Rationale and Significance

This methodology course will focus on concepts, techniques and practices for critical discourse and narrative approaches to interpretive policy analysis, which an emphasis on feminist, post-colonial, and critical race methodologies.

Interpretive analysis—conceptually distinct from the more ubiquitous term ‘qualitative’—signals an attention to the philosophical presuppositions that guide the production of knowledge and meaning making; given different understandings of the nature of human or social reality and whether and how that reality might be known (Yanow, 2006). Critical discourse analysis similarly examines the production and use of language as means to understand social practices, relations of power in relation to the study of social and health policies and related social problems.

During the first two seminar meetings, students will examine the contemporary debates in the area of interpretive research and ground these debates in their epistemological and ontological origins. In particular, we will examine the ‘linguistic turn’ in social science and how theories of language complicate the research process. We will also explore the ‘cultural turn’ in social science which reflect debates of how human life is lived across multiple cultural contexts. And finally, we will address the ‘critical turn’, which engages how power and knowledge are embedded in the process of research.

The remaining seminar meetings examine specific methods for generating data and conducting analysis using discourse and narrative methodologies (we may explore other methodologies depending on student interest and as time permits). In addition to addressing philosophical foundations, will discuss and practice common strategies to access and collect data (e.g. observation, interviewing, finding existing documents), methods of organizing and representing different forms/genres of data for analysis (e.g. transcripts, electronic texts, images, hand-written notes); and strategies to analyze and represent your analyses for different audiences.

Students will be involved in making a substantial and ongoing contribution to the group learning process through providing peer feedback, constructing/critiquing conceptual models and
theoretical frameworks, and learning how to critically evaluate and enhance the methodological rigor in the projects of those involved in the seminar.

This advanced graduate course seeks to support social work and health science doctoral students to develop appropriate research designs and research proposals for either their comprehensive paper or their doctoral dissertation research. **Prior coursework in epistemology and introductory level qualitative methods are required.**

**Educational Philosophy**

This course will be guided by the practice of engaged pedagogy—as developed by scholars like Paulo Freire and bell hooks—and focuses on education as a process towards critical consciousness. This teaching approach presumes that students come to the classroom with lived experience that informs how they engage in the subject matter and the worlds in which they live.

As the instructor, I will seek to facilitate and encourage students to understand different perspectives, to analyze how knowledge is constructed and situated in the world, and to address issues of social justice, including gender, around the world. In this process, students are invited to analyze assumptions that underlie key concepts, engage in dialogue about the strengths and limitations of operating assumptions, while introducing new information with which to strengthen their own knowledge base.

Instead of identifying a single truth, course members will critically examine what various concepts can ‘do’; what social realities they reveal; how we can use different methodologies and methods to expand social work knowledge, practice, and research.

**Course Learning Objectives**

This course is designed to build upon students’ prior learning towards be able to understand and successfully perform the following:

1) To be able to differentiate among different epistemologies, theories, and applications to policy analysis research using critical and interpretive methodologies.
2) To discuss and apply interpretive and/or critical paradigms to the carry out research design, data collection and data analysis steps.
3) To generate and analyze different forms of data for use in interpretive policy analysis.
4) To discuss and articulate one’s subjectivity in relation to the research process and the production of knowledge.
5) To articulate the role of theory in your work and the strategic or deliberate use or extension of theory at all stages of the research process.
6) To understand and implement ethical decision-making in the context of interpretive policy research.

**Positive Learning Environment**

Knowledge sharing and learning can be an enlightening and unsettling experience. Therefore, we may be surprised by what we share and how we communicate with one another. We will be
approaching this learning as a journey with multiple itineraries that we will aim to honour and respect.

Because the classroom is a microcosm of larger social relations, class discussions may manifest some aspects of social difference and inequality. Examining course concepts from multiple perspectives will likely highlight differences among course members as well as common interests and aims. This process can be difficult and even personally challenging. While group process is not the subject of this course, the classroom climate inevitably impacts the quality of learning for all. Thus, it is expected that all course members, including the instructor, are mindful of their participation and take seriously the individual and collective task of respectful dialogue. Identifying and understanding our various differences in understanding and subjectivities can also lead to deeper learning.

**Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom**

In consideration of your classmates and your own learning please turn off all cell phones and pagers during class. If you must receive messages or be on call for an emergency, please discretely excuse yourself from the classroom.

