

**Course title:** The Discursive Construction of Knowledge

**Language of instruction:** English

**Professor:** Dr Mario Bisiada

**Professor's contact and office hours:** mario.bisiada@upf.edu

**Course contact hours:** 45

**Recommended credit:** 6 ECTS credits

**Course prerequisites:** there are no prerequisites for this course

**Language requirements:** Recommended level in the European Framework B2 (or equivalent : Cambridge Certificate if the teaching language is English, DELE or 3 semesters in the case of Spanish)

**Course focus and approach:** The course seeks to instruct participants the basics of discourse analysis by taking a broadly social constructionist perspective, investigating how discourse serves to construct knowledge and what we take for granted as everyday common sense.

**Course description:** The course aims to investigate the discursive construction of knowledge through an interdisciplinary approach based on text analysis and readings from diverse fields such as philosophy of language, linguistics, sociology and social psychology. While discourse analysis is often presented as a linguistic tool to discover hidden ideologies, this course seeks to broaden the focus of the concept of discourse to teach participants an interdisciplinary and critical perspective that questions what is presented as knowledge and common sense. Special attention is paid to social aspects such as class and gender, as well as resources of linguistic analysis such as metaphors or subjectivity.

**Learning objectives:**

At the end of this course the students should

1. have developed a critical view of knowledge as a social construction
2. understand the role of language in the (re)production of ideology
3. be able to analyse texts and discourses as perspectives on social interaction

**Course workload:** Apart from the classes, there are two weekly readings that serve as preparation and reinforcement to be read before and after the class, respectively. Every week, one group of students will have to prepare a presentation while others prepare critical or comprehension questions to engage in a debate in class about the set reading.

**Teaching methodology:** Classes consist of lectures and task-based group work and discussions to give depth to the contents presented. Student participation is expected at all times. The course is divided into weekly topics as indicated below.

**Assessment criteria:**

Final essay (and essay draft) –40%

The final essay is a piece of academic writing of 3000 words. The topic has to be negotiated with the professor, at least one draft must be submitted (worth 10% of the final mark) and at least one tutorial has to be held during term time.

Presentations in pairs and weekly questions – 40%

At the beginning of the course, students choose one reading and present it in pairs. Aims, the main argument, the methodology (in case of empirical readings) and results/conclusions should be summarised in 15 minutes. Students who don't present in that week have to formulate questions or comments and send them to the professor and the presenting students. After the presentation, the presenting students spend 15 minutes answering the peer questions and debating the reading in class.

Class participation: 10%

**BaPIS absence policy**

Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student's final grade as follows:

<b>Absences</b>	<b>Penalization</b>
Up to two (2) absences	No penalization
Three (3) absences	1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Four (4) absences	2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Five (5) absences or more	The student receives an INCOMPLETE ("NO PRESENTADO") for the course

The BaPIS attendance policy **does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences**. The student is deemed responsible to manage his/her absences.

Only absences for medical reasons will be considered justified absences. The student is deemed responsible to provide the necessary documentation. Other emergency situations will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Academic Director of the BaPIS.

The Instructor, the Academic Director and the Study Abroad Office should be informed by email without any delay.

**Classroom norms:**

- No food or drink is permitted in class.
- Students will have a ten-minute break after one one- hour session.
- ...

**Weekly schedule:**

A weekly schedule /or daily schedule, should follow, session by session. The date is not necessary. Reading assignments for the week should be listed in this week schedule.

Example:

**WEEK 1 & 2: Foundations of discourse analysis**

The first two weeks are spent presenting and discussing the theoretical bases that we'll draw on in the course. The syllabus, assessment system and readings will be presented and assigned.

Readings and class discussion:

Burr, Vivien. 2015. *Social Constructionism*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.

Keller, Reiner, Anna-Katharina Hornidge & Wolf J. Schünemann. 2018. *The sociology of knowledge approach to discourse: Investigating the politics of knowledge and meaning-making*. Routledge.

Widdowson, Henry G. 1998. *The Theory and Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis*. *Applied Linguistics* 19(1). 136-151.

**WEEK 3: Discourse in Foucault**

This week is dedicated to the study of Foucault's work on discourse and theory.

Reading and class discussion:

Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Truth and Power*. In Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, 107-133. Brighton: The Harvester Press.

**WEEK 4: Designing a rigorous discourse study**

We'll look at some tools to analyse texts such as corpora. Regarding theory, we'll discuss criteria to design a rigorous discourse analysis, independently of the topic.

Reading and class discussion:

Burman, Erica & Ian Parker. 1993. *Against Discursive Imperialism, Empiricism and constructionism: Thirty-two problems with discourse analysis*. In Erica Burman & Ian

Parker (eds.), *Discourse Analytic Research: Repertoires and Readings of Texts in Action*, 155-172. London: Routledge.

#### WEEK 5: Class analysis

This week is dedicated to class analysis, especially basing ourselves on a juxtaposition of works from Marxism and Pierre Bourdieu. We'll discuss how we can use these works in a concrete analysis of an actual problem. We'll analyse how knowledge is constructed about society from a social perspective and which role class plays in this.

