We have to talk -- Spoken discourse
speech acts – a shift from focusing on linguistic competence to focusing on **communicative competence**

**discourse**: communication beyond the level of the sentence

**critical discourse analysis**: institutional speech (power and ideology as they apply to language

- how we do things with words
- how we exchange information
- how we negotiate relationships in speech
- how we signal discourse organization and authority
- turn taking and negotiating who gets to speak
- how we respond to situations and perform identities by style-shifting
speech acts:

**locutionary act:** speech sounds and words and their referential meaning

**illocutionary act:** intended meaning of an utterance or the conventional force that an utterance is understood to have

**perlocutionary act:** the effect achieved by the utterance on the hearer

**questions:** they're a kind of directive, because they typically mean, "tell me"

**verdictives:** judgments, referee calls, other sorts of *verdicts*
Types of illocutions:

- **assertives:** represent a state of affairs – *That book was pretty dull.*

- **directives:** get the addressee to do something –

  *Can you pass the salt?*
  *It’s cold in here.*

- **commissives:** get the speaker to do something (promises, threats, statements of intent)

- **expressives:** express the speaker’s mental state – *I’m totally grossed out.*

- **declarations:** acts that bring about the state of affairs to which they refer: firing, sentencing, marrying. What about blessing, cursing?
Direct and indirect speech acts:

Politeness strategies:

Can you pass the salt?
Do you know what time it is?
It’s cold in here.
It’s noisy in the hallway.
The door is open.

Directives:

This room is a pit.

Plausible deniability: Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?
**Performative** speech acts – they make something happen by virtue of their utterance

use first person sg. or plu; present tense verbs:

I dub thee Sir Harry Potter;

*ego te absolve*

felicity conditions: what must apply for an act to be effective

bets must be uttered, but they must also be accepted
– when does a bet count? what happens to you don’t pay up?

naming a person, place or thing:

-- you must have the authority to name
-- doesn't always require a response or agreement from the named person or object
the difference between a PROMISE and a THREAT:

the felicity conditions differ for promises and threats
how so?

a promise

• is uttered (T, text) in the presence of the promisee (H, the hearer) by the person making the promise (S)
• the promise predicates a future act A of speaker S
• H would prefer S doing A to S not doing A
• It is not obvious to H that S would do A in the normal course of events
• S intends to do A, and the utterance of T creates an obligation for S to do A

additionally,

• S and H both believe that S can do A

a threat:

• H would prefer S not doing A to S doing A
**The Cooperative Principle:** successfully exchanging information

Grice’s conversational maxims --

- **quantity:** make your contribution as informative as required not more (or less) than required eg, greetings

- **quality:** don’t lie or say things for which you don’t have any evidence

- **relation:** be relevant

- **manner:** avoid obscurity; ambiguity; be brief; be orderly

we often violate these maxims in order to be polite – how so?
Grice’s conversational **implicature**: the way an utterance can carry implied meaning in a particular conversation

Q: Where can I buy a sweatshirt?  
A: The bookstore is around the corner. (A implies that you can buy a sweatshirt at the bookstore)

**entailment**: the truth value of a statement; what must hold for a statement to be true? – read the fine print! (void where prohibited; in case of a tie, duplicate prizes will be awarded) – advertisements **entail**: what are some entailment claims of ads?

**relevance**: helps discourse cohere (irrelevance disrupts it)

Q: What are we having for dinner?  
A: Meatloaf

Q: What are we having for dinner?  
A: I see Paul just pulled into the driveway.

S: I'll go to the store for milk  
O: But it's raining so hard.
negotiating relationships: politeness and face

politeness: how speakers adapt (or fail to) to the needs of other speakers

Grice stresses clarity, but often there are other goals directing conversation. *Politeness* is such a goal. *(White lies, deflection)*

*Does this make me look fat?*
*I totally messed up that last assignment.*

**face:** how you look to others

positive face: being approved by others: – *May I get past?*

negative face: imposing your will: Outta my way, bozo

politeness attends to the face-needs of others

*positive politeness:* complimenting, thanking, being friendly
*negative politeness:* apologizing, being deferential, using indirect speech acts
there are other things that control discourse besides clarity and relevance

• formality: don’t impose yourself, be aloof

• deference: give addressees options about how to respond

• equality: is there an implied hierarchy of speakers?
face threatening acts:

assessing the need to mitigate a negative act

- you're going to tell someone they got a low grade
- you're going to fire someone
- you're going to tell someone bad news
- or you simply want something that could pose a problem for them (borrowing money or a car, asking a huge favor
- asking what someone’s grade is can often be a face-threatening act
- or asking someone's age?
- these are culture specific

The power of compliments: to make people feel good; to help the speaker get their way
**Discourse markers:** parts of discourse that may have non-propositional content

words *like now, so, and, well, I mean, you know* – how do these operate?

they can focus:

- *now,* signals something important may be coming
- *like:* how does it operate?
- quotative: *And he was, like, “Do you really mean it?”*
- qualifier: *It was like, raining*
- focusing: *Do it, like now.*

- *and, so, well, you know, I mean, really, you're kidding?, you're not gonna believe this,*

- *but...*

- *dude...*

- *So... [this is becoming more and more common as a signal or intro to the answer to a question]*
Conversational Analysis – conversations often follow a predictable structure, with beginnings, middles, and ends

greetings: in some cultures, it's not appropriate to indicate you're really great – so-so is the preferred unmarked response to How are you?

turn taking --

how do you indicate you’re done?
how do you indicate you’re not done?

• gesture
• adjacency pairs: q&a; compliment and thanks – two statements that go together and require a back and forth on the part of speakers
• eye contact
• Intonation – to indicate not being done or being done
violations:

overlap – not a violation, though it calls for repair – often occurs at a turn-taking boundary

interruption – this is a violation, according to many people

• it can indicate power differentials (who is allowed to interrupt? who isn't?)
• back-channeling (minimal response indicating agreement, attention, etc)
• it can redirect the conversation along new lines

  • OK, I understand, but can you tell me about what happens after?
maintenance and repair

keeping a conversation going is work – how is it accomplished?

sometimes you have to ask all the questions; keep things moving – take for example a classroom

repair: you misspeak, begin again; clarification
style-shifting: negotiating social meaning

style in how we talk

  indexical meaning: the direct association of how we talk with context – pointing (here, there); style shifting indexes social meaning – what kinds of styles? does *like* index youth? do tag questions index *+female*? (stereotypes)

what other stylistic indexes are there?

style and creativity: how do style and speech index social identity (groups in h.s., for example, preps, nerds, whatever, or in college?)

is there an English-major index?
gender differences in speech

Stereotype of women’s language:

women speak more than men
women use hedges, superpoliteness, tag question, emphasis, empty adjs, hypercorrect grammar and pronunciation, seriousness, special lexicon, up talk – are they indicative of gender or of power?

in Japan, the situation is reversed, and indirectness indexes power, not gender

other models of gender difference:

boys are competitive;
girls are cooperative

women do the conversational grunt work: their topics are rejected more often; they do more backchanneling, they ask more questions

are any of the stereotypes true?
intra vs. inter group communication:

women talking with women: more cooperation, backchanneling, collaborative production of discourse;

men talking with men: more competition

queer sociolinguistics:

how linguistic features index gender identity; how plays on stereotypes are adapted/rejected as discourse markers

language and identity

we all belong to multiple speech communities

we are always negotiating among our various identities

private v. public, group v. general, us v. them