

**CMS 384K**  
**Microethnography of Interaction**

Th. 3:30 - 6:30

CMA 3.108

**Instructor: Jürgen Streeck**  
**Office: CMA 7.136**  
**Office hours: T 2:00 - 3:30 and by appointment**  
**Phone: 471-1955/448-3139**  
**jstreeck@mail.utexas.edu**

**Class Description**

This class is an intensive, “hands-on” laboratory for naturalistic research on human interaction and serves as a core methodology course for students interested in the study of language, culture, and embodied action in social life. We study how people orchestrate speech, body motion, and practical action and what resources they use to make sense together from moment to moment. Participants will learn the practicalities of producing audiovisual data and a methodology for analyzing them. The focus of the class is on situations in which people not only talk, but also conduct practical, collaborative activities, and where the material world becomes engaged in the exchange. More specifically, we will examine interaction sequences in which aspects of the world are explained, the ‘how to’ of actions modeled, the functioning of objects demonstrated, etc. My hope is that the research conducted in connection with this class will produce interesting and, perhaps, systematic findings on these communicative practices, and thus contribute to the closing of a gap in our understanding of knowledge as produced and distributed in communities of practice.

**Research:** Students will collaborate in small teams, each of which will study interaction and work-activities in one “site”, i.e. one work-place (or set of related work-places). The instructor will make every effort to find these sites and make initial field-contacts; everything else—especially the distribution of labor—will be up to the team. The teams will submit interim products—video-footage, field-notes, preliminary analyses, etc.—throughout the semester, but the main product will be a research report, comprising a paper along with an edited video and/or multimedia presentation, to be delivered after the end of the semester.

**Grading:** You will receive continuous and extensive feedback on all work that you submit; however, it has been my experience that grades on preliminary work (such as raw video-footage or field-notes) are not very helpful. Your course-grade will thus depend upon the quality of your (i.e. your team's) final research-report:

quality of the data (video, field-notes/observations, etc.)	20%
quality of data-analysis, contribution to scholarship	40%
written report (organization, writing)	20%
accompanying materials (edited/titled video, multimedia)	20%

**Reading:** A. Duranti, *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 (available from the Co-Op) and a reading packet.

### **Schedule**

1/18 Welcome; learning to use digital video-cameras and wireless microphones

1/25 The "human subjects" nightmare and other preliminaries

read and report in class:

1. website for taping:

[http://www.rcfp.org/taping/cwt\\_menu.html](http://www.rcfp.org/taping/cwt_menu.html)

2. website for human subjects:

<http://www.utexas.edu/research/humanresearch/policies.htm#codes>

(at the bottom of this page you will find several ways to satisfy the "knowledge of human subjects" requirement)

2/1 Recording interaction

Goodwin, C. (1993). Recording Human Interaction in Natural Settings. *Pragmatics*, 3(2), 181-209.

Duranti, Appendix

assignments due:

1. contact the principals at your field-site, introduce yourself
2. submit application for research with human subjects to the Departmental Review Committee (DRC)

- 2/8 "Praxeology": The study of communicative practices  
First introduction to the computers in the Speech Lab
- Duranti, Ch. 1 (esp. 1.2)  
Hanks, W. F. (1996). Language and Communicative Practices.  
Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Ch.s 9, 10
- begin field-observations, identify important activities/settings,  
potentially begin to make recordings
- 2/15 Talk and embodied action within life-worlds
- Goodwin, C. (1998). Action and embodiment within situated  
human interaction. CD-ROM/installed on computers in the  
Speech Lab
- assignment due:  
preliminary field-report: settings, activities, communication  
media, participation roles, recording conditions
- 2/22 Communities of practice
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated Learning: Legitimate  
Peripheral Participation. Cambridge: Cambridge University  
Press. Ch.2 "Practice, person, social world"; Ch.3 "Midwives,  
tailors, quartermasters..."
- Kleifgen, J. A., & Frenz-Belkin, P. (1997). Assembling  
knowledge. Research on Language and Social Interaction,  
30(2), 157-192.
- assignment due:  
initial video-recordings
- 2/29 Theories of culture
- Duranti, Ch. 2
- 3/1 Ethnographic methods  
Digitizing and editing video
- Duranti, Ch. 4

3/8 Old School-microethnography

Erickson, F., & Shultz, J. (1977). When is a context? Some issues in the analysis of social competence. *The Quarterly Newsletter of the Institute for Comparative Human Development*, 1(2), 5-10.

McDermott, R. P., & Roth, D. (1978). Social organization of behavior: interactional approaches. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 7, 321-345. (available online through Electronic Journals, UT Library)

McDermott, R., Gospodinoff, K., & Aron, J. (1978). Criteria for an ethnographically adequate description of concerted activities and their contexts. *Semiotica*, 24(3/4), 245-276.

Spring Break

3/22 Demonstrative doings and other communicative actions by which knowledge is transmitted

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis*. New York: Harper & Row. Ch. 13, The frame analysis of talk

Star, S. L. (1996). Working together: Symbolic interactionism, activity theory, and information systems. In Y. Engeström & D. Middleton (Eds.), *Cognition and Communication at Work* (pp. 297 - 318). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Duranti, Ch. 7

assignment due: sample of edited and digitally enhanced video-tape

3/29 Cognitive actions, cognitive tools, collaborative activities

Kirsh, D. (1995). The intelligent use of space. *Artificial Intelligence*(73), 31-68. Available on-line at <http://icl-server.ucsd.edu/~kirsh/Articles/Space/AIJ1.html>  
see other work by Kirsh at:  
<http://cogsci.ucsd.edu/~kirsh/>  
<http://adrenaline.ucsd.edu/onr/index.htm>

Wertsch, J. V. (1991). A sociocultural approach to socially shared cognition. In L. B. Resnick, J. M. Levine, & S. D. Teasley (Eds.), *Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition* (pp. 85-100). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

4/5 Distributed cognition

Hutchins, E., & Klausen, T. (1996). Distributed Cognition in an Airline Cockpit. In Y. Engeström & D. Middleton (Eds.), *Cognition and Communication at Work* (pp. 15-34). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hutchins, E. (1991). The social organization of distributed cognition. In L. B. Resnick, J. M. Levine, & S. D. Teasley (Eds.), *Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition* (pp. 283-307). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

assignment due: description of recurrent activities in the workplace

4/12 Lab day: Working with Photoshop, Premiere, Aftereffects, Authorware, and Dreamweaver (brief introductions)

4/19 New School-microethnography: Frameworks of participation

Goodwin, C., & Goodwin, M. H. (1992). Context, activity, and participation. In P. Auer & A. DiLuzio (Eds.), *The Contextualization of Language* (pp. 77-100). Amsterdam: Benjamins B.V.

Duranti, Ch. 9

assignment due: preliminary analysis of cognitive and instructional actions

4/26 Built space and interaction

LeBaron, C., & Streeck, J. (1997). Built space and the interactional framing of experience during a murder interrogation. *Human Studies*, 20, 1-25.

5/3 no class

5/10

**Presentations of final research reports**

**final reports due**