

LING 7800

Kira Hall

This graduate seminar draws from perspectives across the diverse subfields of sociocultural linguistics to understand profanity as a discursive practice that is complexly embedded in culture and society. The definition of profanity pursued in this course includes any use of language that is ideologically positioned as offensive to taste, sensibilities, and/or classes of persons, such as curse words, sexual registers, youth slang, verbal taboo, vulgar language, pornography, hate speech, derogatory gestures, or expletives. A central goal of the seminar is to bring together social theoretical work regarding the interdependency of censorship and profanity with the situated empirical study of profanity (and its avoidance) in specific social contexts. To this end, the seminar will introduce students to current developments in linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and varied forms of discourse analysis. Texts in poststructuralist, feminist, and anthropological theory will be read alongside empirical and ethnographic studies on social and interactional uses of profanity in order to gain a holistic understanding of how taboo forms come into being and gain their power from constraints placed on expression. Students interested in a more detailed course description should email Kira Hall at kira.hall@colorado.edu.