



# **Just Words, Second Edition: Law, Language, and Power (Chicago Series in Law and Society)**

*John M. Conley, William M. O'Barr*

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Is it "just words" when a lawyer cross-examines a rape victim in the hopes of getting her to admit an interest in her attacker? Is it "just words" when the Supreme Court hands down a decision or when business people draw up a contract? In tackling the question of how an abstract entity exerts concrete power, *Just Words* focuses on what has become the central issue in law and language research: what language reveals about the nature of legal power.

Conley and O'Barr show how the microdynamics of the legal process and the largest questions of justice can be fruitfully explored through the field of linguistics. Each chapter covers a language-based approach to a different area of the law, from the cross-examinations of victims and witnesses to the inequities of divorce mediation. Combining analysis of common legal events with a broad range of scholarship on language and law, *Just Words* seeks the reality of power in the everyday practice and application of the law. As the only study of its type, the book is the definitive treatment of the topic that will be welcomed by students and specialists alike.

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