Computers and electronic tablets may be used to support the learning activities in the classroom. These include such activities as taking notes and accessing course readings under discussion. However, non-academic use of laptops and other devices are distracting and seriously disrupt the learning process for everyone. Neither computers nor other electronic devices are to be used in the classroom for non-academic reasons. This includes emailing, texting, social networking, shopping, and other creative uses of the Internet.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION**

**Assignment Overview:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Course Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation &amp; Learning Goals</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>May 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Memos</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Leading Discussion</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Practicing Interpretive Analysis &amp; Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>All three drafts account for 5% of the total grade.</em></td>
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</table>

| Essay 1 | Draft for Peer Review | -- | May 16 |
| Essay 2 | Draft for Peer Review | -- | June 6 |
| Essay 3 | Draft for Peer Review | 5% | June 27 |

| Essay 1 | Final to Instructor | 20% | May 23 |
| Essay 2 | Final to Instructor | 20% | June 13 |
| Essay 3 | Final to Instructor | 20% | July 4 |
Grading Criteria

Written assignments will be graded on their clarity, comprehensiveness, originality, appropriate use of reference materials and technical adequacy. Papers are expected to be of sufficient quality as to represent your growing professionalism. All written work must be typewritten in APA format.

The University Grading Practices Policy is available at: [http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/Resources/SGS+Digital+Assets/governance/policies/GPP+-+Effective+July+1%2c+2012/universitygpp.pdf](http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/Resources/SGS+Digital+Assets/governance/policies/GPP+-+Effective+July+1%2c+2012/universitygpp.pdf). It defines the grade scale as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade Scale</th>
<th>Scale of Marks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90 - 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85 - 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80 - 84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77 - 79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73 - 76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70 - 72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>FZ*</td>
<td>0 - 69%</td>
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</table>

*FZ = Fail

What the Grades Mean

- **A+: Exceptional work.** The writing demonstrates exceptional mastery of the material and writing. Introduces innovative approaches or theories using a broad range of sources.
- **A/A-: Excellent Work.** Work is very well conceptualized, is well written, and integrates knowledge from various sources using a critical perspective.
- **B+: Very Good Work.** Work draws upon various knowledge sources, addresses relevant issues and theory, and is well written.
- **B: Average Work.** Work meets basic requirements.
- **B-: Overall performance is unsatisfactory.** Work draws upon limited knowledge sources without a critical perspective, demonstrates a general understanding of the issues and is poorly written.
- **FZ: Inadequate.** Work does not reflect understanding of issues, is poorly written, and has major misunderstandings about context and theory.

Writing Style Requirements

Please follow the guidelines in the 6th edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual for format and citations in your written assignments. This manual is available at the campus bookstore, the library, and the Writing Centre (www.hswriting.ca). Some basic information for using APA is available on the American Psychological Association website at [http://www.apastyle.org/index.aspx](http://www.apastyle.org/index.aspx). The instructors encourage students to set up individual appointments with the Writing Lab if you anticipate experiencing challenges with the writing assignments. All assignments must be typed and emailed to the course instructor.
**Late Papers**

The teaching team for this course has agreed that any paper handed in 1-7 days late will receive a one grade point deduction (eg. A to A-). Any paper more than one week late will not be accepted without clear documentation of illness (see absence due to illness section) or another personal situation that may merit academic consideration.

Students should make every effort to discuss anticipated late papers with instructors IN ADVANCE of due dates. Make a copy of everything you submit for course assignments. Please refer to the Faculty website for regulations regarding extensions, late papers, etc. available at http://www.socialwork.utoronto.ca/students/reg/grading.htm

**Turnitin**

Students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin on Blackboard (University of Toronto) for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. Students can upload their papers as many times as they like to review their work before submitting a final version to the instructor. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism.

It has, on occasion, taken over 72 hours for a Turnitin originality report to generate and be sent to students. Please keep this in mind should you wish to review a report before submitting for grading.

**Academic Dishonesty & Plagiarism**

Students in graduate studies are expected to commit to the highest standards of integrity, and to understand the importance of protecting and acknowledging intellectual property. It is assumed that they bring to their graduate studies a clear understanding of how to cite references appropriately, thereby avoiding plagiarism. Common examples of problematic academic practices that lead to consequences for plagiarism include:

- Copying and pasting from a source and providing a citation but forgetting to put quotation marks around the content;
- Using material from a source and making changes in specific words or sentence structure but not citing the original source.
- Using ideas from a source without citing the original source.

Graduate students are understood to be capable of expressing ideas that are original and distinct from those of the sources to which they refer. The consequences for academic dishonesty are very high at the graduate level; suspected plagiarism is immediately repeated to the Associate Dean’s Office and referred to the School of Graduate Studies. Please take the time to review your work carefully to avoid these consequences.
Two excellent documents: How Not to Plagiarize [http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize) and the Code on Behavior and Academic Matters is available for you to review on the FIFSW web site or at [http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/calendar/Pages/Policies-and-Guidelines.aspx](http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/calendar/Pages/Policies-and-Guidelines.aspx)

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities or Medical conditions**

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability or medical condition, please inform the instructor/s so we are able to modify the way the course is taught to facilitate participation and/or use resources available to us, such as Services for Students with Disabilities and Adaptive Technology to facilitate learning. If assistance is required, we will treat that information as private and confidential.

