



SPS Workshop 2019-2020

Theorising Discourse Analysis in International Politics

6 November 2019 (9:00 – 13:00)

7 November 2019 (9:00 – 13:00)

8 November 2019 (10:00 – 12:00)

Given by Dr Katharine M Millar, LSE

Seminar Room 4, Badia Fiesolana

Register [online](#)

Workshop Description:

The workshop provides a graduate-level introduction to the theory, epistemology, and methodology of discourse analysis in the political and social sciences, underscored by a substantive emphasis on international affairs, gender studies, and security studies. The workshop differentiates between the major strands of discourse analysis in the social sciences and the forms of questions, and types of claims, supported by each. Working systematically across the levels of epistemology, methodology, and method, the workshop provides students with the robust theoretical and conceptual grounding necessary to construct rigorous, valid, and, most importantly, consistent qualitative research designs.

The workshop structure moves from the more metatheoretical and conceptual to the concrete. Participants will become familiar with the basic theory of knowledge underscoring each approach to discourse analysis, but also engage with practical issues of discourse/text selection, casing, linguistic and cultural competence, accessibility, and, of course, the actual practice of textual interpretation. The workshop will also include a brief discussion of the pros and cons of computer-assisted analysis, illustrated with reference to the software package NVivo – the majority of the methods considerations introduced, however, will pertain more generally.

Significantly, the workshop will also engage with the more challenging aspects of interpretive analysis and ethics: the perils and unavoidability of reification, reflexivity and the positionality of the researcher; learning to “see” intersectional identities and power relations; and “hearing” meaningful silences. The workshop will conclude with a reflection upon the politics of methodology and epistemology within the academy, and a Q and A session troubleshooting student research issues.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Distinguish between major approaches to discourse analysis, evaluate their pros and cons, and select the appropriate method for their individual research project
- Execute the core elements of discourse analysis research design: casing, text selection, practical textual interpretation, and data presentation
- Make informed decisions about the utility of computer-assisted analysis for their own research
- Engage open-mindedly with the critical politics and ethics of discourse analysis
- Fairly evaluate – and defend – discourse analysis research design and specific interpretive claims

Requirements:

It is expected that students will have a basic familiarity with the logic and components of social scientific research design (i.e. neopositivist epistemology, discrete causality, case selection, literature review, etc.)

Students will write a response paper of no more than 1000 words in response to one of the asked questions for each seminar (see balance of syllabus), to be presented to the group. The student facilitator will be responsible for coordinating participants to ensure duplication is avoided and each session is covered. Students are also expected to a) read the materials for each session and b) be prepared to apply said materials to their own research in discussion. For the final session, students are requested to bring specific, prepared questions for troubleshooting their own research.

Session One: Epistemology: Discourse and Claim-Making

Essential Readings:

Hermann, M.G., 2008. [Content analysis](#). In *Qualitative methods in international relations* (pp. 151-167). Palgrave Macmillan, London. (read this first)

Hopf, T., 2004. [Discourse and content analysis: Some fundamental incompatibilities](#). *Qualitative methods*, 2(1), pp.31-33. and Neuendorf, K.A., 2004. Content analysis: A contrast and complement to discourse analysis. *Qualitative Methods*, 2(1), pp.33-36. **(read this last)**

Van Dijk, T.A., 1993. [Principles of critical discourse analysis](#). *Discourse & society*, 4(2), pp.249-283.

Vucetic, S., 2011. [Genealogy as a research tool in International Relations](#). *Review of International Studies*, 37(3), pp.1295-1312.

Questions for Discussion (and paper responses):

What types of questions can be answered using discourse analysis?

What is the relationship between language/meaning and the world within discourse analysis?

What is the theory of agency at work within discourse analysis?

Why might discourse analysis superficially appear inconsistent, vague, or overly-assertive?

Examples:

Bourdieu, P., 1991. *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard University Press. (more background than example)

Epstein, C., 2008. *The power of words in international relations: birth of an anti-whaling discourse*. MIT Press.

