

MDIA 311 Content Analysis

Trimester 2 2009

24 Points

TRIMESTER DATES:

Teaching dates: 13 July to 16 October 2009

Study week: 19 to 23 October 2009

Last piece of assessment due: 13 November 2009

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Coordinating Instructor: Dr. Douglas A. Van Belle

Office: KP42-210

Office Hours: 1-3PM Thursdays.

Email: doug.vanbelle@vuw.ac.nz

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Fridays 2PM-5PM OK 501

COURSE DELIVERY

This is a research methods oriented course that combines lectures and tutorials/workshops into a single afternoon session.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Blackboard will be used as a bulletin board to post announcements and material relevant to the course.

Lecture notes WILL NOT be posted on Blackboard.

COURSE CONTENT

This course offers a hands-on engagement with content analysis as a research methodology. This includes an exploration of some of the basics of the underlying philosophical, conceptual and social foundations of the social-scientific mode of inquiry. Students will learn the skills required to apply this methodology to

independent research projects and will also develop sufficient conceptual background to independently pursue greater expertise. This course should be particularly useful for students considering future careers involving text or communication analysis and students who might use content analysis or social science methods in post-graduate research.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By focusing on method as an expression of the underlying concepts driving social scientific research, it is expected that students will develop the ability to make informed assessments, developments and applications of content analysis as a methodology. Specifically students are expected to be able to:

- 1) Understand the logic of the falsification model of science.
- 2) Understand the disjuncture between the ideals of the philosophy of science and the compromises that are necessary for its application to social scientific research
- 3) Apply the methodology of content analysis.
- 4) Identify where social scientific techniques and content analysis methodologies can inform the conduct of qualitative and theoretical research.
- 5) Design case-selection, coding and analysis procedures appropriate to a variety of research questions and applicable to a variety of media.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The average student is expected to commit approximately 240 hours to this course. This works out to roughly 19 hours per week to this paper, plus 10-12 hours for completing the essay at the end of term. Weekly readings and workshop assignments have been designed to take 10 hours per week, leaving 9 hours per week to be scheduled for studying, researching and writing.

READINGS

For the first two weeks of trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of VicBooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two all undergraduate textbooks will be sold from VicBooks and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building. You can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to you or they can be picked up from the shop. You will be contacted when they are available.

Essential texts:

Kimberly A. Neundorf (2002) *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. (MUST BE PURCHASED WEEK 1!)

MEDIA STUDIES COURSE OUTLINE 311

MDIA 311 ancillary readings: All ancillary readings are required and all are available free of charge to students, on-line through the VUW library.

Students are also pursue a significant amount of independantly-selected reading material and should be aware that costs may be associated with obtaining books or articles through interlibrary loan.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

This course is internally assessed. Below is an outline of the points of student assessment. These criteria are final for Term 2-2009 and supersede all other descriptions or depictions. All four assessments are required and must be completed to pass this course. Please note the definition of completion for the workshop assignments in its description.

Mid-Term Test	30%
Project	30%
Term Paper (4000 Words)	30%
Workshop Assignments	10%
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Total	100%

Mid-Term Test, Friday August 21, 2009: 2:00 PM-5:00PM— OK 501

The Mid-Term test focuses heavily upon the content of the textbook and students should tackle those readings as early in the term as they can manage. Students should also carefully consider how the lecture material and text materials relate to one another in order to best prepare for this piece of assessment. The test will be held in the lecture theatre. Alternate testing accommodations will be made as required for special needs students, but official university documentation must be offered to both the tutor and coordinating instructor at the beginning of the term. Make-up tests will only be offered to students with documented emergencies and please do note that the university is very strict about what counts as an emergency. **TRAVEL PLANS FOR THE BREAK ARE NOT AN ACCEPTIBLE JUSTIFICATION FOR RESCHEDULING TESTING.**

Project, Due Friday 2 October, 2009 2:01 PM

The project portfolio must be turned in directly to the instructor at the beginning of the lecture. Arriving late to this lecture will result in the paper being considered to be late. The specifics of the project will be announced before the mid-term break and posted on Blackboard shortly after..

