

CONTENT ANALYSIS
Sociology 699Y
Spring 2013
Wednesday 3:30-6:00 p.m.
Art-Sociology Building, Room 1117

Professor: Melissa Milkie

Course Description

Content analysis is a powerful tool in sociological analysis because it enables researchers to examine and uncover a wide ranging set of social and cultural patterns that are often subtle or difficult to detect through other means. This course will provide an overview of the potential and the challenges of conducting content analyses, as well as the specific procedures relevant to carrying out this type of research. We will also discuss to what extent content analysis is a useful tool in analyzing “culture” compared with other methods. You’ll read about and discuss controversies surrounding research issues and challenges within content analysis methodology, including those relevant to design, data generating, data analysis, measurement, and the presentation of results.

Students will conduct a content analysis study based on a formulated research question and a clear plan for data construction. Through this research process and discussion of core readings, students will sharpen their abilities to design, conduct, and critique content analysis research; all should leave the course with a project that can be developed into a publication in a peer-reviewed academic journal.

Course Requirements

All students must enter the classroom each week with nuanced knowledge of the assigned readings and thoughtful observations and critiques of them. Reading in the order listed on the syllabus with each week’s set of readings is best. All must actively contribute to seminar discussions and expect to respectfully disagree with others. We will have shared leadership across all of us as we present problems and issues from our own research and as we discuss and contribute to ideas stemming from core readings.

Readings: Readings include those that directly discuss and tackle tricky methodological issues, as well as model articles that illustrate particular difficulties in action. The articles are available on h:\Milkie\Socy699Y, organized into weekly folders; most are also available through Research Port. Two books are available through local bookstores and Amazon.com:

Corbin, Juliet and Anselm Strauss. 2008. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Neuendorf, Kimberly A. 2002. *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

There are many excellent books, some aimed at graduate students, and a plethora of creative and highly informative articles on specific topics that we cannot cover in this single course.

Additional reading may be useful to you, particularly if you have not taken a Qualitative Research methods course. Please see the website for some recommendations.

Graded Requirements **Late assignments are penalized 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., A- to B+) per day late, up to 5 days late**

1. Class participation in person and online (10 percent): In class, your full attention in listening and participating in discussion is critical to the success of your own learning as well as that of your classmates. Online: post your problems to The Culture Lab website; comment on others' problems. *Three* posted problems and *three* responses to others' problems are required.

2. Critiques (5 percent each—20 percent total): Turn in a 2-3 page written critique of a starred **article for indicated weeks. In your critique, do not summarize the article. Focus on identifying and discussing two different problems, for example of design, RQ, population and sampling, conceptualization, coding, analysis, or presentation of results. Be specific, and provide details of how a different choice might yield different results. Essentially, you are critiquing the validity of the study. You will be asked to present critiques in class.

Project Assignments: These are assignments for which students use their own project/data.

3: RQ/pop ID (10 percent). Write a 2-3 page document; this becomes the first part of your methods section for the final paper. Carefully state your research question and its importance, and identify the population of interest (cultural text you will generalize to), why you are using it, its advantages and disadvantages as a text in studying your RQ. See NSF's pub on qualitative work: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04219/nsf04219.pdf>

4. Sample Construction (10 percent). Create a sample using your text in two different ways. Then, turn in a 2-3 page document on how and why you created the sample you did – specify and justify your choices. This becomes a second part of your methods section for the final paper.

Sample Generation Tools: For archives of newspaper and other types of articles, the library has some research databases that make it relatively simple to generate your data. Two commonly used research databases are Lexisnexis (academic) and Factiva. Both search engines allow you to narrow your search by newspaper (Regional, NYTimes, Washington Post, etc.), by keyword, and by date, to name a few. Another useful tool is to use Google News (www.google.com/news). You can sort by date range and narrow by your search terms as well. NVivo 10 is a useful place to collect and analyze online media such as twitter, Facebook, and webpages. Version 10 allows users to capture the data and import it directly into NVivo without having to copy and paste the data into separate documents (such as Microsoft Word or Excel).

