



# The Choreography of Speech : Introducing Gesture Studies



Code Apogée  
2MIAM33



Composante(s)  
UFR Langues et  
Civilisations



Période de  
l'année  
Semestre 2

## En bref

- > **Mobilité d'études:** Oui
- > **Accessible à distance:** Non
- > **Effectif:** 20

## Présentation

### Description

Speakers are social movers (Birdwhistell 1970) who physically engage in communication. Their bodily moves are not random but patterned – and always meaningful. In this seminar we learn to observe how speech is “orchestrated to a choreography of the human body” (Asher 1972). We look at the way meanings - abstract or concrete - are physically produced and enacted on the socio-interactive stage. We start by observing facial expressions and co-speech gestures in silent movies. We gradually become aware that speech production necessarily comes with gestural action.

This multimodal course resembles no other, in that it combines formal research seminars, animated classroom discussions, creative workshop sessions and film screenings.

### Objectifs

Understanding how vocal activity combines with other forms of semiotic expression. Getting a grasp on the interpersonal, cohesive and representational properties of gesticulation.. Eliciting the pragmatic and representational functions of head tilts and nods, eyebrow activity, movements of the hands and arms, etc. Learning how to observe, record and interpret gestural activity and gestural symbolism in context. Discovering how gesture can help teachers and pupils in language education. Experimenting with “intersemiotic translation”: the conversion of spoken or written discourse into different sign systems (e.g. mime, tableau vivant, dance compositions).

### Contrôle des connaissances

Attendance & engagement (30 %) + learning diary with guided entries and follow-up activities (70 %).

### Syllabus

No prior knowledge of linguistics or gesture semiotics is required since we start from scratch. Theories of gesture and movement are brought into the picture that go beyond gesture semiotics: Jousse's anthropology of gesture; Turner's anthropology of performance; Schechner's performance theory and Laban's theory of modern educational dance. Students of art, comics, literature and drama, as well as political science or media studies might find this course useful to analyse gesture, posture, gait and demeanour in a variety of (socio-historical) settings.



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## Compétences visées

Observing and analysing the patterned moves made by humans: co-speech gesticulation but also the expressive movements made by actors and dancers on the stage. Developing one's own expressive potential as a speaker-mover.

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## Informations complémentaires

Ouvert aux étudiant-es en mobilité sous réserve du nombre de places disponibles.

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## Bibliographie

All the necessary course material will be made available through e-campus, including a selection of academic papers and book excerpts.

### For further reading:

- \* CALBRIS, Geneviève et Louis PORCHER 2009 [1989]. Geste et communication. Paris : Didier
- \* KENDON, Adam. 2004. Gesture. Visible Action as Utterance. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press
- \* LABAN, R. 1963. Modern Educational Dance. London : Madonald & Evans
- \* MCNEILL, D. 1992. Hand and Mind. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- \* STREEK, Jürgen. 2009. Gesturecraft. The manu-facture of meaning. Amsterdam : John Benjamins.