Sociology 741: Social Structure & the Individual

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-Thursday 3:00 – 5:30pm
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I have taught this course many times. This time, the course and data are totally new. The course has evolved into a course on conversation analysis.

I have long been dissatisfied with the data on social structure. I have asked myself where is the data of social structure and the individual generated? It is generated in the talk of people in conversation.

Long ago, shortly before his untimely death, I took a course on conversation analysis by Harvey Sacks, one of the two founders of this new field. The other founder is Emanuel Schegloff, professor of sociology at UCLA.

Using Schegloff's book, *Sequence Organization in Interaction: A Primer in Conversation Analysis*, 2007, this version of the course will focus on naturally occurring conversation. We will record and transcribe everyday conversations and analyze them for how they formulate individuals and social structures.

The book and techniques of conversation analysis provide an easy way to find empirical evidence in transcriptions. We will start out by identifying adjacency pairs in conversation and how they structure talk. Then, we will move to expansions in talk and then to expressed preferences and finally to closings.

Aug 27: Introduction of students and instructor. What is Conversation Analysis (CA)? Sacks and membership. Schegloff and the identification of adjacency pairs in the turn taking structure of conversations.

Sep 3: A consideration of how individuals and social structure get formulated in everyday conversations.

Sep 10: Examples of conversations and how to transcribe them, making data for CA. A demonstration.

Sep 17: Introduction to adjacency pairs in the turn taking structure of serial conversations. Some examples in greetings and other questions and answers and other examples.

Sep 24: "What kind of people live in the UH dorms?" "What kind of people go to UH?" Some examples of social structure and the individual.

Oct 1: "What kind of people are accountants?" "What does car obsession tell you about people?"

Oct 8: Specification of class project. Go out and record conversations about social structure and the individual. Transcribe and present the video of these conversations and present an analysis of the conversation.

Oct 15: The formulation of agency in conversations.

Oct 22: Expansions.

Oct 29: Transit topicality and recycled topics. Closings in conversations.

Nov 5: Summary of sequence organization.

Nov 12: Student presentations.

Nov 19: Student presentations.

Nov 26 – Thanksgiving. No class.

Dec 3: Student presentations.

Dec 10 – Last day of class, evaluation and party.