5. Coding Rules (10 percent). A “how-to “of document based on your coding scheme. This is both an instructional and definitional resource. It tells you and other coders what to look for in the text, what to code, what not to code, and so on. It is the document you could hand to almost anyone and ask them to code your text. This becomes an appendix for your final paper. An example is available at h:\Milkie\Socy699Y\methresources.

6. NVivo Reflection (5 percent). Go through your first round of coding using NVivo and write a 2-3 page reflection paper on it. What did you learn, and how did it alter your ideas about coding rules and procedures for your project?

7. Reliability Report (5 percent). Code a small subset of your data using your established definitions and rules and ask a colleague to code the same data using the coding rules. Compare the results and calculate a preliminary inter-coder reliability rate. Refine definitions and rules as necessary. Write a 1-2 page reflection, reporting the rate (include the rate in your methods section).

8. Final Paper (30 percent). ~20 pages (plus tables, figures etc.). Revise prior assignments based on feedback from classmates and your professor to create the final paper. Include a title page, abstract, intro and a clear RQ. The methods section should be very detailed, discussing your sampling of the case, data generation, and coding rules and procedures. Present preliminary quantitative and qualitative results. A discussion section draws upon the readings and your experiences to reflect on the challenges of content analysis.

Class Protocol

Attend all classes, arrive on time and *turn off all electronic devices*, including: cell phones, laptops, iPads, iPods, etc. prior to the start of class, and do not leave during class unless there is an emergency. This is a rare time of focused, shared discussion. You will have a break to catch up on communications.

Academic Integrity

As part of a community of scholars, as well as a moral community which is responsible for the integrity of scholastic work, you are required to uphold the University of Maryland code of academic integrity. Cheating or any form of academic dishonesty usually results in a permanent grade of “F/dishonesty” for the course. Written documents regarding absences or late assignments that contain false information are considered academic dishonesty cases and will be handled accordingly.

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.shc.umd.edu>. To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).”

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented physical or learning disability, necessary accommodations will be made. Contact me to discuss this as soon as possible.

CourseEvalUM

Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University as well as to the tenure and promotion process. CourseEvalUM will be open for you to complete your evaluations for courses at the end of the semester. Please go to the website www.courseevalum.umd.edu to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

Course Outline and Scheduled Readings (subject to change)

Jan. 23 (Week 1): Introduction and Course Overview

Familiarize yourself with theculturelab@umd.edu website; you will be posting and discussing some of your questions online there with classmates.

Guest analyst: Joanna Pepin

Jan. 30 (Week 2): Theory, Research Questions and Content Analysis

Neuendorf, Kimberly A. 2002. Chpts. 1 & 3 “Defining Content Analysis” & “Beyond Description” in *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, Kathy. 2008. “Grounded Theory as an Emergent Method.” Pp. 155–70 in *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, ed. by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Bibler and Patricia Leavy. New York: Guilford.

Altheide, David, Michael Coyle, Katie DeVriese, and Christopher Schneider. 2008. “Emergent Qualitative Document Analysis.” Pp. 127–54 in *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, ed. by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Bibler and Patricia Leavy. New York: Guilford.

Corbin, Juliet and Anselm Strauss. 2008. Chpt 2 “Practical Considerations” in *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Binder, Amy. 1993. “Constructing Racial Rhetoric: Media Depictions of Harm in Heavy Metal and Rap Music.” *American Sociological Review* 58:753-67.

****Critique #1 due**

Feb. 6 (Week 3): Cultural Texts, Part I

oral to written texts (jokes); advertisements and visual Data, songs

Corbin, Juliet and Anselm Strauss. 2008. Chpt 3 “Prelude to Analysis” in *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lamont, Michelle. 2000. “Meaning-Making in Cultural Sociology: Broadening Our Agenda.” *Contemporary Sociology* 29:602–7.

Altheide, David L. 2000. “Tracking Discourse and Qualitative Document Analysis.” *Poetics* 27:287–99.

**Smirnova, Michelle Hannah. 2012. “A Will to Youth: The Woman’s Anti-Aging Elixir.” *Social Science & Medicine* 75:1236-43.

