MEJO 890.001
TEXTUAL ANALYSIS:
Media Texts and Their Uses

Fall 2021 (Remote*)
Dr. Barbara Friedman
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Office Hours (via zoom): By appointment and via
https://unc.zoom.us/j/8295127742

*To join class:
https://unc.zoom.us/j/93955274164?pwd=ckNkQ2dvekQ3bUh6c25sMTV3VlNEUT09
Meeting ID: 939 5527 4164
Password: Text

Course Description & Objectives: Textual analysis refers to *a set of methods and a way of thinking* that focuses on written, visual and spoken language—what it represents and how we use it to make sense of the world and our place in it. Text-based approaches are transdisciplinary, bridging social sciences and humanities by treating media texts as cultural artifacts—documentary evidence that contains traces of socially constructed realities. Using the techniques of close reading, qualitative text analysis provides a means to illuminate experiences that might otherwise be inaccessible to empirical research methods. Media texts have everyday uses and they range from simple to complex. Further, media "texts" are not limited to printed materials—computer-mediated communication, broadcasts, video games, advertisements and photography, for example, can also be subjected to close reading to understand social phenomena. Scholars have focused on the production and responses to media texts to explore issues such as civil rights, immigration, violence, reality TV, politics, myth and memory, to name a few.

In this course, you will:
- gain an understanding and appreciation for documents, broadly construed, as objects of meaning in media studies and for the sociocultural implications of changes in media technology;
- gain exposure to some of the theories and concepts underpinning textual analysis as a useful form of interpretive inquiry;
- cultivate (or refine) the habit of close reading, "the mindful, disciplined reading of an object with a view to deeper understanding of its meaning" (Brummett, 2018, p. 2);
- become familiar with a range of qualitative research methods associated with text analysis, their technical points and applications;
- read and critique published examples of textual analysis;
- complete original research using methods of textual analysis suitable for scholarly presentation and commensurate with the student's level of study (e.g., journal article, book chapter, thesis/dissertation chapter).

Required Reading:

- Ahmed, S. (2019). *What's the Use? On the Uses of Use*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
    - Available full-text via UNC Libraries: https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb9769346

Other Reading:

I will draw reading from a range of fields/sources this semester and will provide pdfs or links to the material on Sakai. Reading will be placed in the Resources area of our Sakai site. Some material comes from the following books on interpretive, text-based methods; I encourage you to explore them more thoroughly if you find the selections helpful to your work:

- Brummett, B. (2018). *Techniques of Close Reading*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Boreus, K., & Bergstrom, G. (2017). *Analyzing Text and Discourse: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kuckartz, U. (2014). *Qualitative Text Analysis: A Guide to Methods, Practice and Using Software*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schwartz-Shea, P., & Yanow, D. (2012). *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. London: Routledge.

Grades & Grading Policy: This course will be conducted as a graduate seminar. This means that you are expected to be prepared to discuss/critique assigned readings, as well as your own research in progress; and to help peers as they develop their research. Each student is expected to produce an original research paper by the end of the semester using methods of textual analysis and suitable for scholarly presentation. The final paper should be suited to your level of study (e.g., journal article, book chapter, thesis/dissertation chapter), determined in consultation with the instructor.

Course grades will be determined *using this general scheme*, but who are we kidding, we're heading into another unusual semester. What's most important is that you engage with the reading, seek deeper understanding together, accept and incorporate feedback and make relatively steady progress in your writing. I am here to support and encourage your learning, so don't hesitate to ask for assistance when you need it.

Participation (e.g., reading discussion/leadership, presentations)	*25 percent*
Written assignments (work in progress)	*25 percent*
Final Paper	*50 percent*

Student grades will be determined this way:

H - Student reads and critically engages with all of the assigned material. Participation in discussion and written assignments exhibit the ability not only to apply the material, but also to

extrapolate ideas, expand into new areas, and contribute to the body of scholarship in the area. Reserved for truly outstanding work.

   P - Student usually reads and engages critically with the assigned material. Able to apply material and extrapolate ideas. Consistently good work completed on deadline.

   L - Student reads and engages critically with only some of the assigned material. Able to apply the material and extrapolate ideas in only some instances.

   F - Student occasionally misses class, does not always read the material, fails to critically engage with it, and is unable or unwilling to apply the material.

Honor Code: Students must adhere to the letter <u>and</u> spirit of the <u>University honor system</u>.

AEJMC Values & Competencies: The School's accrediting body outlines a number of values that our majors should be aware of, and competencies our majors should be able to demonstrate by the time they graduate from our program. You can learn more about them at the following link, under the heading "Professional Values & Competencies."
http://www.journalism.ku.edu/acejmc-professional-values-competencies

Special Needs: If you have any disability or other special situation that may make it difficult to meet the requirements described above, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. If you have not done so already, you should also contact <u>Accessibility Resources & Service</u> (ARS) at 919-962-8300 or <u>accessibility@unc.edu</u>.

Safe@UNC*.* The University's <u>Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Other Misconduct</u> states that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject by federal law to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources <u>here</u> (some are confidential, some are not). You can find confidential resources off-campus at <u>Orange County Rape Crisis Center</u>.

Week-by-Week Schedule: With Ahmed's thoughts on 'use' as a possible conceptual framework for research, course reading/instruction/participation will move through uses and usefulness of media texts and include examples of specific approaches to textual analysis. Students will read about and discuss the foundations of textual analysis and its uses and critiques in the field of media studies (and to a degree, others), the application and techniques of textual analysis, and complete original research suitable for scholarly presentation. Students will take responsibility for leading discussions of the reading and of their work in progress. Be sure to check Sakai for changes to our schedule and, importantly, to reading assignments, which may be modified based on students' areas of concentration in the course.