Term Paper, Due Friday 13 November, 2009 1:13 PM

These essays are to be placed in the essay submission box in the Media Studies office, located on the second floor of KP-42. Papers must include a signed cover sheet. The specifics of the essay will be announced before the mid-term break and posted on Blackboard shortly after

Students are expected to use this essay guide for the structure of their paper:

http://www.cqpress.com/docs/college/VanBelle_WritingAppendix.pdf

Students are also expected to use a standard style guide for formatting references and footnotes. The formatting and referencing instructions in the Media Studies Essay Guide (posted on blackboard) may be used, but students majoring in other disciplines or familiar with other formats may use an alternative. The best place to locate these guidelines is on the websites of an academic journal from your discipline. For example politics students may wish to use:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~iuisq/docs/style.pdf>

Workshop Assignments

Workshop assignments will be handed out and explained at the end of some of the lectures and are due at the start of the next lecture. These single page assignments are intended primarily as exercises to support workshop activities and enhance student engagement with course material. They have been designed so that the primary learning experience is embodied in the challenge of pursuing the stated goals rather than reaching the goal. To reflect this, they are marked on an acceptable/not-acceptable basis and the primary criterion of assessment will be evidence of a clear effort to engage the stated intent of the assignment. Failing to attain the stated goal of a workshop assignment is acceptable and can still receive full marks. If the student finds that he or she has put three hours of work (unless another amount of time is specifically indicated for the assignment) without reaching the stated objective, the student should stop and write a short paragraph articulating how they attempted to reach the stated goal with an emphasis on choices and strategies. Students must complete ALL of the workshop assignments to complete this assessment. Late assignments will be given a zero, but will count as completed for passing the course. Students who do not complete this part of the assessment will fail this course regardless of their marks on other assessments.

Additional notes on written assignments.

Always keep a copy of the finished essay, project or workshop assignment. It is your responsibility to submit the assignment on time, and in the event of loss, regardless of fault, it is in your best interest to be able to immediately make a new copy available to your tutor.

All text should be typed unless otherwise instructed. The lecturer prefers all text to be double spaced but, alternatively you could leave a blank line between the lines you type. In respect of script size, you probably want to use a 12 point font for the main essay text and a 10 point font for footnote/endnote details. Times Roman or similar serif font please.

Assignments must be stapled and each page numbered. Do not use plastic covers or binders. A stack of essays in plastic covers exhibits many of the same qualities as a stack of live fish.

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office. Remember to always fill in your lecturer's name.

PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS

Assignments submitted after the deadline without a written extension will be penalised at a rate of 2% (out of a total of 100) per working day. In other words, if you get 50% for an assignment, after one day your grade will drop to 48%, then 46% the following day etc. Late assignments are likely to receive limited feedback. The weekend counts for one day (i.e. an assignment due on Friday that is submitted on Monday will receive a 2% penalty). Please ensure that you are aware of the time that your assignment is due, as well as the date, as this is the cut-off time utilised in calculating lateness penalties.

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Extension requests must be submitted to the Course Co-ordinator). Tutors cannot grant extensions.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To gain a pass in this course you must:

- Take midterm test
- Complete Term Paper
- Complete Project
- Complete ALL workshop assignments

STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Work submitted in an in class test or examination will obviously be handwritten. You are expected to write clearly. Where work is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

You should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC (Academic) website also provides information in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcademic/Publications.aspx>

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	17-7	<p><u>Lecture Topics:</u></p> <p>First Hour Introduction. Teaching strategy and related suggestions for learning strategies. Agreement reality and the evidentiary nature of scientific inquiry.</p> <p>Second Hour The logic of falsification, it's relation to theory and relation to reality. Issues in it's application to the social sciences. The misuse of Occam's razor. Measurement error and the fallacy of falsification.</p> <p>Workshop Hour Why do they always start in the middle? Things that are missing from the beginning of content analysis textbooks</p> <p><u>Readings For Week 2:</u> Neundorf Chapters 1 and 2</p> <p>Remember that all ancillary readings are required.</p> <p>Van Belle, D. (2006) "Dinosaurs and the Democratic Peace: Paleontological Lessons for Avoiding the Extinction of Theory in Political Science." <i>International Studies Perspectives</i> 7: 287-306.</p> <p>Chernoff, Fred (2008) "International Relations, Paleontology, and Scientific Progress: Parallels between Democratic Peace Studies and the Meteor Impact Extinction Hypothesis." <i>International Studies Perspectives</i> 9: 90-98.</p> <p>Jackson, Patrick T. (2008) "Hunting for Fossils in International Relations." <i>International Studies Perspectives</i> 9: 99-105.</p> <p>Van Belle, D. (2008) "Rejoinder: It's Just not That Complicated." <i>International Studies Perspectives</i> 9: 106-110.</p>
Week 2	24-7	<p><u>Lecture Topics:</u></p> <p>First Hour Error and the Post Falsification model of science. The logic of Platt's strong inference. Adapting strong inference to address the issue of error</p> <p>Second Hour Science as a self-ordered social process. Evolutionary logic of niches. Invisible hand of the marketplace.</p> <p>Workshop Hour Media structure, the logic of communication with different mediums and message units</p> <p><u>Readings For Week 3:</u> Neundorf Chapters 3 and 4</p>
Week 3	31-7	<p><u>Lecture Topics:</u></p> <p>First Hour Science as limiting the range of possible truths. Niches or roles for scientists in the scientific community.</p> <p>Second Hour Science as replicability. Transparency of process, choice and structure of inquiry.</p> <p>Workshop Hour Universes, population and sampling What are you trying to</p>

