New York University
Media, Culture, and Communication
Fall 2023
MCC-GE 3101
Monday 2-4:50
Room 712
East Bldg/239 Greene St.

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  Communication
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Doctoral Methods Seminar

Course description:
This doctoral methods course focuses on the philosophical and theoretical assumptions behind, and rationales for, qualitative and interdisciplinary methodologies and approaches. The aim of the course is to establish a vocabulary for methodological approaches to research, to examine the nature of research questions served by different methods, to analyze the usefulness and limits of certain methods, and for students to be able to design a research project and apply methods to research. Readings include explanations of method as well as examples of particular theoretical/methodological approaches. This course is a survey of methodological approaches, so it will inevitably not provide a deep dive into particular methods so much as a general sense of what they involve. You may, depending on what methods you are drawn to, want to take a method specific course (on ethnography, for example) in addition.

Our approach will thus be both practical and meta-theoretical. We will unpack the assumptions, techniques, and aims of different methods. We will look at the methodological aims and approaches of a range of texts, examining the ways in which various scholars construct their arguments, define their materials, data, units of analysis, and objects of study, and justify their examples as representative of broader cultural and media contexts. With each approach, we will examine what kinds of questions a method will help us to ask (and not ask) and the limits and strategies of each approach. Fundamental to this collective inquiry will be an examination of the kinds of knowledges that particular approaches can help us to understand, and the kinds of case studies, objects of study, and expanded definitions of data we can work with.

In looking at readings we will consider the following questions: What questions is the author asking? What is the object of study? What is the "data"? What is the unit of analysis? What archive is constructed by this work? How does that archive reveal its method? What are the primary and secondary sources? What is the argument? What methods is the author using to make this argument? How do you know, i.e. how does the author reveal their method and what

consequence does this have? How persuasive is the argument? How does the author argue that their object(s) of study is representative of a larger field? What is gained by this choice of method? What is not available to the author through this choice? In addition, we will also examine the politics of method, how disciplines define (and police) methods, and the relationship of method to interdisciplinary approaches in the humanities and social sciences.

This class also serves as an introduction to the MCC faculty. The class session will be divided into two for most classes, with MCC faculty visiting in the first half and discussing their research and their methodological approaches. We will also look at the books published by recent MCC PhDs out of their dissertations.

Assignments and requirements:
Students are expected to do all designated readings in preparation for class, to participate fully in class discussions, and to come prepared to ask faculty guest speakers informed questions. Each week has many more readings than we will actually do. Each week we will have several shared readings, including those by the faculty guest speakers, and then 2 students will be assigned to report on one additional reading.

There will be two assignments: (1) students will fully read and report in class on a recent book by an MCC Ph.D. (2) There will be a final short assignment, 5-8 pages, of a proposal for a project with a specific emphasis on methods.

Grades will consider presentation 30%, proposal 30%, and class participation 40%.

Readings:
Articles/chapters listed on the syllabus are either linked or in pdf on this Google Drive:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1n2JtvKPC9K251D8UAl3KFdNrF6dGdayZ

Recommended Books:
Jessica McCrory Calarco, *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum* (2020)
https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.library.nyu.edu/book/89878
Joli Jensen, *Write No Matter What: Advice for Academics* (2017)
Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials 4th Edition* (2016)

Jonathan Sterne's website is a valuable resource on academia and graduate studies: http://sterneworks.org/academe/

Books (derived from dissertations) by recent MCC PhDs:

Naomi Angel, *Fragments of Truth: Visual Culture and the Work of Reconciliation in Canada* (2022)
Katherine Brideau, *The Typographic Medium* (2021)
Hatim el-Hibri, *Visions of Beirut: The Urban Life of Media Infrastructure* (2021)
Jacob Gaboury, *Image Objects: An Archaeology of Computer Graphics* (2021)
Carolyn Kane, *Chromatic Algorithms: Synthetic Color, Computer Art, and Aesthetics After Code* (2014)
Tamara Kneese, *Death Glitch: What Social Networks Leave Behind* (2023)
Max Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism* (2021)
Lana Lin, *Freud's Jaw and Other Lost Objects: Fractured Subjectivity in the Face of Cancer* (2017)
Nadja Millner-Larsen, *Up Against the Real: Anti-Representational Militancy in 1960s New York* (2023)
Wazhmah Osman, *Television and the Afghan Culture Wars: Brought to You by Foreigners, Warlords, and Activists* (2021)
David Parisi, *Archaeologies of Touch: Interfacing with Haptics from Electricity to Computing* (2018)
Elizabeth Patton, *Easy Living: The Rise of the Home Office* (2020)
Matthew Powers, *NGOs as Newsmakers: The Changing Landscape of International News* (2018)
Scott Selberg, *Mediating Alzheimer's: Cognition and Personhood* (2022)
Jennifer Telesca, *Red Gold: The Managed Extinction of the Giant Bluefin Tuna* (2020)
Hannah Zeavin, *The Distance Cure: A History of Teletherapy* (2021)