**Kimport, Katrina. 2012. “Remaking the White Wedding? Same-Sex Photographs’ Challenge to Symbolic Heteronormativity.” *Gender & Society* 26:874-99.

****Critique #2 due**

Guest analyst: Michelle Smirnova

Feb. 13 (Week 4): Cultural Texts, Part II

books, newspapers, magazines, diaries, TV, movies, blogs

Schudson, Michael. 1989. “How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols.” *Theory and Society* 18:153–80.

LaRossa, Ralph. 2012. “The Historical Study of Fatherhood: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations.” Pp. 37-58. *Fatherhood in Late Modernity: Cultural Images, Social Practices, Structural Frames*.

Collins, Patricia A., Julia Abelson, Heather Pyman, and John N. Lavis. 2006. “Are We Expecting Too Much from Print Media? An Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of the 2002 Canadian Healthcare Reform Debate.” *Social Science & Medicine* 63:89–102.

**Miller, Diana. 2011. “Masculinity in Popular Sitcoms, 1955-1960 and 2000-2005.” *Culture, Society and Masculinities* 3:141–59.

**Kleykamp, Meredith and Crosby Hipes. 2013. “Ticking Time Bombs? Coverage of Veterans of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in the Elite American Media.”

****Critique #3 due**

Guest analyst: Crosby Hipes

Feb. 20 (Week 5): Selecting a Population; Sampling

Neuendorf, Kimberly A. 2002. Chpt. 4 “Message Units and Sampling” in *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Riffe, Daniel, Charles F. Aust, and Stephen R. Lacy. 1993. “The Effectiveness of Random, Consecutive Day and Constructed Week Sampling in Newspaper Content Analysis.” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 70:133–39.

Craig, Stephen. 1992. “The Effect of Television Day Part on Gender Portrayals in Television Commercials: A Content Analysis.” *Sex Roles* 26:197-211.

**Misra, Joya, Stephanie Moller, and Marina Karides. 2003. “Envisioning Dependency: Changing Media Depictions of Welfare in the 20th Century.” *Social Problems* 50:482-504.

****Critique #4 due**

Guest analyst: Joanna Kling

Feb 27 (Week 6): Issues in Sampling

justifying the sample; units of analysis, missing data

Neuendorf, Kimberly A. 2002. “Message Archives.” Pp. 215–18 in *Content Analysis Guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Riffe, Daniel, Stephen Lacy, Jason Nagovan, and Larry Burkum. 1996. “The Effectiveness of Simple and Stratified Random Sampling in Broadcast News Content Analysis.” *Journal of Mass Communication Quarterly* 73:159–68.

Rutherford, Markella B. 2009. “Children’s Autonomy and Responsibility: An Analysis of Childrearing Advice.” *Qualitative Sociology* 32:337–53.

Pescosolido, Bernice A., Elizabeth Grauerholz, and Melissa A. Milkie. 1997. “Culture and Conflict: The Portrayal of Blacks in U.S. Children's Picture Books Through the Mid- and Late-Twentieth Century.” *American Sociological Review* 62:443-64.

****RQ/Pop ID due**

March 6 (Week 7): Analyzing Culture: Content Analyses vs. other Methods

interviews, experiments, ethnography vs. CA

Pugh, Allison. 2013. "What Good are Interviews for Thinking about Culture? Demystifying Interpretive Analysis." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 1:1–27.

Feagin, Joe R. 1991. "The Continuing Significance of Race: Antiracist Discrimination in Public Places." *American Sociological Review* 56:101-16.

Pager, Devah and Lincoln Quillian. 2005. "Walking the Talk: What Employers Say Versus What They Do." *American Sociological Review* 70:355-80.

Van Ausdale, Debra and Joe R. Feagin. 1996. "Using Racial and Ethnic Concepts: The Critical Case of Very Young Children." *American Sociological Review* 61:779-93.

Denny, Kathleen E. 2013. "Privileging the Privileged: Evaluations of Fathers by Race and Level of Involvement with Children."

