

EDUCATION 240B
THEORETICAL ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF LITERACY

Fall, 2003

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Meetings on Wednesdays 4-7, 5509 Tolman

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The course will be divided into four parts: (1) historical meanings of literacy and introduction to tensions in the field (classes 1-3); (2) literacy and the individual (classes 4-7); (3) socio-cultural perspectives on literacy learning (classes 8-11); and (4) literacy and the social world (classes 12-15). Within these parts of the course, we will discuss questions such as the following: (a) What is literacy? How is it defined? (b) Historically, what has it meant to be literate? (c) What is known about the relationship between literacy and thought? Between literacy and learning? What are the implications for schooling? (d) What theories can teachers use to guide students in becoming literate? (e) What are the influences of school, culture, and community on literacy development? (f) What are the relationships between literacy and economic and political development? (g) What are the implications for the future of literacy research?

I hope you will leave this course with a critical understanding of central theoretical issues in literacy studies, with understanding of their implications for schools and the larger culture, and an understanding of how these issues relate to our social and political world. I also hope you will learn about how the theories we study can be used as a foundation for research on language, literacy, learning, and culture.

Required Reading:

The course reader can be purchased at Copy Central, 2483 Hearst.

Books can be purchased at the ASUC bookstore:

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). C. Emerson & M. Holquist (Eds.) *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, Austin: The University of Texas Press.

Cushman, E., Kintgen, E., Kroll, B., & Rose, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

Vygotsky, L. *Mind in Society*. (1978). Ed. M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, E. Souberman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Part 1: Historical Meanings of Literacy and Introduction to Tensions in the Field (Classes 1-3)

Class 1: 8/27— Introduction and overview: What is literacy? Common tensions in the field: skills versus practices; orality versus literacy.

[A preliminary discussion that will likely continue throughout the semester]

Class 2: 9/3—Historically, what has it meant to be literate? What Literacy? Whose history?

(1) Reader: Cook-Gumperz, Jenny. (1986). Literacy and schooling: An unchanging equation? In J. Cook-Gumperz (Ed.), *The social construction of literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 12, Graff, Harvey, “The nineteenth century origins of our times”

Class 3: 9/10—Historically, what has it meant to be literate?

Chapter 13, Greene, Jamie Candelaria, “Misperspectives on literacy: A critique of an Anglocentric bias in histories of American literacy”

Chapter 15, McHenry, Elizabeth, & Heath, Shirley Brice, “The literate and the literary: African Americans as writers and readers—1830-1940

LOGS DUE FOR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Part 2: Literacy and the Individual (Classes 4-7)

Class 4: 9/17—What is the relationship between literacy and thinking?

(2) Reader: Goody, Jack, & Watt, Ian. (1968). The consequences of literacy. In Jack Goody (Ed.), *Literacy in traditional societies* (pp. 27-68). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 7, Scribner, S., & Cole, M., “Unpackaging literacy”

Group presentation 1: Scribner, Sylvia, & Cole, Michael. (1981). *The psychology of literacy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (see chapters 1, 6, 14 especially)

Class 5: 9/24—How are claims about the relationship between orality and literacy related to claims about the relationship between literacy and thinking?

(3) Reader: Ong, Walter J., “Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word,” pp. 31-57, 78-116.

Chapter 8, Akinnaso, F. Niyi, “Literacy and Individual Consciousness.”

Class 6: 10/1—How are claims about autonomous text related to claims about the relationship between literacy and thinking?

(4) Reader: Olson, David. (1977). "From utterance to text: The bias of language in speech and writing," *Harvard Education Review*. 47, 257-281.

(5) Reader: Olson, David. (1994). *The world on paper: The conceptual and cognitive implications of writing and reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 20-44, 257-304

Class 7: 10/8—What are some relationships between literacy and schooling?

Chapter 34, Arnove, Robert, & Graff, Harvey, "National Literacy Campaigns"

http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global_co/global_initiative/strategy_2002.pdf
<http://www.unicef.org/sowc02summary/pdf/sowc2002summ-table4.pdf>

Chapter 21, Haas, Christina, "Learning to read biology: One student's rhetorical development in college"

LOGS DUE FOR MIDTERM GRADING

Part 3: Socio-Cultural Perspectives on Literacy Learning (Classes 8-11)

Class 8: 10/15—What theories guide our understanding of how literacy is acquired?

Vygotsky, L. *Mind in Society*. (1978). Ed. M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, E. Souberman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (pp. 19-30, 52-57, 79-91, 105-119)

(6) Reader: Britton, James. "Vygotsky's Contribution to Pedagogical Theory"

(7) Reader: Luis Moll, (2000). Inspired by Vygotsky: Ethnographic experiments in education. In C. Lee & P. Smagorinsky (Eds.), *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research: Constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry*. (pp. 256-268). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Class 9: 10/22— What theories guide our understanding of how literacy is acquired? (continued)

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). Discourse in the novel. In C. Emerson & M. Holquist (Eds.), *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, Austin: The University of Texas Press.

