

Language and Power
TEAC 840D
Fall 2017, Wednesday, 7-9:30pm

“Sticks and stones/ Can break my bones/ But words will never hurt me”. Won’t they ever? What is the relationship of words to a world where actions are supposed to ‘speak louder than words?’ This course is designed for students interested in the relationship of language, discourse, knowledge and action both in social theory and in educational practice. We will deal with a variety of issues taken from different disciplines including but not limited to the following:

- philosophy (Foucault, Butler, Nussbaum, Dewey) – e.g., language as social symbolic power
- sociology (Bourdieu, de Certeau, Goffman, Wittgenstein, Weber) – e.g., language as symbolic capital
- semiotics (Barthes, Bakhtin) – e.g., language as social semiotic and dialogic action
- sociolinguistic analysis (R. Lakoff, Scollon, Cameron, Tannen, Nussbaum, amongst others) – e.g., intersection of language and ideology, gender, work.

Each social theory will be exemplified as theory-in-use in contemporary, published empirical research through a variety of research publications and books.

This is not a philosophy, nor a sociology, nor a linguistics course. Rather, its concern is the relationship of language, knowledge and power *in education*. The readings have been taken from scholars who have all, in one way or another, used the tools they were given by their respective disciplinary and institutional training to problematize the knowledge they had received within a specific educational system. These readings are intended, in turn, to help students understand the problematic nature of language and the way it is used to control knowledge, memory, and history, and ultimately, our destinies. The course is devoted to the development of professional and academic writers and thinkers, so there is a strong emphasis on analytical writing as well as the consumption and critique of ideas and empirical research in education.

Professor Loukia K. Sarroub
LSARROUB@UNL.EDU
472-5166