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1, Sept 11: Introduction

Reading:
Paul Edwards, "How to Read a Book"
https://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf
Pierre Bayard, *How to Talk about Books You Haven't Read*, excerpt

Week 2, Sept. 18: Considering Evidence/Discourse Analysis
Reading:
Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes"
Eve Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading"

Guest: Marita Sturken
Reading:
Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History*, Introduction
Marita Sturken, *Terrorism in American Memory*, Introduction and Chapter 5: The
  Memory of Racial Terror

Recommended:
Adele Clarke, *Situational Analysis*: Chapter 3 Doing Situational Maps and
  Analysis, Chapter 4, Turning to Discourse(s), and Chapter 5: Mapping
  Narrative Discourses
Donna Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy"
Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex"
Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 4th Edition, Chapters 6, 8, 9

Week 3, Sept. 25:

Guest: James Wahutu
Reading:
J. Siguru Wahutu, Zhuoru Deng, and Osman Osman, "Speaking of Africa:
    Sociology and the Study of Media in Majority World Countries"
J. Siguru Wahutu, "Making African Suffering Legible: Co-Constructing Narrative
    of the Darfur Atrocities"
J. Siguru Wahutu, "Why Study African Media?"

Political Economy/Analyzing Media Industries
Shawn Shimpach, "Realty Reality: HGTV and the Subprime Crisis"
Rodney Benson, *Shaping Immigration News, A French-American Comparison*
    excerpt
Rodney Benson, Timothy Neff, and Mattias Hessérus, "Media Ownership and
    Public Service News: How Strong are Institutional Logics?"
David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker, "Toward a Political Economy of Labor in
    the Media Industries," in Wasko, Murdock and Sousa, eds., *The Handbook of
    Political Economy of Communications* https://search-credoreference-
    com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/content/title/wileyhpoec?tab=contents
John Caldwell, "Cultural Studies of Media Production: Critical Industrial
    Practices"
Liza Featherstone, *Divining Desire: Focus Groups and the Culture of
    Consultation* (2017), excerpts
Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Kids Rule! Nickelodeon and Consumer Citizenship*

Week 4, October 2:

Guest: Nicole Fleetwood
Reading:
Nicole Fleetwood, *Marking Time*, Introduction and Chapter 1
Nicole Fleetwood, "The Case of Rhianna"

Unpacking Blackness/Race/Colonialism
Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Introduction and excerpt
Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being,* Chapter 1
Cheryl Finley, *Committed to Memory: The Art of the Slave Ship Icon*, excerpts
Charlton McIlwain, *Black Software: The Internet & Racial Justice, from the AfroNet to Black Lives Matter* (2019)
Safiya Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression*, excerpt

Week 5, October 10 (Tues):

Guest: Nicholas Mirzoeff
Reading:
Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture, 3rd Edition*, Introduction
Nicholas Mirzoeff, *White Sight: Visual Politics and Practices of Whiteness*,
   Introduction
Nicholas Mirzoeff, "The Whiteness of Birds"
https://read.dukeupress.edu/liquid-blackness/article/6/1/120/299559/The-Whiteness-of-Birds

Visual Culture Analysis:
Erica Robles-Anderson, "The Crystal Cathedral: Architecture for Mediated
   Congregation"
Arvind Rajagopal, "Notes on Postcolonial Visual Culture"
Zeynep Gursel, *The Image Brokers: Visualizing World News in the Age of Digital
   Circulation*, Introduction
Simone Browne, *Dark Matters* Introduction and Chapter 2
Tina M. Campt, *A Black Gaze: Artists Changing How We See*
   https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6724962#goto_toc
Fernando Dominguez Rubio, *Still Life: Ecologies of the Modern Imagination in
   the Art Museum,* Introduction

Week 6, October 16:

Guest: Lisa Gitelman
Reading:
Lisa Gitelman, Paper Knowledge, Introduction
https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1656071
Lisa Gitelman, "Models and Manufacture: The Shoe as Commodity"
Lisa Gitelman, "Metadata"

