
Reflection paper #1 due
- Week 5** **Cognitive Linguistics, Metaphors in Politics**
February 3
Read Lakoff, *Moral Politics*, Part One-Three
February 5
Read Lakoff, *Moral Politics*, Part Four-Six
Read Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising* (D2L)
- Week 6** **Political Metaphors in American Politics**
February 10
Thompson, *Enough Said*, chapters 1-4
Reflection Paper #2 due
February 12
Thompson, *Enough Said*, chapters 5-8
Topic Proposals due
- Week 7** **Language, Genealogy and Discourse**
February 17
Read Foucault, *Power/Knowledge, Two Lectures*, (D2L)
Read Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, (D2L)
February 19
Read Fraser and Gordon, *A Genealogy of Dependency* (D2L)
Annotated Bibliography due
- Week 8** **Language as a form of Political Action**
February 24
Read Altman, *Liberalism and Campus Hate Speech* (D2L)
Read Allen and Burrige, *The Language of Political Correctness* (D2L)
Read Lakoff, *Political Correctness and Hate Speech*, (D2L)
- Language as Domination and Resistance**
February 26
Read Scott, *Domination and the Art of Resistance* (D2L)
Read Mitchell, *Everyday Metaphors of Power* (D2L)
Read Edelman, *Language of the Helping Professions* (D2L)
Read Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (D2L)
Application Paper #3 due

Week 9

Language and the Mass Media

March 2

Read Chomsky, *The Media as a Mirror of Society* (D2L)

Read Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent* (D2L)

Thesis statement and introductory paragraph due

March 4

Read Baudrillard, *Simulation Theory*, (D2L)

Week 10

Presentation of Research

March 9

Research paper draft due

Informal class research presentations

March 11

Informal class research presentations

Research Paper

You are to write a 10-15 page research paper this quarter that addresses the relationship between language, politics and culture. The final paper will be due during our designated final exam, **Monday, March 16, 2020**. Your paper should begin with a well-developed thesis, employ at least ten or more *scholarly sources*, and incorporate some of the ideas and debates that we address in class. Your paper must use the proper form—either standard MLA or Chicago Manuscript Style—for footnotes and bibliographic citations. Whatever form you choose, you must be consistent throughout your paper.

The major goal of this assignment is to get students to apply some of the theories discussed in class to the everyday world of politics. Specifically, students are required to engage in discourse analysis by reviewing and analyzing primary texts. This means that your observations concerning the political world are significant for this project. For example, if you are interested in interest group politics, you may want to look at the discourse of the NRA and see how that group constitutes and defines the gun control issue. Alternatively, if you are interested in consumer culture, you may want to observe shopping malls as a type of text to be deconstructed; if you are interested in some musical artist as a cultural icon, you may apply discourse analysis to the person and to the musical lyrics. Your topic choice should be something that you are interested in and excited about exploring. I will accept many different possibilities for topics as it pertains to politics and culture. We will be reading articles in class that may serve as a model for your paper. I have posted examples of papers and topics on D2L as examples of the type of research paper I like you to write. In addition, we will read excerpts from Otto Santa Anna's *Brown Tide Rising* in class that will give you an idea of how to construct a research design involving discourse analysis. I have also listed below some general topic areas that you may want to consider:

- Social Policy Area (the language of homelessness, capital punishment, gun control, social welfare)
- Interest Group Politics (NRA, Tea Party Movement, Black Lives Matter, Occupy Wall Street)
- Presidency and Presidential Speeches (Bush Doctrine, War on Drugs, War on Terrorism)
- Cultural phenomenon: food, architecture, movies, music, art
- A political issue, current event or historical event
- A media analysis on the handling of a particular issue
- Social Movements and Political Protests
- The language of 9/11
- Issues around race, class, gender, sexuality

You may select a topic you are interested in, however, students must receive prior approval for their paper topic and students must set up a meeting with me to discuss their research prior to the topic proposal due date on February 12.

In addition, during the quarter you must submit different aspects of your research paper as outlined below:

- **Paper topic proposal** 1-2 pages in length that identifies your topic. Your paper proposal is due on **February 12** and is worth 5 points. Your proposal ought to include an identification of a topic of interest, a series of research questions involving your topic, and a brief literature review of your topic. Papers should be one or two pages in length, double-spaced and typed.
- **Annotated bibliography** due on **February 19** and is worth 5 points. Annotated bibliography example is posted on D2L; an annotated bibliography is a list of sources that are relevant to your topic with a brief summary or description of the source's content. Students must have **at least five sources** annotated at the aforementioned due date.
- **Thesis statement and introductory paragraph** worth 5 points. Students must have a well-developed thesis. The thesis statement and introductory paragraph will be due on **March 2**.
- Finally, students will write a rough **draft and informal class presentation** for **March 9**. I will provide students with feedback on their drafts prior to submitting their final research paper. The rough draft too will be worth 5 points.

Please note that if you do not submit the above writing assignments on time, you will receive zero credit. I will read your work after the due date and provide feedback but you will be penalized 5 points per assignment.