PART I: TEXTS, THEIR USES AND USEFULNESS

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Week 1, Aug. 19 ~ Everything is Text

To Read:

- Burton, "Media Texts: Features and Deconstructions," in *Media and Society: Critical Perspectives*
- Ahmed, "Using Things," chap. 1 in *What's the Use?*
- Brummett, "On Noticing What You See and Hear," chap 1 in *Techniques of Close Reading*
- *Optional: (Read if you are new to textual analysis/cultural studies or would just appreciate a primer – the Brummett reading, above is a bit of a primer, too)*
    - Lockyer, "Textual Analysis," in *Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, **or**
    - Fursich, "Textual Analysis and Communication," Oxford bibliographies, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756841/obo-9780199756841-0216.xml

To Do:

- Prepare a list of several phenomena you could research using Ahmed's ideas about 'usefulness,' and post to Sakai Forums before next class.

Week 2, Aug. 26 ~ Uses and Usefulness of Media Texts

To Read:

- Wolfe, "Who's Gotta Have It? The Ownership of Meaning and Mass Media Texts"
- Hall, "Encoding and Decoding"
- Mehta, "Master of None: Negotiated Decoding" in Thompson and Mittell, eds., *How To Watch Television*
- Sandler, "Modern Family: Product Placement," Thompson and Mittell, eds., *How To Watch Television*
- Connor, "'Canon: Brown Eyes, Frizzy Hair and Very Clever:' Fan Art, Fan Activism, and Black Hermione Granger," in Halliday, ed., *The Black Girlhood Studies Collection*
- Lamas, "I Am Caught Between the Two Worlds of the ICU and TV," *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/20/opinion/medical-tv-show-misinformation.html

Week 3, Sept. 2 ~ Interpretive Research Design

To Read:

- Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, introduction and chaps. 1-3 in *Interpretive Research Design*

Optional *(recommended if qualitative methods are new to you):*

- Saldaña, "Thinking about thinking" and "Thinking analytically," chaps. 1-2 in *Thinking qualitatively: Methods of mind*

Week 4, Sept. 9 ~ Designing for Trustworthiness
*To Read***:**
- Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, "Designing for trustworthiness"
- Smith and Wakefield, "Textual analysis of tobacco editorials"
- Hedrick, "One Direction real-person fiction on WattPad"

Alexandra Dillon

PART II: APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES

Week 5, Sept. 16 ~ Discourse Analysis
To Read:
- Bergström and Boréus, "Analyzing text and discourse in the social sciences," chap. 1 in Boréus and Bergström, *Analyzing text and discourse: Eight approaches for the social sciences*
- Macmillan and Edwards, "Who killed the princess?"
- Petersen, "Replicating our bodies, losing ourselves"
- Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, "Portraits of veganism"
- Steele, "Black bloggers and their varied publics"

Optional: (Read one or both if this is the first you're hearing of discourse analysis)
- Paltridge, "What is discourse analysis," chap. 1 in *Discourse analysis: An introduction*, 2nd ed.
- Stokes, "Discourse analysis," in *How to do media and cultural studies*, 2nd ed.

➢ DUE: Turn in the introduction to your research paper (or equivalent) to Sakai Assignments

Week 6, Sept. 23 ~ Coding Text for Analysis
To Read:
- Saldaña, chaps. 1-3 in *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*
- Whipple and Shermak, "The enemy of my enemy is my tweet"
- Samples for coding

Week 7, Sept. 30 ~ Genre Analysis
To Read:
- Miller, "Genre innovation: Evolution, emergence, or something else?"

- Mumford, What is this thing called soap opera?, chap 2 in *Love and ideology in the afternoon: Soap opera, women, and television genre*
- Levine, "Struggle for survival: Stagnation and innovation," in *Her Stories: Daytime soap operas and US television history*
- Damasio & Da Costa, "Portuguese soap operas: A case study on the emergence of an original production culture," *Critical Studies in Television 15*(1)*,* 2020.

Week 8, Oct. 7 ~ Work on your own

➢ DUE: Turn in your literature review or equivalent to Sakai

Week 9, Oct. 14 ~ News as Genre
To Read:
- Van Leeuwen, "News genres" chap. 15 in *Handbook of communication in the public sphere*
- Buozis and Creech, "Reading news as narrative"
- Bray, "How do online news genres take up knowledge claims of …"

Week 10, Oct. 21 ~ FALL BREAK – NO CLASSES

➢ DUE: Turn in your method section or equivalent to Sakai

Week 11, Oct. 28 ~ Ideological and Argumentation Analysis
To Read:
- Downey and Toynbee, "Ideology: Towards renewal of a critical concept"
- Deuze, "Popular journalism and professional ideology"
- Bishop, "The professional protester"
- Vavrus, "Opting out moms"

Week 12, Nov. 4 ~ Visual Analysis
To Read:
- Brennen, Simon & Nielsen, "Beyond (mis)representation"
- Mortensen, et al., "The marijuana user in US news media"
- Chouliaraki & Stolic, "Photojournalism as political encounter"

Week 13, Nov. 11 ~ Work on papers
- Instructor available

Week 14, Nov. 18 ~ Presentations
- Informal presentations of finished research or research-in-progress

Week 15, Nov. 25 ~ Thanksgiving holiday, no class

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 1:
FINAL PAPERS DUE TO SAKAI BY 5 P.M.

Cara Barer