

Course Description of PhD. Course in Interpretive Methods October 16 – 17, 2019 University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Instructor details

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Short Bio (ca. 50-70 words):

Ph.D. MA in political science, Associate Professor, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Her research interests include social and political categories, categorization, frontline work, welfare state research, classic social theory of solidarity and systematic qualitative methods. Her work has appeared in *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy* "An approach to the development of comparative cross-national studies of street-level bureaucracy" (2019), *Qualitative Studies* "Health care professionalism without doctors" (2018), *Administration and Society* "Welfare State Regimes and Caseworkers' Problem Explanation" (2017), *Profession and Professionalism* "She isn't someone I associate with pension" (2016), *Public Management Review* "Prevention at the Front Line. How home nurses, pedagogues, and teachers transform public worry into decisions on special efforts" (2015), *Critical Policy Studies* "Constructing at-risk target groups" (2014) and in *Social Policy and Administration* "Disciplining Disability" (2013).

Prerequisite knowledge

None

Short course outline.

This course is intended for PhD students who have just started or who are interested in starting an interpretive or qualitative research projects. The course is primarily aimed at students of political science, sociology, international relations and public administration, but students of other social science disciplines such as public policy and anthropology will also benefit from it. The course is organized around the typical steps of a research process - from how to formulate an interpretive research question to how to present and document analyses. It introduces a broad spectrum of interpretive approaches with a focus in particular on narrative methods and discourse analysis during all sessions of the course. These two approaches provide a good representation of different interpretive strategies, and by understanding their logics and uses students will be able to select a

particular research strategy that best fits with their own research question. The course provides students with a working knowledge of interpretive methods, including insights into how they can be used in practice in an interpretive research process.

Long course outline

This course provides students with an introduction to different interpretive methods. Students will learn to 'read' texts while becoming familiar with contemporary thinking about interpretation, narrative, and discourse. During the course we will focus on narrative method, hermeneutics, phenomenology, discourse analysis, and genealogy.

The course is organized with the following six objectives in mind: (1) To examine the scientific criteria of interpretive research and to give students basic training in how to formulate interpretive research questions. (2) To expose students to issues of conceptualization, theory, research design, and strategies of framing questions and selecting cases. (3) To assist students in how to organize and process material through interpretive coding strategies. (4) To provide students with knowledge about how to choose the best strategy of interpretation for the research question. (5) To introduce students to how to condense and present interpretations and finally (6) how to draw conclusions from interpretive analyses.

Theoretically, the course considers questions such as the following: What is 'interpretive' research? What questions is it best suited for? By what criteria does it meet or fail to meet the standards of scientific evidence? What are the roles of concepts in interpretive research? Can interpretive methods verify hypotheses, or only generate them? Can interpretive research explain social phenomena, or only interpret them? Do interpretive analyses have a small-N problem? In what ways is interpretive research "grounded"?

Practically, the course considers questions such as the following: What scientific criteria apply for interpretive methods? How do researchers ask the 'right' question to the 'right' material? What collecting techniques can be used to enhance the quality of the material? What interpretive position should ground the research? What is the unit of analysis? How do researchers organize the material and how do they 'read' it? How can they make sense of their interpretations in a transparent, authentic and inclusive way? And how can they draw conclusions from their interpretive analyses?

The course introduces a broad spectrum of interpretive approaches, however the theoretical focus will be on narrative method and discourse analysis. The explicit focus on these two approaches is chosen in order to expose students to methods, which put rather different weight on inductive and deductive strategies of interpretation. This is expected to strengthen students' general knowledge of interpretive methods as well as to give them a solid basis to choose the 'right' strategy of interpretation after the course.

After the course students will have a basic knowledge of how to choose between interpretive methods, including insight into hands-on tools that can be used during an interpretive research process. Students will subsequently be able to follow advanced courses in interpretive methods with a more specialized focus on e.g. ethnographic method, grounded theory, narrative method, thematic analysis, cross-case analysis or discourse analysis.

Learning goals:

After the course, the participant should have a basic understanding of how to:

1. Operationalize an interpretive research question
2. Select and collect data for interpretation
3. Organize and process data through interpretive coding strategies
4. Analyze data using strategies of interpretation
5. Draw conclusions from interpretive analyses

Day-to-day schedule (Wednesday 16 October to Thursday 17 October)