Joye, S., 2009. The hierarchy of global suffering: A critical discourse analysis of television news reporting on foreign natural disasters. *Journal of International Communication*, 15(2), pp.45-61.

Miller, B., Pournik, M. and Swaine, A., 2014. Women in peace and security through United Nations Security resolution 1325: Literature review, content analysis of national action plans, and implementation. *IGIS WP*, 13.

Session Two: Methodology: Practicalities of Discourse Analysis

Essential:

Hansen, L., 2013. [Security as practice: discourse analysis and the Bosnian war](#). Routledge. Chapter Five (but really, you should read all of Part One)

Milliken, J., 1999. [The study of discourse in international relations: A critique of research and methods](#). *European journal of international relations*, 5(2), pp.225-254.

Methmann, C., 2014. [Visualizing climate-refugees: race, vulnerability, and resilience in global liberal politics](#). *International Political Sociology*, 8(4), pp.416-435.

Questions for Discussion (and paper responses):

How do we bound/identify a discourse?

How do we identify cases within discourse analysis?

Is comparison meaningful and/or possible within discourse analysis?

What “counts” as a text within discourse analysis? How do we identify them?

How do we know when a discourse analysis is “finished?”

How do we connect interpretive discursive analysis to social and political phenomena?

What is the fair/appropriate means of evaluating discourse analysis?

Examples:

Doty, R.L., 1993. [Foreign policy as social construction: A post-positivist analysis of US counterinsurgency policy in the Philippines](#). *International studies quarterly*, 37(3), pp.297-320.

Hansen, L., 2011. [The politics of securitization and the Muhammad cartoon crisis: A post-structuralist perspective](#). *Security Dialogue*, 42(4-5), pp.357-369.

Millar, K.M., 2015. [Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American soldiers as liminal figures](#). *Review of International Studies*, 41(4), pp.757-779.

Möller, F. and Shim, D., 2019. [Visions of Peace in International Relations](#). *International Studies Perspectives*.

Shapiro, M.J., 1990. [Strategic discourse/discursive strategy: The representation of "security policy" in the video age](#). *International Studies Quarterly*, 34(3), pp.327-340.

Session Three: Method: Computer-Assisted Analysis (SPSS) and Representation of Data

Essential:

Robins, C.S. and Eisen, K., 2017. [Strategies for the effective use of NVivo in a large-scale study: Qualitative analysis and the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell](#). *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(10), pp.768-778.

Maher, C., Hadfield, M., Hutchings, M. and de Eyto, A., 2018. [Ensuring rigor in qualitative data analysis: A design research approach to coding combining NVivo with traditional material methods](#). *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17(1), p.1609406918786362.

Saillard, E.K., 2011, January. [Systematic versus interpretive analysis with two CAQDAS packages: NVivo and MAXQDA](#). In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 12, No. 1).

Questions for Discussion (and paper responses):

What are the benefits and drawbacks of computer-assisted discourse analysis?

Are all projects suited for computer-assisted analysis?

What times of information can computer-assisted discourse analysis produce?

Background:

Attride-Stirling, J., 2001. Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, 1(3), pp.385-405.

Bennett, A., 2015. Found in translation: Combining discourse analysis with computer assisted content analysis. *Millennium*, 43(3), pp.984-997.

Jackson, K. and Bazeley, P., 2019. *Qualitative data analysis with Nvivo*. SAGE Publications Limited.

Johnston, L., 2006. Software and method: Reflections on teaching and using QSR NVivo in doctoral research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 9(5), pp.379-391.

Sotiriadou, P., Brouwers, J. and Le, T.A., 2014. Choosing a qualitative data analysis tool: A comparison of NVivo and Leximancer. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 17(2), pp.218-234.

