

MODEL SYLLABUS
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES:
ANALYZING TEXTS AND DOCUMENTS

CLASS FORMAT AND SCHEDULING:

Lecture and discussion, with 2 - 2 hour sessions per week.

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:

Theory and practice of communicative analysis of social/cultural texts and documents and the records produced by systematic observing and interviewing procedures.

CREDIT HOURS:

5 credits

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The course is designed to provide the student with an intensive exposure to the theory and practice of textual and document analysis as practiced in qualitative communication studies. Topics include: an overview of how textual and document analysis fits into qualitative research practice, a review of different philosophical underpinnings and how their implications for practice differ, an examination of approaches used both for the analysis of social/cultural texts and documents as well as the field notes, records, and interview transcriptions produced by the researcher. Current issues and debates relating to text and document analysis will also receive attention. While the course emphasizes research practice, the issues involved in the analysis of texts and documents are issues that impact virtually every aspect of everyday communication practice and design. These ramifications will be discussed. While graduate students will be required to select their class project with scholarly purposes in mind, undergraduates may opt for more practical applications. Class discussion will allow ample consideration of possibilities.

DEVELOPED IN 1996 BY:

Brenda Dervin, Ph.D., Professor (Communication), 3016 Derby Hall, 154 N. Oval Mall, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA dervin.1@osu.edu. Note: This syllabus was developed for curriculum committee review purposes and as a model for alternative instructors. The readings come solely or primarily from authors writing in the various communication fields. Actual presentations of the class will vary and most versions will rely 30-50% on works from sources in other fields.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

While attendance is not a formal course requirement, there are four ways in which missing class can hurt you. One is in your participation grade for which attendance is a necessary pre-requisite. The second will be in the resources you will be able to bring to bear on the take-home exams because class lectures and discussions will necessarily impact the selection of the exam questions. The third will be in the resources you will be able to bring to bear on your class paper because class sessions will be in part orient toward assisting Sudan's with their selected class projects. If you miss a class you must acquire the missing notes from another student and not from the instructor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

For both undergraduate and graduate students, class grades will be calculated based on:

Class participation & discussion	20%
Two take-home exams	40% (20% each)
Class paper	40%

The two take-home exams with each consist of four sets of three questions from which students are to choose one question per set to be answered in no more than one double-spaced typed page.

For the class paper, each student is to execute an analysis of a set of texts or documents of his/her own choosing. The final paper is to include the following components: a) a commentary on the experience using concepts derived from class readings and discussions; b) an analysis of the results obtained from the observations; and c) an appendix including at least 15 pages of record of systematic text/document analysis. Sections a and b of the paper should be about 10 pages in all. Significant class time will be devoted to selecting class projects and to discussion of concepts useful for the final paper analysis. Students are encouraged to hand in portions of their papers in draft form for feedback. These drafts may be handed in at any time and will be handed back with comments within one week. The target size for the final paper is 25 pages.

Graduate students will be expected to do graduate level work including covering the extra readings assigned to them as well as preparing a class paper of quality suitable for submission for convention or journal referee.

CLASS READINGS

There are four texts for the class available at the bookstores. Copies of the assigned articles are also on reserve in the library.

Althiede, David, *Qualitative media analysis*. Thousand, Oaks, Ca.: Sage, 1996

Berger, Arthur Asa. *Media analysis techniques.*, Thousand Oaks, Ca: 1991

Jensen, Klaus Bruhn. *The social semiotics of mass communication*. Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage, 1995

Silverman, David. *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods of analyzing talk, text, and interaction*. London: Sage Ltd., 1993.