	Topic(s)	Details
Day 1	Introducing interpretive methods Interpretive strategies, positions and methods (1). Hands-on strategies for interpretation and analysis (1).	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Welcome2. Interpretation of what? Asking the 'right' question to the 'right' material.3. Selecting and collecting data suited for interpretation.4. Narrative methods5. What's your unit of analysis? Organizing your data?6. What's in your data? Reading your data.7. Exercise
Day 2	Interpretive strategies, positions and methods (2). Hands-on strategies for interpretation and analysis (2).	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discourse analysis.2. Selecting and collecting data suited for discourse analysis.3. How to make sense of it?4. Sorting your data using interpretive research strategies.5. Drawing valid conclusions from interpretive research.6. Exercise

Day-to-day reading list

	Readings (please list at least the compulsory reading for the scheduled day)
Case material	<p>Lindekilde, Lasse, "Discourse and Frame Analysis: In-depth Analysis of Qualitative Data in Social Movement Research" in: D. della Porta (ed.) <i>Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. PP. 1-38.</p> <p>Government of Denmark, 2009: A Common and safe future, www.nyidanmark.dk, pp. 4-30.</p>
Day 1	<p>Soss, Joe, 2006: "Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations - A Practice Centered View of Interviewing for Interpretive Research", pp. 127-149 in: (ed. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea) <i>Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Method and the Interpretive Turn</i>, New York: M.E. Sharpe.</p> <p>Weiss, Robert S., 1994, "Respondents: Choosing Them and Recruiting Them" in: <i>Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies</i>. New York: Free Press. PP. 15-37.</p> <p>Yanow, Dvora, 2006 "Thinking interpretively: philosophical presuppositions and the human sciences", 5-26 in: (ed. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea) <i>Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Method and the Interpretive Turn</i>, New York: M.E. Sharpe.</p> <p>Yanow, Dvora, 2012: "Ways of Knowing", pp. 24-44 in: <i>Interpretive Research Design</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Mark Bevir, 2006: "How Narratives explain" in: (ed. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea) <i>Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Method and the Interpretive Turn</i>, New York: M.E. Sharpe. PP. 281-290.</p> <p>Riessman, Catherine Kohler, 1993, "Narrative Analysis" in: <i>Qualitative Research Methods Series 30</i>. London: SAGA Publications. PP. 1-70.</p>
Day 2	<p>Fairclough, Norman, 2003: "Social analysis, discourse analysis, text analysis" pp. 21-61 & "Discourses and representations" pp. 123-155 in: <i>Analyzing Discourse. Textual analysis of social research</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Phillips, Nelson & Cynthia Hardy, 2002, "Discourse Analysis – Investigating Processes of Social Construction" in: <i>Qualitative Research Methods Series 50</i>. London: SAGA Publications. PP. 1-87.</p> <p>Stavrakakis, Y., Horwarth, D., & Norval, A., 2000. "Introducing discourse theory and political analysis", chapter 1 in: <i>Discourse theory and political analysis. Identities</i>. Pp. 1-23. Manchester: Manchester University Press.</p>

Literature

Government of Denmark, 2009: A Common and safe future, www.nyidanmark.dk

Lindekilde, Lasse, "Discourse and Frame Analysis: In-depth Analysis of Qualitative Data in Social Movement Research" in: D. della Porta (ed.) *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. PP. 1-38.

Mark Bevir, 2006: "How Narratives explain" in: (ed. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea) *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Method and the Interpretive Turn*, New York: M.E. Sharpe. PP. 281-290.

Fairclough, Norman, 2003, "Social analysis, discourse analysis, text analysis" pp. 19-61 & "Discourses and representations" pp. 121-156 in: *Analyzing Discourse. Textual analysis of social research*. London: Routledge.

Phillips, Nelson & Cynthia Hardy, 2002, "Discourse Analysis – Investigating Processes of Social Construction" in: *Qualitative Research Methods Series 50*. London: SAGA Publications. PP. 1-87.

Riessman, Catherine Kohler, 1993, "Narrative Analysis" in: *Qualitative Research Methods Series 30*. London: SAGA Publications. PP. 1-70.

Soss, Joe, 2006, "Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations - A Practice Centered View of Interviewing for Interpretive Research" in: (ed. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea) *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Method and the Interpretive Turn*, New York: M.E. Sharpe. PP. 127-149.

Stavrakakis, Y., Horwarth, D., & Norval, A., 2000. "Introducing discourse theory and political analysis", chapter 1 in: *Discourse theory and political analysis. Identities*. Pp. 1-23. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Weiss, Robert S., 1994, "Respondents: Choosing Them and Recruiting Them" in: *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. PP. 15-37.

Yanow, 2006 "Thinking interpretively: philosophical presuppositions and the human sciences," in: (ed. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea) *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Method and the Interpretive Turn*, New York: M.E. Sharpe. PP. 5-27.

Yanow, Dvora & Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, 2012: "Ways of Knowing" in: *Interpretive Research Design*. London: Routledge. PP. 24-44.