#### Reading and class discussion:

Weininger, Elliot B. 2005. Foundations of Pierre Bourdieu's class analysis. In Erik Olin Wright (ed.), *Approaches to Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### WEEK 6: Metaphor in discourse

This topic is dedicated to metaphors and their role in knowledge construction, from a social and cognitive perspective. We will introduce various existing approaches to and empirical perspectives of the concept and discuss various real-world example of this highly common discursive tool.

#### Reading and class discussion:

Cameron, Lynne. 1999. Operationalising "Metaphor" for Applied Linguistic Research. In Lynne Cameron & Graham Low (eds.), *Researching and Applying Metaphor*, 3-28. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### WEEK 7: Gender equality and knowledge construction

We'll treat some bases of feminist and gender theory and how they have influenced knowledge construction in contemporary societies. We'll work through some ways of analysing texts and social phenomena from a gender perspective and discuss texts that take this perspective.

#### Reading and class discussion:

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender trouble*. London: Routledge.

#### WEEK 8: Appraisal theory and positioning

This week we'll learn some linguistic tools to express positioning towards and appraisal of a topic in a text. We'll analyse selective use of sources and how this can influence the stance taken by an author. We'll debate notions of subjectivity and objectivity in texts in general.

#### Reading and class discussion:

Martin, James R. y Peter R. R. White. 2005. *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

#### WEEK 9: Power and resistance in discourse

The final sessions will serve to sum up notions and concepts we've discussed and relate them to the main issue in discursive struggle: power.

Reading and class discussion:

Phillips, Nelson & Cynthia Hardy. 2002. *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction*. London: SAGE.

**Last revision: May 2024.**

### **Required readings:**

Burman, Erica & Ian Parker. 1993. Against Discursive Imperialism, Empiricism and constructionism: Thirty-two problems with discourse analysis. In Erica Burman & Ian Parker (eds.), *Discourse Analytic Research: Repertoires and Readings of Texts in Action*, 155-172. London: Routledge.

Burr, Vivien. 2015. *Social Constructionism*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender trouble*. London: Routledge.

Cameron, Lynne. 1999. Operationalising "Metaphor" for Applied Linguistic Research. In Lynne Cameron & Graham Low (eds.), *Researching and Applying Metaphor*, 3-28. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1980. Truth and Power. In Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, 107-133. Brighton: The Harvester Press.

Keller, Reiner, Anna-Katharina Hornidge & Wolf J. Schünemann. 2018. *The sociology of knowledge approach to discourse: Investigating the politics of knowledge and meaning-making*. Routledge.

Martin, James R. y Peter R. R. White. 2005. *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Phillips, Nelson & Cynthia Hardy. 2002. *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction*. London: SAGE.

Weininger, Elliot B. 2005. Foundations of Pierre Bourdieu's class analysis. In Erik Olin Wright (ed.), *Approaches to Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Widdowson, Henry G. 1998. The Theory and Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Applied Linguistics* 19(1). 136-151.

### **Recommended bibliography:**

Any syllabus should include here a bibliography for further reading and consistently listed (Chicago, MLA...) (minimum 5 books). Please, use the format below (no bullets or numbers, spacing between items and french indent)

Baker, Paul. 2014. *Using Corpora to Analyse Gender*. London: Bloomsbury.

- Bisiada, Mario. 2021. Discursive Structures and Power Relations in Covid-19 Knowledge Production. *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications* 8(248). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00935-2>.
- Bisiada, Mario. 2024. Investigating metaphor & representation with corpora. In Charlotte Taylor & Frazer Heritage (eds.), *Analysing Representation: A Corpus and Discourse Textbook*. London: Routledge.
- Bubenhofer, Noah. 2022. Corpus Linguistics in Discourse Analysis: No Bodies and No Practices? *Zeitschrift für Diskursforschung* 2022(2). 195-204. <https://doi.org/10.3262/ZFD2202195>.
- van Dijk, Teun. 1993. Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Discourse and Society* 4(2). 249-285.
- Foucault, Michel. 1981. The Order of Discourse. In Robert Young (ed.), *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, 48-78. London: Routledge.
- Greckhamer, Thomas & Sebnem Cilesiz. 2014. Rigor, Transparency, Evidence, and Representation in Discourse Analysis: Challenges and Recommendations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 13(1). 422-443.
- Kress, Gunther. 2001. From Saussure to Critical Sociolinguistics: The Turn towards a Social View of Language. In Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor & Simeon J. Yates (eds.), *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, 29-38. London: SAGE.
- Mills, Sara. 2004. *Discourse*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Routledge.
- Potter, Jonathan & Margaret Wetherell. 1987. *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*. London: SAGE.
- Statham, Simon. 2022. *Critical Discourse Analysis: A Practical Introduction to Power in Language*. London: Routledge.
- Verschueren, Jef. 2012. *Ideology in Language Use: Pragmatic Guidelines for Empirical Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.