In addition to the texts there is a selection of additional readings on reserve at the library. Full citations for the all the readings are included in [Master Bibliography for Model Syllabi Qualitative Research in Communication Studies](#). In the schedule below, readings

are identified by last name of senior author and an abbreviated document title. Items are marked as follows:

+items are required readings for both undergraduate and graduate students

*items are required readings for graduate students

- items are available for those who wish to pursue issues in more depth

COURSE SCHEDULE:

WK FOCUS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH MANDATES

Course texts:

+Althiede 1, Plugged-in research

*Althiede 2, Ethnographic document analysis

+Silverman 2, The logic of qualitative methodology

Reserve list:

+Berger , The artwork (or text)

- Brown, Narrative analysis and organizational development

- Farrell, Narrative in natural discourse...

*Frey, Overview of textual analysis

- Tuchman, Qualitative methods in the study of news

*van Dijk, Discourse analysis in (mass) communication research

3 PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Course texts:

+Berger 1, Semiological analysis

+Berger 2, Marxist analysis

+Berger 3, Psychoanalytic criticism

+Berger 4, Sociological analysis

*Jensen 1, Sources of social semiotics

- Jensen 2, Communication theory: first order semiotics

- Jensen 3, Theory of science: second order semiotics

Reserve list:

- Fry, A semiotic model for the study of mass communication

- Lanigan, Semiotic phenomenology: a theory of human communication praxis

4 ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLIC ARTIFACTS AND DOCUMENTS

Course texts:

+Althiede 3, The stages and processes of qualitative document analysis

+Althiede 4, Newspapers, magazines, and electronic documents

Reserve list:

- Connell, Text, discourse, and mass communication
- *Larsen, The textual analysis of fictional media content
- *van Dijk, The interdisciplinary study of news as discourse

***** TAKE HOME EXAM #1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF
FIRST
CLASS SESSION THIS WEEK**

**5 SYMBOLIC ARTIFACTS AND DOCUMENTS
(CONTINUED)**

Course texts:

- +Althiede 5, Electronic reality
- +Silverman 4, Texts

Reserve list:

- *Livingstone, Interpreting a television narrative: how different viewers see...
- *Rakow, Woman as a sign in television news
- Solomon, The elements and process of communication campaigns

**6 ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH
PRODUCTS**

Course texts:

- +Althiede 7, Field notes and other data
- +Silverman 3, Observations

Reserve list:

- *Rubin, What did you hear? Data analysis

**7 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PRODUCTS
(CONTINUED)**

Course texts:

- +Silverman 5, Interview data
- +Silverman 6, Transcripts

Reserve list:

- *Strine, How to read interpretive accounts of organizational life
- *Wachtman, Storytelling: the narrative structure of evaluation

8 CONTENT ANALYSIS: QUANTITATIVE TOOL IN A NEW CONTEXT

Reserve list:

- Bertrand, Techniques of analyzing focus group data
- *Cantor, Artifactual study on the analysis of culture: a defense of...
- +Dervin, The critical content analysis of sense-making responses...
- +Frey, Content analysis
- *Kepplinger, Content analysis and reception analysis
- Rosengren, Advances in Scandinavian content analysis

9 ISSUES IN TEXTUAL AND DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

Reserve list:

- *Jensen, After convergence: constituents of a social semiotic of media...
- *Jordon, On ethnography...: reading narratives or deconstructing... +Kvale, The plurality of interpretations
- +Kvale, The social construction of validity
- McGee, Text, context, and the fragmentation of contemporary culture

***** TAKE HOME EXAM #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF FIRST CLASS SESSION THIS WEEK**

10 ISSUES (CONTINUED)

Reserve list:

- *McRobbie, The politics of feminist research: between talk, text, and action
- *Moore, Texts, readers, and contexts of reading: developments in...
- +Newcomb, The search for media meaning
- Rushing, Power, other, and spirit in cultural texts
- +Stewart, Speech and human being: a complement to semiotics
- Tracy, 'Good' and 'bad' criticism: a descriptive analysis

EX

***** FINAL CLASS PAPER DUE AT END OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED EXAM PERIOD FOR THIS CLASS**

This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and for seeking available assistance in a timely manner.