Media History/Media Archaeology
Jonathan Sterne, *MP3: The Meaning of a Format*, excerpt
Erica Robles-Anderson and Patrik Svenssen, " 'One Damn Slide After Another':
  Powerpoint at Every Occasion for Speech"
Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka, *Media Archaeology*, Introduction
Jeffrey Sconce, *The Technical Delusion*, Introduction
Thomas Elsaesser, "Freud and the Technical Media: The Enduring Magic of the
  Wunderblock"
Shannon Mattern, *Code + Clay … Data + Dirt*, Introduction

Week 7, October 23:

Guest: Laine Nooney
Reading:
Laine Nooney, "A Pedestal, A Table, A Love Letter: Archaeologies of Gender in
   Videogame History"
Laine Nooney, *The Apple II Age: How the Computer Became Personal,*
   Introduction, Chapters on Home and Education, Inconclusions
   https://www-degruyter-
   com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/document/doi/10.7208/chicago/9780226816531/ht
   ml

Historical Research
Lynn Spigel, "Introduction to *Welcome to the Dreamhouse*" and "Outer Space
   and Inner Cities"
Kristen Ross, excerpt from *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*
Whitney Pow, "A Trans Historiography of Glitches and Errors," *Feminist Media
   Histories*
Robert Darnton, "An Early Information Society," http://www.historians.org/about-
   aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/presidential-addresses/robert-
   darnton
Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, The Whole
   Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*, Introduction and Chapter 3
John Harwood, *The Interface: IBM and the Transformation of Corporate Design
   1945-1976*, Chapter 2: The Architecture of the Computer
Jason Gallo, "Doing Archival Research" from *Research Confidential*

Week 8, October 30:

Guest: Paula Chakravartty
Reading:
Paula Chakravartty and Srirupa Roy, "Media Pluralism Redux: Toward New
   Frameworks of Comparative Media Studies 'Beyond the West'"
Paula Chakravartty and Sarah J. Jackson, "The Disavowal of Race in
   Communication Theory"
Michelle Buckley, Paula Chakravartty, and Sahiba Gill, "From Indenture to 'Good
   Governance': eMigrate and the Politics of Reforming Global Labour Supply
   Chains"

Global/Transnational Research
Aihwa Ong, "Introduction: Worlding Cities or the Art of Being Global"
Arvind Rajagopal, "Putting American in Its Place"
Juan Piñon, "Corporate articulations of transnationalism: the U.S. Hispanic and
   Latin American television industries"
Angharad N. Valdiva, "The Gendered Face of Latinidad: Global Circulation of
   Hybridity"
Sujata Moorti, "Digital Cosmopolitanisms: The Gendered Visual Culture of
   Human Rights Activism"

Week 9, Nov 6:

Guest: Natasha Schull (4-5:30)
Reading:
Natasha Schull, *Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas* (2012) Introduction
Natasha Schull, "Gambled Away: Video Poker and Self-Suspension"
Natasha Schull, "Data for life: Wearable technology and the design of self-care"
"Natasha Schull, The data-based self: Self-quantification and the data-driven (good) life"

Science, Technology, and Society Studies (STS)/Digital Research
Reading:
Mara Mills, "On Disability and Cybernetics: Helen Keller, Norbert Weiner, and the Hearing Glove"
Mara Mills, "Hearing Aids and the History of Electronics Miniaturization"
Mara Mills and Rebecca Sanchez, eds., *Crip Authorship: Disability as Method*, Introduction
   https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=30180156
Finn Brunton, *Digital Cash: The Unknown History of the Anarchists, Utopians, and Technologists Who Created Cryptocurrency* (2019), Introduction
John Law, "STS as Method"
Ignacio Farías and Anders Blok, "STS in the City"
Banu Subramaniam, Laura Foster, Sandra Harding, Deboleena Roy, and Kim TallBear, "Feminism, Postcolonialism, Technoscience"
Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory*, Introduction and excerpts
Angela Xiao Wu. The ambient politics of affective computing. *Public Culture, 34* (1).
Angela Xiao Wu, Harsh Taneja, and James Webster, (2020). Going with the flow: Nudging audiences online. *New Media & Society*.
Christian Sandvig and Eszter Hargittai, "How to Think about Digital Research"

Week 10, Nov. 13:

Guest: Lily Chumley

Reading:

Lily Chumley, *Creativity Class: Art School and Culture Work in Postsocialist China* (2016) Chapter 5 and Conclusion

Gregory Bateson, "Metalogue: What is an Instinct" from *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*

