



Fujiko Nakaya's 'London Fog' outside Tate Modern, London, 2017. Tate Photography.

Fall 2022
MEJO 851 Textual Analysis:
Our Storied World
Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
CA 338
Dr. Barbara Friedman
bfriedman@unc.edu (or Sakai Messages)

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 are not limited to printed materials—computer-mediated communication, broadcasts, video games, advertisements and photography, for example, can also be read to understand social phenomena. This semester, we will consider subjectivities across media by focusing on the active process of “storying” ourselves and others; that is, how do we use ideas about story and subjectivities to bring ourselves and others into being through media? What do stories and storying tell us about the role of texts in ways of being and knowing?

To demonstrate a range of analytical approaches to text unified by our focus on stories and subjects, we will read from the following books, as well as scholarly articles and book chapters appropriate to our work this semester and posted to Sakai.

- Schwartz-Shea, P., & Yanow, D. (2012). *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. London: Routledge. Full text available via UNC Libraries: <https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb9691726>
- Ruth Palmer, *Becoming the News: How Ordinary People Respond to the Media Spotlight* (Columbia University Press, 2018). **Ebook in Sakai Course Reserves.**
- Bronwen Thomas and Julia Round, eds. *Real Lives, Celebrity Stories: Narratives of Ordinary and Extraordinary People Across Media* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014). **Ebook in Sakai Course Reserves.**
- Sarah Hagelin and Gillian Silverman, *The New Feminine Antihero: The Disruptive Women of Twenty-First Century Television* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022). Full text available via UNC Libraries: <https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb11205529>
- Rebecca Wanzo, *The Suffering Will Not Be Televised: African American Women and Sentimental Political Storytelling* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).

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 your level of study (e.g., journal article, book chapter, thesis/dissertation chapter).

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.

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

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 and spirit of the [University honor system](#).

AEJMC Values & Competencies: The School's accrediting body outlines many of the 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 [Accessibility Resources & Service](#) (ARS) at 919-962-8300 or accessibility@unc.edu.

Safe@UNC. The University's [Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Other Misconduct](#) 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 [here](#) (some are confidential, some are not). You can find confidential resources off-campus at [Orange County Rape Crisis Center](#).

Week-by-Week Schedule: With story and subjectivity as possible conceptual frameworks for research, course reading/instruction/participation you 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 (not at the last minute, I promise).

PART 1: THEORETICAL PARADIGMS

Week 1, Aug. 18 ~ Everything is Text

To Read:

- Burton, "Media Texts: Features and Deconstructions," in *Media and Society: Critical Perspectives*
- 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**



Children pass through "Fog x Hill," Herald News.

- Fursich, “Textual Analysis and Communication,” Oxford bibliographies, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756841/obo-9780199756841-0216.xml>

*Fujiko Nakaya testing her fog sculpture, Boston, 2018.
Image by Melissa Ostrow.*



Week 2, Aug. 25 ~ Texts in Research Design

To Read:

- Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, chaps. 1-4 in *Interpretive Research Design*, <https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb9691726>

- Wolfe, “Who’s Gotta Have It? The Ownership of Meaning and Mass Media Texts”

To Do:

- Prepare a list of several phenomena you could research using the notion of story/ing and subjectivity

as you understand them (it’s OK if our ideas reflect a range of understandings) and **post to Sakai Forums by Sept. 1.**

Week 3, Sept. 1 ~ Theorizing About Story

To Read:

- Freeman, “Narrative at the Limits” in *Life and Narrative*
- Bird & Dardenne, “Myth, Chronicle, and Story”
- Altman, “What is Narrative?,” chap. 1 in *A Theory of Narrative* (Course Reserves)
- Thomas & Round, chaps. 1 & 2 in *Real Lives, Celebrity Stories* (Course Reserves)

○ **Optional:**

- Berdayes & Berdayes, “The Information Highway in Contemporary Magazine Narrative”

To Discuss:

- Discuss your list of research phenomena, and how you might design a related interpretive research project. How do texts figure into your project, and what definitions will you use? What concepts/theories?

Week 4, Sept. 8 ~ Theorizing About Subject

To Read:

- Walls, “Of Subjects, Subjectivity, and Subjectification,” in *Mathematical Subjects*
- Code, “Taking Subjectivity into Account,” in *Feminist Epistemologies*
- Wanzo, “It’s a Hero?,” in *The Blacker the Ink*
- Thomas & Round, “Competence in Your Own Enactment,” chap. 4 in *Real Lives, Celebrity Stories* (Course Reserves)

To Do:

- Turn in to Sakai a work plan for the semester (see Assignments)

PART 2: APPROACHES & TECHNIQUES

Week 5, Sept. 15 ~ Studying News Subjects

- Palmer, *Becoming the News* (Course Reserves)
 - No class held, read Palmer and be prepared to discuss Sept. 22

Week 6, Sept. 22 ~ Interviewing News Subjects

- Discussion of Palmer, *Becoming the News*
 - *Note:* 2-3 discussion leaders



Fujiko Nayaka, Fogscape, 2014

Week 7, Sept. 29 ~ Political Storytelling

To Read:

- Wanzo, *The Suffering Will Not Be Televised*
 - No class held, read Wanzo and be prepared to discuss Oct. 6

Week 8, Oct. 6 ~ Narratives of Trauma

- Discussion of Wanzo, *The Suffering Will Not Be Televised*
- *Note:* 2-3 discussion leaders

Week 9, Oct. 13 ~ Discourse Analysis

To Read:

- Paltridge, “What is Discourse Analysis” (a good primer)
- Chang, “The Monstrous Feminine in the Incel Imagination”
- Krakoff, “Colorblind Coverage”
- Steele, “Black Bloggers and Their Varied Publics”
- Jacobsen, “Who is Trans?”

To Do:

- Turn in introduction and literature review (or equivalent) to Sakai

Week 10, Oct. 20 ~ Fall Break (Oct. 20-21) – No classes held

Week 11, Oct. 27 ~ Genre Analysis

To Read:

- Miller, “Genre innovation: Evolution, Emergence, Or Something Else?”
- Hagelin & Silverman, *The New Female Antihero* (Course Reserves)
 - Everyone reads introduction and epilogue
 - Each student chooses a chapter from Part 1, and a chapter from Part 2

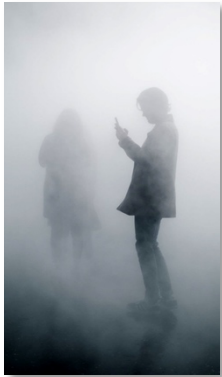
Week 12, Nov. 3 ~ Ideological Analysis

To Read:

- O'Brien, "Prostitution Ideology and Trafficking Policy"
- Deuze, "Popular Journalism and Professional Ideology"
- Vavrus, "Opting Out Moms in the News"

To Do:

- Turn in methods (or equivalent) to Sakai



Week 13, Nov. 10 ~ Visual Analysis

To Read:

- TBD

Week 14, Nov. 17 ~ Work on your own (instructor available via zoom)

To Do:

- Turn in findings/discussion (or equivalent)

Week 15, Nov. 24 ~ Thanksgiving – No classes held

Week 16, Nov. 29 ~ Informal presentations of completed research or research-in-progress

Last Day of Classes (LDOC) ~ Nov. 30



Artist Fujiko Nakaya shrouds Philip Johnson's glass house in fog. By Richard Barnes.

Saturday, Dec. 3 ~ Final papers due

- Turn in to Sakai by 12 p.m.