University of Oxford NVivo 12 Guide:

http://www.skillstoolkit.ox.ac.uk/sites/itlpportfolio/files/publicly-viewable/DA014_Notes_NVivo_Up%20and%20running.pdf (in particular, take a look at the terminology)

Usherwood, S. and Wright, K.A., 2017. Sticks and stones: Comparing Twitter campaigning strategies in the European Union referendum. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 19(2), pp.371-388. **(example)**

Session Four: Critical Extensions: Intersectionality and Reading Silences

Essential:

Dingli, S., 2015. [We need to talk about silence: Re-examining silence in International Relations theory](#). *European Journal of International Relations*, 21(4), pp.721-742.

Gruffydd Jones, B., 2013. '[Good governance](#)' and '[state failure](#)': genealogies of imperial discourse. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 26(1), pp.49-70.

Tidy, J., 2016. [The gender politics of "Ground Truth" in the military dissent movement: The power and limits of authenticity claims regarding war](#). *International Political Sociology*, 10(2), pp.99-114.

Questions for Discussion (and paper responses):

How are we to read absences and silences through discourse analysis? Can we?

What are the ethics of discourse analysis? Does it have a politics?

How do we read implicit power relations within discourse analysis? (e.g. gender, sexuality, race, coloniality) Is there a risk of essentialism?

Background:

Bleiker, R., 2015. Pluralist methods for visual global politics. *Millennium*, 43(3), pp.872-890.

Christensen, A.D. and Jensen, S.Q., 2012. Doing intersectional analysis: Methodological implications for qualitative research. *NORA-Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 20(2), pp.109-125.

Chowdhry, G., 2007. Edward Said and contrapuntal reading: Implications for critical interventions in international relations. *Millennium*, 36(1), pp.101-116.

Gentry, C.E., 2016. Chechen political violence as desperation: What feminist discourse analysis reveals. In *Researching War*(pp. 19-37). Routledge.

Gill, R., 1995. Relativism, reflexivity and politics: Interrogating discourse analysis from a feminist perspective. *Feminism and discourse: Psychological perspectives*, pp.165-186.

Fotopoulou, A., 2012. Intersectionality queer studies and hybridity: Methodological frameworks for social research. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13(2), pp.19-32.

Kronsell, A., 2006. Methods for studying silences: gender analysis in institutions of hegemonic masculinity. *Feminist methodologies for international relations*, pp.108-128.

Lundborg, T. and Vaughan-Williams, N., 2015. New Materialisms, discourse analysis, and International Relations: a radical intertextual approach. *Review of International Studies*, 41(1), pp.3-25.

Williams, M.C., 2018. International Relations in the Age of the Image. *International Studies Quarterly*, 62(4), pp.880-891.

Shilliam, R., 2015. *The black Pacific: Anti-colonial struggles and oceanic connections*. Bloomsbury Publishing. **(against European critical theory/critique/discourse analysis from decolonial perspective)**

Session Five: The Best Defense is a Good Offense (Wrap-Up Session, Q and A, and Trouble-shooting)

Essential:

Aradau, C. and Huysmans, J., 2014. [Critical methods in International Relations: The politics of techniques, devices and acts](#). *European Journal of International Relations*, 20(3), pp.596-619.

Questions for Discussion:

Do certain methods and/or epistemologies imply a particular politics?

How do we respond to positivist challenges to, and misunderstandings of, interpretive discourse analysis?

How much should we *care* about positivist challenges to, and misunderstandings of, interpretive discourse analysis?

(Bring your own specific research questions for trouble-shooting)

Background:

Feyerabend, P., 1974. *Outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge*. London. NLB. (as a counter-point)

Hale, C.R., 2008. *Engaging contradictions: Theory, politics, and methods of activist scholarship*. Univ of California Press.

Jackson, P.T., 2016. *The conduct of inquiry in international relations: philosophy of science and its implications for the study of world politics*. Routledge. All, especially Chapter 2

Staller, K.M., 2013. Epistemological boot camp: The politics of science and what every qualitative researcher needs to know to survive in the academy. *Qualitative Social Work*, 12(4), pp.395-413.

Strausz, E., 2018. *Writing the Self and Transforming Knowledge in International Relations: Towards a Politics of Liminality*. Routledge.