Charles Briggs, "Conclusion: Theoretical Quagmires and "Purely Methodological" issues" from *Learning How to Ask*

Ethnography

Helga Tawil-Souri, "Checkpoint Time" and "New Palestinian Centers: An Ethnography of the 'Checkpoint Economy'"

Gabriella Coleman, *Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking* excerpts

danah boyd, "Making Sense of Teen Life: Strategies for Capturing Ethnographic Data in a Networked Era"

Mizuko Ito et al, *Hanging out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out*, Introduction

Tom Boellstorff, Bonnie Nardi, Celia Pearce, TL Taylor, *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method*, excerpts

Elizabeth Chin, "Writing as Practice and Process" from *My Life with Things: The Consumer Diaries*

Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 4th Edition, Chapter 10

Week 11, Nov. 20:

Guest: Susan Murray
Reading:
Susan Murray, *Bright Signals: A History of Color Television* (2018), Introduction and Chapter 1
Susan Murray, "The New Surgical Amphitheater: Color Television and Medical Education in Postwar America"

Media Infrastructure
Nicole Starosielski, *The Undersea Network*, Introduction
Nicole Starosielski, *Media Hot and Cold*, Introduction
Matthew Hockenberry, Nicole Starosielski, and Susan Zieger, *Assembly Codes: The Logistics of Media*, Introduction
John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media*, Introduction and Chapter 1
Lisa Parks and Nicole Starosielski, Introduction to *Signal Traffic*
Lisa Parks, "Water, Energy, Access: Materializing the Internet"
Nicole Starosielski, "Fixed Flows: Undersea Cables as Media Infrastructure"
Helga Tawil Souri, "Cellular Borders: Dis/Connecting Phone Calls in Israel-Palestine"
Jennifer Holt and Patrick Vonderau, "Where the Internet Lives: Data Centers as Cloud Infrastructure"
Tung-Hui Hu, *A Prehistory of the Cloud*, excerpt
Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure* Space, excerpt

Week 12, Nov. 27:

Guest: Kelli Moore
Reading:
Kelli Moore, *Legal Spectatorship: Slavery and the Visual Culture of Domestic Violence,* Introduction and Chapter 2
  https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.library.nyu.edu/book/100996
Kelli Moore, "Allegation Escrow Platforms: Target Rape, Reporter's Dilemma, and the Promise of 'He Said, They Said'"

Psychoanalysis/Affect Theory
Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* Introduction and *On the Inconvenience of Others,* Introduction
Ben Kafka, *The Demon of Writing: The Powers and Failures of Paperwork* (Intro and Chapter 4)
Lisa Cartwright and Elizabeth Wolfson, "Introduction: Affect at the Limits of Photography"
Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, "In the Shadow of NAFTA"
Anne McClintock, "The Lay of the Land: Genealogies of Imperialism," from *Imperial Leather*
Patricia Clough, "The Affective Turn"
Anne Cvetovich, "Public Feeling" from *After Sex*
Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 4th Edition, Chapter 7

Week 13, Dec. 4:

Guest: Radha Hegde (3:45-5)
Reading:
Radha Hegde, "Fragments and Interruptions: Sensory Regimes of Violence and the Limits of Feminist Ethnography"
Radha Hegde, "Itinerant Data: Unveiling Gendered Scrutiny at the Border"
Radha Hegde, "Food Blogs and the Digital Reimagination of South Asian Diasporic Publics"
Shani Orgad and Radha Hegde, "Crisis-ready responsible selves: National productions of the pandemic"

Feminist Method
Reading:
Sandra Harding, "Is There a Feminist Method?"
Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges" and "Apes in Eden, Apes in Space"
Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny,* Introductio
Sara Ahmed, *Promise of Happiness,* Introduction
Brooke Erin Duffy, *(Not) Getting Paid to Do What You Love: Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational Work*, Chapter 1
Catherine Knight Steele, *Digital Black Feminism,* excerpts

Week 14, Dec. 11:

Guest: Stephen Duncombe (3:30-5)
Reading:
Stephen Duncombe, *Notes From Underground,* Introduction and a chapter
Stephen Duncombe and Silas Harrebye, "The Copenhagen Experiment: Testing
   the Effectiveness of Creative vs Conventional Forms of Activism"

Unpacking Culture/Activism:
Lauren Berlant, Introduction to *Queen of American Comes to Washington City*
Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas* excerpt
Jeffrey Juris and Alex Khasnabish, *Insurgent Encounters: Transnational
   Activism, Ethnography and the Political*, Introduction