represent and how

Readings For Week 4: Neundorf Chapters 5, 6 and 7

Week 4 7-8

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Case studies and sampling. The logic of structured focus comparison. Limiting uninformative variation. Maximizing value of comparisons. The logic of strategic case selection and its application to content analysis. Case selection for qualitative content analysis.

Second Hour Concepts related to Measurement: accuracy, validity, reliability, replicability, precision, operationalization

Workshop Hour Coding strategies 1—simple is good. Manifest content. Binary coding, dictionaries and defining existences

Readings For Week 5: Neundorf Chapter, 8 and 9

Craggs and Wood (2005) Evaluating Discourse and Dialogue Coding Schemes. *Computational Linguistics* 31: 289-295.

Week 5 14-8

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Measurement technique. Human coders. Single coder. Multiple coders. Testing coding schemes

Second Hour Coding strategies 2--- The logic of mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Scales, sieves and categories.

Workshop Hour Question and answers regarding test.

Readings For Week 6:

None

Week 6 21-8

Lecture Topics:

First Hour

Test

Second Hour

More Test

Workshop Hour

Extra time so no one has to rush to finish their test.

Readings For Week 7: Baym, Geoffrey (2007) Representation and the Politics of Play: Stephen Colbert's Better Know a District. Political Communication

Mid Trimester Break: Monday 24 August– Friday 4 September 2009

Week 7 11-9

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Research Design 1—General Strategies for designing an empirical study. Strategies for relating evidence to theory.

Second Hour Research Design 2— Integrating coding strategies with research design

Workshop Hour Redesigning Baym, Relpicating Baym, Extending Baym

Readings For Week 8:

Self Selected Readings for the literature review supporting your project

Week 8 18-9

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Analyzing the written word. Discussion examples and strategies

Second Hour Analyzing the written word. Levels of analysis, units of analysis and the communicative form of the source medium.

Workshop Hour Data management—Coding sheets, rectangular data sets.

Readings For Week 9:

Self Selected Readings for the literature review supporting your project

Week 9 25-9

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Simple data analyses

Second Hour More simpler data analyses

Workshop Hour Testing your coding scheme

Readings For Week 10:

Nelson and Paek (2008) Nudity of female and male models in primetime TV advertising across seven countries. *International Journal of Advertising* 27: 715-744.

Lauzin et al (2008) Constructing Gender Stereotypes Through Social Roles in Prime-Time Television. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 52: 200-214

Week 10 2-10

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Beyond Text 1—Images, structure, layers, and a bit about the Greeks.

Second Hour Beyond Text 2—Themes, stories, and other hints of latent content.

Workshop Hour Paper Workshop

Readings For Week 11:

Krippendorff (2004) Measuring the Reliability of Qualitative Text Analysis Data. *Quality & Quantity* 38 :787-800.

Week 11 9-10

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Qualitative content analysis 1—Scientific lessons that may be of valu, the argument for replicability in qualitative analyses

Second Hour Qualitative content analysis 2—Strategies for pursuing replicability without compromising the purpose of qualitative analyses.

Workshop Hour Discussion hour

Readings For Week 12:

Walker, Schafer and Young (1998) Systematic Procedures for Operational Code Analysis: Measuring and Modelling Jimmy Carter's Operational Code. *International Studies Quarterly* 42: 175-190.

Boris et al (2008) Making Sense of Intractable Multiparty Conflict: A study of Framing in Four Environmental Disputes

Week 12 16-10

Lecture Topics:

First Hour Beyond manifest content. Operational Code Analysis

Second Hour Beyond manifest content. Framing

Workshop Hour

Paper workshop hour.

Study Period: Monday 19 to Friday 23 October 2009

Examination Period: Tuesday 27 October – Sunday 15 November 2009