**Department of Gender Studies**

**DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

**2 credits**

**2017-18 WINTER TERM**

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**Course Description:**

This course is one of the mandatory courses in the field of methodology. It focuses on the interdisciplinary category of ‘discourse’ that conceptualizes the use of various sign systems as an integral part of social events. The major aim on the one hand is to explore how discourse as an explanatory category in different disciplines of humanities and social sciences has emerged to go beyond the dichotomy of text/context. As an introductory course to qualitative research, its objective is to compare the (enabling) limits of different approaches to discourse, both in terms of their theoretical and methodological differences. In the second half of the course we shall study samples of analysis to demonstrate and explore the value systems and sets of beliefs informing the linguistic devices the ‘data’ draws on as well as that of the particular approach to discourse itself. The actual sample analyses will include research that argues for a *relative but relevant* distinction of sexuality and gender.

**Learning Outcome:**

By the end of the course, successful students will develop an awareness of the role of signification both as a social practice of articulation and product (representation) in the conflicts and power struggles that inform and shape the relations of gender and sexuality producing these dimensions of identity. They will understand what it means to say that identity is a discoursal accomplishment that is regulated in and by particular social institutions. They will learn that discourse is not synonymous with any particular sign system; therefore studying discourse is not an act of ‘close’ reading of a particular representation/text but the actual establishment of the interpretative context within which particular materials may be foregrounded as (predominantly) ‘texts/data’. Students will also develop an awareness that their research activity itself is the enactment of a particular ‘discourse’ that shapes how they appeal to the various explanatory categories in the course of their ‘data analysis.’ Above all, they will be able to develop concepts and translate them to actual (textual) analytical steps in order to compare and contrast discoursal representations and representational practices of the sexuality/gender intersection as a point of departure for their own particular research projects.

**Assignment & Assessment:**

* 2-3 questions addressed to the readings on a weekly basis. Each question embedded in a paragraph that explains to the reader (a) which aspect of the argumentation of the reading they may have a problem to grasp or agree with; (b) The logic that leads them to come up with the actual question. Students’ question will serve as guidance for the group discussions in class.
* A sample analysis of a chosen (network, or set of) texts that should explore the textual production of ‘point of view’ and its effects, consequences for the production of meaning of various (collective) identity categories involved in the particular social event the text comes to represent. Length: 3000-3300 words (actual extracts from data and reference list not included).
* In class performance (including production of questions) may change the grade of the paper with one notch up or down.

**Topics and Readings:**

**Week 1:** Orientation: The difference between discourse analysis and analyzing discourse.

**Week 2**: Analysis as a particular form of interpretative practice

F. Tonkiss: “Analyzing Discourse” in *Researching Society and Culture.* Sage, 1998, 245-260.

**Week 3:** The relevance of Saussure’s concept of sign/signification for a move from language to discourse.

D. Howarth: *Discourse,* OUP, 2000, 16-47, Chapters 1 & 2.

**Week 4:** Foucault’s concept of discourse

D. Howarth: *ibid,* 48-84. Chapters 3 & 4.

**Week 5-6:** Textual analysis for social research

N. Fairclough: *Analysing Discourse.* Routledge, 2003, 21-62. Chapters 2 & 3.

**Week 7-8:** Genres and social action

N. Fairclough, *ibid.*65-86; and 191-210, Chapter 4 + Conclusion (for information on concepts used).

**Week 9:** Language use and hetero-normativity.

D. Cameron & D. Kulick: *Language and Sexuality.* CUP, 2003. Chapter 3.

**Week 10:** Gay and lesbian language (?)

D. Cameron & D. Kulick, *ibid.* Chapter 4.

**Week 11:** Sexuality, desire and language use.

P. Eckert, “Demistifying sexuality and desire” in K. Campbell-Kibler, et al. (eds). *Language and Sexuality,* CSLI Publications, 2002, 99-110.

**Week 12:** Language use and sexual politics.

D. Cameron: “Straight talking” in *On Language and Sexual Politics.* Routledge, 2006, 165-178.

**Week 13-14:** Discussion of students’ projects.