Guest analyst: Kathleen Denny

****Sample Construction Plan Due**

March 13 (Week 8): Data Analysis -- Inductive and Deductive Coding

In-class Group Coding assignment – we will use the same research question and data source to analyze. With the research question in mind, students will create coding schemes through an open coding process. Students will compare coding schemes in class.

Corbin, Juliet and Anselm Strauss. 2008. Chpts. 4, 5 & 6, "Strategies for Qualitative Data Analysis," "Introduction to Context, Process and Theoretical Integration" and "Memos and Diagrams" in *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

van Dijk, Teun A. 1993. "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse and Society* 4:249-83.

Dickie, Virginia A. 2003. "Data Analysis in Qualitative Research: A Plea for Sharing the Magic and the Effort." *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 57:49–56.

Flannery Quinn, S. 2006. "Examining the Culture of Fatherhood in American Children's Literature: Presence, Interactions, and Nurturing Behaviors of Fathers in Caldecott Award Winning Picture Books (1938-2002)." *Fathering* 4:71-96.

Guest analyst: Joanna Pepin

March 20: Spring Break

March 27 (Week 9): LAB--Data Analysis with NVivo

Fielding, Nigel. 2008. "The Role of Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis." Pp. 675-95 in Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Bibler & Patricia Leavy (Eds.), *Handbook of Emergent Methods*. New York: Guilford.

****Download free NVivo software to your laptop on March 26 (not before since the free trial is for one month only), and come to class with a list of theoretically derived potential themes, to become nodes for coding**** http://www.gsrinternational.com/products_free-trial-software.aspx. Note NVivo is on three computers in the Grad Lab.

Guest analyst: Shanna Brewton-Tiayon

April 3 (Week 10): Data Analysis – Elaborating Analyses

Corbin, Juliet and Anselm Strauss. 2008. Chpts. 8 & 9 "Analyzing Data for Concepts" and "Elaborating the Analysis" in *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Linneman, Thomas J. 2013. "Gender in Jeopardy! Intonation Variation on a Television Game Show." *Gender & Society* 27:82-105.

Chepp, Valerie. 2013. "Black Feminism and Third Wave Women's Rap: A Content Analysis, 1996-2003."

****NVivo Assignment due**

Guest analyst: Valerie Chepp

April 10 (Week 11): Comparing Analysis "by Hand" to NVivo & Interpreting and Presenting Results, I – Quantitative presentation of data, different ways to present same findings

Neuendorf, Kimberly. 2002. Chpt. 8 "Results and Reporting" in *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sagay, Abigail C., and Kjerstin Gruys. 2010. "Morality and Health: News Media Constructions of Overweight and Eating Disorders." *Social Problems* 57:231-50

****Coding Rules due**

April 17 (Week 12): Big Data/Data Mining

carefully examine Neal Caren's website <http://nealcaren.web.unc.edu/big-data/> and complete the exercises there

Amenta, Edwin, Neal Caren, Sheera Olasky, and James E. Stobaugh. 2009. "All the Movements Fit to Print: Who, What, When, Where, and Why SMO Families Appeared in the New York Times in the Twentieth Century." *American Sociological Review* 74:636-56.

****Bring three written questions to class for Prof. Caren**

Guest analyst: Neil Caren

April 24 (Week 13): Interpreting and Presenting Results, II -- Qualitative

presentation of data, different ways to present same findings

Denny, Kathleen E., Shanna Brewton-Tiayon, Lucia Lykke and Melissa A. Milkie. 2013. "Who's To Blame? Framing Low Father Involvement as a Social Problem in the 20th and 21st Centuries."

****Bring your preliminary results to class for some constructive critiques**

May 1 (Week 14): Evaluating the Quality of Content Analyses

validity, reliability, including inter-coder reliability

Krippendorff, Klaus. 2006. "Reliability in Content Analysis: Some Common Misconceptions." *Human Communication Research* 30:411-33.

Neuendorf, Kimberly. 2002. Chpt. 7 "Reliability" in *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

****Reliability check due**

May 8 (Week 15): Wrap Up and Presentation of Final Projects

****Final paper due; present your work using PPT as for a conference session**