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Final Project Guidelines

Goal: to apply what you learned in COMM118 to data and show how it can be relevant to everyday life.

Requirements

Cover page + 6-7 page paper + a reference page

4-5 sources minimum (Tracy & Robles chapters all count as ONE source, the rest must be other readings we covered; use APA).

Paper Instructions

In choosing your topic, you can take one of two approaches:

- a) Pick a concept we have learned about in class (i.e. face-work, person referencing, speech acts, footing, emotion, etc.) and apply this concept to an aspect of interpersonal communication you find relevant and interesting (e.g., how does emotion culture affect the way we communicate?). Make sure to connect your topical focus to other relevant contexts. For example, if your focus is on how emotion culture surfaces in everyday talk, connect it to other topics such as shifts in footing, identity work, face-work, speech acts, etc.
- b) Think about an aspect of interpersonal communication in your life that interests you and use multiple concepts from class to analyze your topic. For example, your main topic is an interest in how people communicate their ethnic/racial identity in everyday talk. Concepts that help analyze this are person referencing, accents, dialects, shifts in footing (when and where do I express different racial/ethnic identities), Tracy's four identities, etc.

If you need help selecting a topic, email me or come to my office hours, and we can brainstorm about it.

Remember:

- One sentence statement of your topic at the top of your introductory paragraph.
- Explain: significance, relevance, and application of your paper to everyday life
- Clear focus of paper – Have a clearly stated thesis statement that summarizes the argument of your paper and then support it/develop it in consecutive paragraphs. What's the big picture of my paper and how am I going to prove it?
- Include specific examples of talk or conversations (your data) – this can be from personal experiences and/or from media clips (clips do not have to be American/in English, but if you use a foreign clip, please translate for me).
- Transcripts must have line numbers and follow the transcription style in the Tracy & Robles book (there is a detailed version in chapter 5 but no need to be that elaborate). A page of transcribed conversation is typically enough for a paper this long. However, the transcript should be in an annex at the very end after your bibliography, and does not count as part of your 6-7 pages. You can then pull as much data from it in your analysis or refer to number lines.
- Make sure you cite sources in the text every time you reference a particular idea that is not yours, not only when you use direct quotes.
- Keep your observations and your analysis (your thin and thick description) separate.

Grading Rubric

- a. Clear presentation of your focus – 15%
- b. Breadth: Linking multiple topics we've discussed – 20%.
- c. Depth: Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts (e.g., correct use of terms – 20%
- d. Applied connection: how does what you write/say/do in the project matter in everyday life; clearly connect the concepts you discuss to the “real life” examples you use – 40%.
- e. Mechanics (length, references, number of sources, complete sentences, etc.) – 5%



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