**Religious Observances**

Please notify the instructor if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements for alternate scheduling of evaluations or make up of missed work.

**Absence Due to Illness**

If illness is likely to interfere with your meeting a due date for an assignment or other requirements, you should have your physician or health care provider complete a Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form ([http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/getattachment/index/Verification-of-Illness-or-Injury-form-Jan-22-2013.pdf.aspx](http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/getattachment/index/Verification-of-Illness-or-Injury-form-Jan-22-2013.pdf.aspx)) at the time of your illness and submit it to the instructor. You must inform the instructor of the illness on or before the deadline date.

The usual procedures for absence due to illness apply in this course. (see [http://www.socialwork.utoronto.ca/students/reg/illness.htm](http://www.socialwork.utoronto.ca/students/reg/illness.htm)).

**Course Evaluation: Student Feedback Matters**

Course evaluations for this course will be completed through an online system. You will receive an email invitation at your mail.utoronto.ca email address that will direct you to where you can complete the evaluations for all courses that are in the online system.

The University of Toronto has updated course evaluation procedures to make them more convenient for students. Course evaluations are very important to ensuring the quality of education at this Faculty and informing the development of its curriculum.

The survey used to evaluate this course have been developed in collaboration between faculty and students and the university’s teaching and learning experts to ensure that it will provide information about teaching and learning that can be used to enhance and assure the quality of education here at the University of Toronto.

**ASSIGNMENT DETAILS**
1. **Course Engagement (10%)**

Your preparation, presence and participation are integral components of your individual and collective learning. You are expected to complete the required reading and contribute to class discussion, including participation in in-class activities.

Class preparation and participation also includes the provision of peer feedback on field work assignments in class and via posting on Blackboard. If you cannot attend class, please notify your instructor through e-mail (or phone) as soon as you can.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Students will generate participation and learning goals by week two, which will serve as a guide to self-evaluate their course engagement mark at the end of the term. The self-evaluation form is located at the end of the syllabus and will involve: a) a self-assessment of your participation and b) an assessment of your group work (for the fieldwork support triad). Your comments will be considered by the instructor for the final mark for Course Engagement.

2. **Leading Discussion (15%)**

Students will be expected to lead discussion on weekly readings on a rotating basis. On the day you are leading (or co-leading) discussion, you will be responsible for the following:

1) Writing up a one-page analysis about the assigned reading to share with the class. This document may be in bullet form and should address the following: a) main concepts/theories, b) underlying or operating assumptions undergirding the methodology, and c) discussion questions for class.). Your one-page document should be distributed at least 24 hours prior to class time (i.e. the Tuesday morning before class on Wednesday).
2) Presenting your synthesis and critical analysis of the readings (15 minute presentation; time will vary depending on the number of students per week)
3) Facilitating (or co-facilitating) the classroom discussion (20-30 minutes).

**Evaluation Criteria:** Students will be evaluated on the following:

- Written work demonstrates critical analysis of the assigned reading in connection with one’s developing epistemological orientation and substantive interests;
- Organization: Oral presentation and facilitated discussion presents information in a logical, interesting sequence which the class can follow.
- Engagement: Oral presentation involves the class. Student uses clear voice and maintains eye contact and interaction with peers.
- Professional writing: Correct use of spelling, grammar and APA style were appropriate.

2. **Practicing (and Developing) Interpretive Analysis & Writing**

Three short essays from 6-8 pages double-spaced.
Draft essays = Credit/no credit; 5% total for all drafts
Final essay = Graded essay; 20% per essay essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Class Draft for Peer Review</th>
<th>Final to Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>May 16</td>
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<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>June 6</td>
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<td>Essay 3</td>
<td>June 27</td>
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<td>June 13</td>
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<td>July 4</td>
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**Fieldwork support triad:** During the second week of class, we will form groups of three that will provide support and constructive feedback on your field work and written work (described below). On weeks where short essays are submitted, we will set aside 60 minutes of class time for triad meetings.

**Essay 1—Initial project description & Epistemological stance:** This essay should include: a) presentation of a research question and initial choice of ‘methods’ for the final two essays (this may change during the term with instructor consultation); b) a statement of your epistemological stance/orientation, c) your epistemological discussion must engage with at least two of the readings from the syllabus.