Class 10: 10/29— What theories guide our understanding of how literacy is acquired? (concluded)

(8) Reader: Freedman, S.W. (1995). "Crossing the Bridge to Practice: Rethinking the Theories of Vygotsky and Bakhtin," *Written Communication*, 12 (1), 74-92.

(9) Reader: Cazden, Courtney B. (1993). Vygotsky, Hymes, and Bakhtin: From word to utterance and voice. In E.A. Forman, N. Minick, & C.A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's development* (pp. 197-213). New York: Oxford University Press.

**Group presentation 2: Additional Vygotsky reading as well as reading by Vygotsky's interpreters, especially see pieces by James Wertsch.
Group's choice.**

Group presentation 3: Additional Bakhtin (or Volosinov, Medvedev) reading as well as reading by Bakhtin's interpreters, especially see Morson, Holquist, and/or Emerson. Group's choice.

Part 4: Literacy and the Social World (Classes 11-15)

Class 11: 11/5— What are literacy practices and literacy events?

Chapter 24, Szwed, John, "The ethnography of literacy"

(10) Reader: Heath, Shirley Brice (1983). *Ways with Words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-4, 149-235, 343-369, 379-385, 401-414.

Class 12: 11/12— What is the meaning of literate discourse?

Chapter 30, Gee, James Paul, "Literacy, discourse, and linguistics: Introduction *and* What is literacy?"

Chapter 31, Delpit, Lisa, "The politics of teaching literate discourse"

Group presentation 4:

Gee, James Paul. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*, Second edition. London: Taylor & Francis.

or

Street Brian. (1995). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography and education*. London: Longman. (see especially the first part of the book)

Class 13: 11/19— What is the role of ideology and power in our understandings of literacy in the social world?

Chapter 25, Street, Brian, "The new literacy studies"

Chapter 35, Friere, Paulo, "The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom *and* Education and conscientização"

Group presentation 5:

Friere, Paulo. (1997). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

or

Friere, Paulo, & Macedo, Donaldo. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

LOGS DUE FOR FINAL GRADING

Class 14: 11/26—How does globalization relate to notions of multiliteracies?

(11) Reader: The New London Group (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66 (1), 60-92.

(12) Reader: Lemke, J. (1998). Metamedia literacy: Transforming meanings and media. In D. Reinking, M.C. McKenna, L. Labbo, & R. Kieffer (Eds.), *Handbook of literacy and technology: Transformations in a post-typographic world* (pp. 283-301).

Class 15: 12/3—PARTY, CLASS SUMMARY, AND DISCUSSION OF THE FUTURE OF LITERACY THEORY AND LITERACY RESEARCH

COURSE PAPERS DUE

Course Requirements

A. Course Log (30%)

Your course log is meant to help you reflect on the course readings. Each week you will write about what you have read. The log should include up-to-date responses to the class readings, along with an integration of ideas from the readings with class discussion. You will share your logs with your classmates every week and will receive and write comments on your classmates' logs. I'll check your logs weekly but will read them carefully three times during the semester (once after the first couple of entries to make sure you're getting the most you can from your readings, again at midterm to give you a preliminary grade, and again at the end of the term to give you a final log grade). When you hand in your logs, please put an asterisk beside any portion of your log that you want me (or your classmates) especially to attend to.

The log will replace all examinations and will be where you show how you are synthesizing the ideas from class and from the readings and how you are connecting what you are learning to your own research interests. The log will also be a place for you to ask questions; I want to encourage you to articulate what you don't understand, not simply what you do understand. To ease the burden of doing logs you may skip doing your log for any two weeks of your choosing, but you are still responsible for having done the readings for those weeks. Please keep your logs in a folder or loose leaf notebook so that you can take the pages out to hand in. I will grade the logs at midterm and at the end of the term. Grades will be based on completeness and on depth of reflection.

B. Course paper (45%)

For this paper, choose one area of literacy studies which interests you and delve into it in some depth. You will need to develop a bibliography that goes beyond the class readings and that includes the important pieces of literature in the area you have chosen. In this paper, you should take a position on the literature you have read and support that position. Your position will likely lead you to a way to organize the literature and focus your paper. In the process you will need to synthesize the readings. This course paper could serve as one of the required position papers for doctoral students or the start of one. If you are thinking of using this paper for another course as well, I will expect twice as much from you as I would if the paper was just for this course; further, you will need my permission and also the permission of the instructor of the other course. As you are doing your reading for the paper, I would advise you to keep a summary of each piece you read in a computer file. These summaries will be a valuable resource for those of you who are doctoral students when you prepare for orals.

C. Theory-to-practice presentation (25%)

You will work with a small group (ideally three people but no fewer than two and no more than five) on a 20 minute presentation to the class on a piece of supplementary reading; the reading ideally will be related to your course paper, but it doesn't have to be. I will suggest a number of possibilities for supplementary reading for these presentations (see syllabus) and will ask you to sign up for them by the third class. You will naturally gravitate toward areas of interest and these will likely lead you to areas for your bibliography and paper. It also will lead you to others in the class with similar interests. In your presentation, explain what about the material you found theoretically interesting and why. Then take this material and suggest/demonstrate implications for practice. Creativity is encouraged.

Recent Books Related to Literacy—Resources for your paper

- Alvermann, Donna E., Hinchman, Kathleen A., Moore, David W., Phelps, Stephen F. & Waff, Diane R. (Eds.). (1998). *Reconceptualizing the literacies in adolescents' lives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Barton, David, & Hamilton, Mary. (1998). *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. London: Routledge.
- Barton, David, Hamilton, Mary, & Ivanic, Roz, (Eds.). (2000). *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context*. London: Routledge.
- Beaufort, Anne. (1999). *Writing in the real world: Making the transition from school to work*. New York: Teachers College.
- Besnier, Niko. (1995). *Literacy, emotion, and authority: Reading and writing on a Polynesian atoll*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boone, Elizabeth Hill, & Mignolo, Walter D. (Eds.). (1994). *Writing without words: Alternative literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Cope, Bill, & Kalantzis, Mary, (Eds.). (2000). *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. London: Routledge.
- Cushman, Ellen. (1998). *The struggle and the tools: Oral and literate strategies in an inner city community*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Dyson, Anne Haas. (1997). *Writing superheroes: Contemporary childhood, popular culture, and classroom literacy*. New York: Teachers College.
- Fingers, Margaret J. (1997). *Just girls: Hidden literacies and life in junior high*. New York: Teachers College.
- Freedman, Sarah Warshauer, Simons, E.R., Kalnin, J.S., Casareno, A., & the M-CLASS teams. (1999). *Inside city schools: Investigating literacy in multicultural classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gee, James Paul, Hull, Glynda, & Lankshear, Colin. (1996). *The new work order: Behind the language of the new capitalism*. Boulder: Westview.
- Gere, Anne Ruggles. (1997). *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880-1920*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Guerra, Juan C. (1998). *Close to home: Oral and literate practices in a transnational Mexicano community*. New York: Teachers College.
- Harklau, Linda, Losey, Kay M., Siegal, Meryl (Eds.). (1999). *Generation 1.5 meets college composition: Issues in the teaching of writing to U.S.-educated learners of ESL*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Heller, Caroline. (1997). *Until We Are Strong Together: Women Writers in the Tenderloin*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Horner, Bruce, & Lu, Min-Zhan. (1999). *Representing the "other": Basic writers and the teaching of basic writing*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Kalman, Judy. (1999). *Writing on the plaza: Mediated literacy practices among scribes and clients in Mexico City*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Lankshear, Colin, with Gee, James Paul, Knobel, Michele, & Searle, Chris. (1997). *Changing literacies*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Lee, Carol D., & Smagorinsky, P., (Eds.). (2000). *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research: Constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Luttrell, Wendy. (1997). *School-smart and mother-wise: Working-class women's identity and schooling*. New York: Routledge.
- Macedo, Donaldo. (1994). *Literacies of power: What Americans are not allowed to know*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Mahiri, Jabari. (1998). *Shooting for excellence: African American and youth culture in new century schools*. Urbana: NCTE.
- Merrifield, Juliet, Bingman, Mary Beth, Hemphill, David, & DeMarrais, Kathleen P. Bennett (Eds.). (1997). *Literacy, language and technology in everyday life*. New York: Teachers College.
- Millard, Elaine. (1997). *Differently literate: Boys, girls and the schooling of literacy*. London: Falmer Press.
- Muspratt, Sandy, Luke, Allan, Freebody, Peter, (Eds.). (1997). *Constructing critical literacies: Teaching and learning textual practice*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Perez, Bertha, (Ed.). (1998). *Sociocultural contexts of language and literacy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Prinsloo, Mastin, & Breier, Mignonne, (Eds.). (1996). *The social uses of literacy: Theory and practice in contemporary South Africa*. Bertsham, South Africa: Sached Books.
- Purcell-Gates, Victoria. (1995). *Other people's words: The cycle of low literacy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Stephens, Mitchell. (1998). *The rise of the image, the fall of the word*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thornton Tamara Plakins. (1996). *Handwriting*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Tyner, Kathleen. (1998). *Literacy in a digital world: Teaching and learning in the age of information*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Warschauer, Mark. (1999). *Electronic literacies: Language, culture, and power in online education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Websites of interest:

<http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/literacy/>

http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global_co/comprehensive_efa_strategy_summary.shtml