CJT 765 Advanced Communication Research Methods: Analysis of Texts

Fall 2011

Class meetings: Grehan Journalism Bldg. Rm 223
Mondays, 3:30-5:50 PM

http://jat.uky.edu/~jhertog/CJT_765/CJT_765.html

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Analysis of texts

No single term that I have run across covers all forms of analysis applied to symbolic content. Each term I have found--textual analysis, content analysis, text analysis, discourse analysis, rhetorical analysis and so on--at least implies a particular type of content, a particular form of analysis, etc. I chose analysis of texts because it comes closest to providing an umbrella term for any type of scholarly (or other) form of analysis of symbolic content. We'll be looking at analysis of texts as a family of methods aimed at evaluating the meaning of a text or group of texts. A text can be seen as an enduring bounded corpus of symbolic content. This accepts a range of phenomena as texts. Not only books, television shows, paintings or recorded conversations are considered texts but also churches, maps, responses to open-ended survey questions, fashion ensembles, store layouts and on and on. While psychologists are especially well-versed in experimentation, sociologists and political scientists in survey research, and anthropologists in ethnography, the analysis of symbolic content is a special focus of the communications discipline. A perusal of communications journals will quickly demonstrate how widely used varied forms of text analysis are within the discipline.

Because this is a seminar it is appropriate (and expected) for each of you to take responsibility for teaching as well as learning. I cannot keep up with the vast number of methods and topics that fall under this umbrella, but can provide a theoretical base, experience and examples that relate to much of this field. I'm hoping to learn a great deal from this experience as well as enjoy the opportunity to explore this extremely active and rapidly expanding area of research.

I will emphasize the inseparability of theory and method in the course, so exposure to text-related theory and research will be as prominent as discussion of methods per se. As a consequence, we will be taking a rather broad approach instead of focusing on only one or a few means of studying texts.
**Grading**

Grading for this course will be determined by weekly online comments via Blackboard, leadership of one discussion session, a content analysis project report and presentation and a qualitative textual analysis project report and presentation. We will be discussing the projects in the seminar as they develop.

The breakdown of the percentage contribution from each source follows:

- **Weekly contributions:** 30%
- **Discussion leadership:** 10%
- **Content analysis project:** 30%
- **Qualitative analysis project:** 30%

Work that is not turned in on the due date will receive a 10% decrease in points awarded per weekday late, unless you provide a University-recognized excuse for the delay or you have made prior arrangements with me. Work must be made up within one week of return to class.

**Weekly contribution:**

Each week I will post a question on Blackboard that relates to the readings and prior discussion. You will be expected to respond to the question. Normally the response would be no more than 1,000 words but I may specify another count on occasion. Additionally, you will be asked to critique a classmate’s response. I will specify what I want you to focus on each week. These critiques will be no more than 500 words in length.

**Discussion leadership:**

Beginning the third class period you each will lead a discussion of a short piece you selected that relates to the required weekly readings. You are responsible for proposing the piece to me (a short explanation of its relation to the readings, your reasons for choosing the particular piece and an outline of your proposed discussion). The quality and logic of your choice, as well as your preparedness in leading the discussion, will determine your grade.

**Content analysis project:**

Applying the knowledge gained from your text and associated readings, you will propose a content analysis project. You will specify the theoretical problem you wish to tackle, the sample to be generated, and the approach you want to use. From among these proposals, at least three will be developed into actual projects and carried out by teams of coders, etc. More on that later.

**Qualitative analysis project:**

To cap off the course, each of you will carry out a textual analysis of some sort on a topic of your choosing. As before, you will need to outline your theoretical approach (though those wishing to apply grounded theory approaches will be rather vague on this one), outline the sample of text you wish to analyze, and some explanation of how you will approach the texts. During the scheduled final period,
you will present your project and the findings you have generated.

**Policy on diversity**

All class members will be treated with respect by the instructor and students. Grading and all other instructor contact with students will be based on effort and performance alone. No discrimination against or mistreatment of students (or the instructor) for any reason will be tolerated.

The following class schedule may be adjusted according to the needs of the class as it proceeds. Any changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard.

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<th>Fall 2011 Schedule, CJT 765</th>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Quantitative Research Methods: Text Analysis</td>
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**August 29**

Texts and Meaning
The Role of Texts in Communications Research
The Varieties of Texts
Symbol Volume and the Significance of Concepts

**Accompanying Reading:**

- Neuendorf, Chapters 1-3

**September 5**

Memorial Day Holiday—No Class Meeting

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<th>September 12</th>
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<td>Sampling and Theory Development</td>
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**Explication**
Conceptualization

Accompanying Reading:

- Neuendorf, Chapters 4-5

September 19
Developing Coding Rules

- Neuendorf, Chapters 6-7

September 26
Content Analysis Contexts
### Visual Content Analysis

- Neuendorf, Chapters 8-9
  - Bell, P. Content analysis of visual images. (pp. 10-34).
  - Lister, M., & Wells, L. Seeing beyond belief: Cultural studies as an approach to analysing the visual. (pp. 61-91).

### October 3

#### Extensive v. Intensive Content Analyses

#### Computerized Content Analyses

  - West, M. D., & Fuller, L. K. Toward a typology and theoretical grounding for computer content analysis. (pp. 3-12).
  - Stevenson, R. L. In praise of dumb clerks: Computer-assisted content analysis. (pp. 3-12)

### October 10
**Develop Team Content Analysis Projects**

### October 17
**Rhetorical Analysis**


### October 24
**Introduction to the Qualitative Analysis of Texts**

**Framing Analysis**

- **Matthes**, J., & Kohring, M. (2008). The content analysis of media frames:


**October 31**

Content Analysis Reports and Discussion

Critical Discourse Analysis


**November 7**

Narrative Analysis

- **Anthony**, K. (in press) "The piece I have attached is actually a piece written by Katie Anthony, a second year Ph.D. student in our Comm department here at UK. It just got accepted for publication and is currently in press." (e-mail from Brittany Lash).

**November 14**

Myth and Folklore/Develop Textual Analysis Projects


November 21
Ideological Analysis/Feminist Analysis


November 28
Health and risk communication

December 5
The interaction of method and theory


Finals Week Final Project Presentations