**Essays 2 & 3 — “Hands on Assignments”**
During weeks 3-10, you will develop two short essays (about 2,500 words) to share first with your field work support triad (see due dates above). These essays should be typed and written in APA style. In each essay, you should indicate your research questions, where you situate this work (in terms of scholarly context, socio-political context, and personal standpoint). You should also illustrate what theories inform your methodology. You may choose 2 from the following list of options:

A) *Discourse/Narrative Analysis I:* Choose a discrete body of written work (e.g., newspaper articles, organizational document, policy document, parliamentary records etc.) and conduct an analysis of language, metaphors and/or symbols used therein. What discourses does this ‘text’ employ? What theories of language are you using to analyze this text? What “work” do the discourses in this text “do” and for whom?

B) *Discourse/Narrative analysis II:* Write a discourse analysis of a major, paradigm-defining book within a subfield of your discipline.

C) *Interview:* Using previously collected interview data, conduct secondary data analysis on one or more individual interview transcripts. (See instructor for details as this option is ideal for people who are working under and existing ethics protocol but may require Ethics Review approval for secondary data analysis).

D) *Archival work.* If you have access to original documents that you would like to evaluate/analyze, you may choose this exercise. Students submit a full, typed version of their notes, as well as a write-up analysis. (May count as 2 assignments. Contact instructor for details).
E) Another qualitative method: If you would prefer to get your hands “dirty” trying another qualitative approach (e.g., focus group, event analysis), please contact instructor.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Ability to demonstrate critical analysis of research methodology and how these relate to your epistemological stance;
- Clear, ‘thick’ description (Geertz, 1973) of the context in which the ‘research’ took place and how this relates to the social issue(s) you are studying;
- Clear presentation of fieldwork methods (i.e. date, time, duration) and ethical considerations for each method;
- Presentation of the development of your analysis, both reflexive and theoretical, from the fieldwork observations/data.
- Professional writing style that is well supported by cited literature (e.g. reports, academic journals, newspaper articles), well organized and grammatically concise.

Required Text and Readings:


An electronic version of this text is available in the University of Toronto Libraries. If you wish to purchase this book, you may also read one of the newer editions (e.g. 4th Edition 2014).

2) Portal/ Blackboard: Links to journal articles that are available through the University of Toronto libraries will be posted on Blackboard.

Recommended Texts (not required):


COURSE SCHEDULE
Subject to change

Week 1, May 2, 2018  Course Overview—Epistemology and the History of Research Methods

Recommended Reading:


Week 2, May 9, 2018  What is Knowing? How do we know? Who is a knowing subject?

Philosophical Perspectives:


Thinking Interpretatively in the Social Sciences


Recommended Reading:


**Week 3, May 16, 2018**  
**Semiotics and the Linguistic Turn in the Social Sciences**


**Illustration**


**Recommended Reading:**

Week 4, May 23, 2018  Critical Discourse Analysis

Theory & Method


Illustration


Week 5, May 30, 2018  Critical Metaphor Analysis & Stories as Framing Devices

Theory & Method


Illustration


Week 6, June 6, 2018  Narrative & Embodiment

Theory & Method


Illustration


Recommended Reading:


**Week 7, June 13, 2018  Interviewing Methods**

*Theory & Method*


Bartlett, R. (2012). Modifying the diary interview method to research the lives of people with dementia. *Qualitative Health Research, 22*(12), 1717-1726.

*Illustration*


*Recommended:*

**Week 8, June 20, 2018  Beyond Interviewing**


Week 9, June 27, 2018  
Agency, Subjectivity in Representation


*Recommended:*


The End
APPENDIX A

SWK 6007—Field Work Triad Reflection Form

This form is designed to capture what contributed (or detracted) from your learning as part of the field work triad. Please complete this form at the end of the course, as part of the “course engagement” assignment.

Your Name:
Name of group members:

Please describe how each member of the group contributed to the field work triad. You may rank group members, or provide examples of activities or roles that each person offered to support the group.

Where they any challenges that the group faced and in what ways did you (personally) address these challenges?

What lessons do you take away from this group work (things to do in the future, things you would like to do differently)?
Appendix B

Participation Self-Assessment

Name: ______________________________

This form will be used to generate your participation mark. Insert the participation goals you developed at the beginning of the term and fill out the quantitative and qualitative assessment of your participation below. The completed form is due at the last class (December 6, 2012).

Insert BELOW the goals you identified for yourself at the beginning of the term:

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________

How often were you able to address your participation goals in class? (Check the box that fits the best)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Participation Goals</th>
<th>All of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Almost none of the time</th>
<th>None of the time</th>
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How well were you able to realize your participation goals in class? (Check the box that fits the best)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Participation Goals</th>
<th>Extremely well</th>
<th>Very well</th>
<th>Somewhat well</th>
<th>Not so well</th>
<th>Not well at all</th>
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</table>
What is your overall numeric assessment of your participation: ______ out of total 100%

Comments on your participation in class: