Humanistic Approaches to Media Communication (JMC:6333:0001), Spring 2021
Tuesday 3:30–6:00 p.m., E254/Online

Professor: Brian Ekdale, brian-ekdale@uiowa.edu, E324 AJB
Drop-in Hours: Mondays from 11:30–2:30 p.m. You can also make an appointment.
Drop-in Location: Conducted over Zoom using this link https://bit.ly/ekdale
DEO: Dr. David Ryfe, david-ryfe@uiowa.edu, E305B AJB

Course Overview: In this graduate seminar, students will explore the foundations, assumptions, and applications of critical/cultural theory and qualitative methods. The goals of the course are to provide students with an understanding of how to interpret and critique humanistic research as well as how to develop ideas, evidence, and arguments that lead to compelling and useful research in media communication. This course also serves as a required introductory research and methods course for M.A. and Ph.D. students in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Course Objectives:
By the end of the semester, you should be able to do the following:
- Make sense of, critique, and apply major theories in critical/cultural media studies
- Understand key methodological issues in qualitative research
- Make informed, justifiable, and ethical choices when using textual analysis, interviews, and/or observational research
- Craft a compelling research argument that is informed by a theoretical lens and supported by relevant evidence
- Design a detailed humanistic research project proposal

Schooling During COVID-19: These are extraordinary times, and we are being asked to do extraordinary things. I anticipate that this semester will be challenging for many of you and overwhelming for some of you. If you find yourself in a difficult spot, please let me know, so we can work together to figure out a way forward. If you have a TALA accommodation, please let me know via email or through a synchronous meeting (drop-in hours or appointment) by the end of the second week of the semester.

Course Modalities: This course has been designated as "hybrid," meaning we are authorized for both in-person and online meetings. My goal is to keep all of us healthy and safe this semester, but I also recognize that some of you may prefer to meet in person. I will lean on you to help me decide how we should meet this semester. If we meet in person, we will meet in the Brownell Boardroom (E254 Adler Journalism Building) or another agreed upon location (e.g., in an outdoor park, weather permitting) wearing masks and remaining socially distant.

Readings: This course has no required books. Assigned articles and chapters are available on ICON. Readings are to be completed by the start of class in the week indicated.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice: The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is dedicated to equity, anti-racism and social justice. One of the ways faculty can enact this commitment is by assigning readings authored by scholars who hold a variety of gender, racial, and national identities as well as scholarship that is engaged with marginalized and vulnerable communities. I have sought to do so here. Any omissions, areas of weakness, and lapses of

ignorance are my own. If you have suggestions for me on how to make the course or my teaching more equitable, inclusive and anti-racist, please let me know. If you feel more comfortable doing so anonymously, please contact David Ryfe, director of SJMC.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation (15%): The success of any graduate seminar depends on the participation of its students. Therefore, you will be graded on your attendance, preparedness, contribution, and cooperation.

- <u>Attendance</u> means showing up. Simply put, you should be in seminar. If you have a legitimate reason for arriving late, leaving early, or missing class, please discuss this with me before the start of class.
- <u>Preparedness</u> means completing all assigned readings prior to the start of class. While I encourage you to draw from your individual experiences and areas of expertise, our discussions should be centered on the ideas explored in the weekly readings.
- <u>Contribution</u> means sharing your ideas. Each of you offers a unique perspective based on your beliefs, upbringing, and areas of expertise. Therefore, it is important that you share your thoughts, opinions, and reactions with each other.
- <u>Cooperation</u> means working well with others. A seminar should be a place where everyone feels comfortable sharing their views, even if those views are uncommon or unpopular. At the same time, you must always be aware of how your words and actions affect those around you. Intolerance, antagonism, and demagoguery have no place in the healthy exchange of ideas.

Reading Response Briefs (10%): To help spark in-class discussion, I am asking you to write and submit a few brief notes about the weekly readings. In your response, I want you to write 3-4 "bullet points" about the week's readings (3-4 total, not 3-4 for each reading). These bullet points could be any combination of the following:

- What you see as the main contribution(s) of a particular reading
- Parts of a particular reading that resonated with you most (i.e., most provocative argument, most persuasive evidence, most compelling writing, etc.)
- Parts of a particular reading that resonated with you least (i.e., least provocative argument, least persuasive evidence, least compelling writing, etc.)
- Connections you see between the various readings assigned that week or previous weeks

These briefs should demonstrate that you have attempted to understand the readings, you've grappled with their arguments, and you are able to clearly communicate your ideas. I am less interested in the quality of your prose than the thoughtfulness of your response. You do not have to comment on all of the readings, but you should reflect upon more than one reading. Upload your response briefs to ICON at least an hour before the start of class. These briefs will be graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory as follows:

- <u>Satisfactory</u>: Clear evidence of good faith attempt to understand the readings' contributions; original thoughts; completeness
- <u>Unsatisfactory</u>: Little evidence of good faith attempt to understand the readings' contributions; unoriginal thoughts; partial or incomplete

Methods Exercises (35%): You will have three short assignments that will ask you to practice the basics of the qualitative research design. Early in the semester, you will identify a topic that will be your focus for all three methods exercises. Details about each of these exercises will be provided later in the semester.

- o Topic Proposal – 5%
- o Textual Analysis Exercise – 10%
- o Interview Exercise – 10%
- o Observation Exercise – 10%

Final Paper (40%): You will use one or more of the methods exercises listed above as the starting point for a detailed research proposal that includes a literature review, a methods section, relevant data collection documents, and an initial argument. Details about this paper will be provided later in the semester.

- o Final Paper Proposal – 5%
- o Final Paper Presentation – 10%
- o Final Paper – 25%

Grading Scale:

A	93–100	B-	80–82	D+	67–69
A-	90–92	C+	77–79	D	63–66
B+	87–89	C	73–76	D-	60–62
B	83–86	C-	70–72	F	59 and below

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Readings are listed in a suggested reading order. Schedule is subject to change.

Week 1 (1/26) *Introductions*	*No readings due.*
Week 2 (2/2) *Readings in Critical Theory*	Fuchs, C. (2011). *Foundations of Critical Theory and Information Studies.* (Ch 2. "Critical Theory Today", pp. 11–74) Horkheimer, M., & Adorno, T. W. (1944/2012). The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception, (pp. 53–75). Reprinted in *Media and cultural studies: KeyWorks.* Williams, R. (1980/2012). Base and superstructure in Marxist cultural theory, (pp. 115–124). Reprinted in *Media and cultural studies: KeyWorks.* Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text*, (25/26), 56–80.

Week 3 (2/9) *Readings in Cultural Studies*	Kellner, D. M., & Durham, M. G. (2012). Adventures in media and cultural studies: Introducing the KeyWorks. In M.G. Durham & D.M. Kellner (Eds.) *Media and cultural studies: KeyWorks* (pp. 1–23). Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell. Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture: The meaning of style.* New York: Methuen. (Ch. 1, "From culture to hegemony," pp. 5–19). Radway, J.A. (1983). Women read the romance: The interaction of text and context. *Feminist studies*, *9*(1), 53–78. du Gay, P., Hall, S., Janes, L., Madsen, A. K., Mackay, H., & Negus, K. (1997). *Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (Introduction & Ch. 1, "Making sense of the Walkman," pp. 1-40.) Shaw, A. (2010). What is video game culture? Cultural studies and game studies. *Games and culture*, *5*(4), 403–424.
Week 4 (2/16) *Introduction to Humanistic Methods*	**Topic Proposal Due** Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2017). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1–19). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Dutta, M.J., Kaur, S., & Elers, P. (2020). Validity in interpretive methods: Frameworks and innovations. *Annals of the International Communication Association, 44*(3), 185–200. Rapley, R. (2013). Sampling strategies in qualitative research. In U. Flick (Ed.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 49–63). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Kelle, U. (2013). Theorization from data. In U. Flick (Ed.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 554–568). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Puebla, C.A.C (2014). Indigenous researchers and epistemic violence. In N.K. Denzin & M.D. Giardina (Ed.) *Qualitative inquiry—Past, present, and future: A critical reader* (pp. 387–401). Left Coast Press.
Week 5 (2/23) *Textual Analysis*	Brennen, B.C. (2013). *Qualitative research methods for media studies.* New York: Routledge. (Ch. 8, "Textual Analysis," pp. 192–231). Hall, S. (1997). The work of representation. In S. Hall, J. Evans, & S. Nixon (Eds.) *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (pp. 13–74). Sage.

	Altheide, D.L. & C.S. Schneider. (2013). *Qualitative media analysis*. Los Angeles: Sage. (Ch. 3 "Process of Qualitative Document Analysis," n.p.). Gill, R. (2012). Discourse analysis. In. M.W. Bauer & G. Gaskell (Eds.) *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound* (n.p.). Sage.
Week 6 (3/2) *BREAK*	*Enjoy your day off!*
Week 7 (3/9) *Textual Analysis, In Practice*	**Textual Analysis Exercise Due** Bosch, T. (2017). Twitter activism and youth in South Africa: The case of #RhodesMustFall. *Information, Communication & Society*, *20*(2), 221–232. Duffy, B. E., & Schwartz, B. (2018). Digital "women's work?": Job recruitment ads and the feminization of social media employment. *New Media & Society*, *20*(8), 2972–2989. Figenschou, T. U., & Ihlebæk, K. A. (2019). Challenging journalistic authority: Media criticism in far-right alternative media. *Journalism Studies*, *20*(9), 1221–1237.
Week 8 (3/16) *Interview Research*	Brennen, B.C. (2013). *Qualitative research methods for media studies*. New York: Routledge. (Ch. 3, "Interviewing," pp. 26–58). Lindlof, T.R. & Taylor, B.C. (2019). *Qualitative communication research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (Ch. 7 "Qualitative Interviewing," pp. 219–275). Roulston, K. (2013). Analysing interviews. In U. Flick (Ed.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 297–312). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Livingstone, S. (2010). Giving people a voice: On the critical role of the interview in the history of audience research. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, *3*(4), 566–571.
Week 9 (3/23) *Interviews, In Practice*	Lopez, L.K. (2017). Always on the phone: The invisible role of Hmong women in diasporic media industries. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, *10*(2), 185–202. Palmer, L. (2019). *The fixers: Local news and workers and the underground labor of international reporting*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Ch. 1, "Conceptualizing the Story," pp. 34–60; "Research Methods," pp. 195–203). Ravenelle, A.J. (2019). *Hustle and gig: Struggling and surviving in the sharing economy*. (pp. 21–22; Ch. 3, "Forward to the Past of the Early Industrial Age," pp. 135–157; pp. 61–89).

	Richardson, A.V. (2020). *Bearing witness while Black: African Americans, smartphones, and the new protest #Journalism.* New York: Oxford University Press. ("Preface," pp. ix–xvii; Ch. 4, "#StayWoke," pp. 75–92).
Week 10 (3/30) *Conducting Interviews*	**Interview Exercise Due** *Guest: Travis Vogan (Reading TBA)*
Week 11 (4/6) *Observational Research*	Brennen, B.C. (2013). *Qualitative research methods for media studies.* New York: Routledge. (Ch. 7, "Ethnography and Participant Observation," pp. 159–191). Lofland, J., Snow, D., Anderson, L., Lofland, L.H. (2006). *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (Ch. 2, "Evaluating Data Sites," pp. 15–32) Adams, T.E., & Jones, S.H. (2011). Telling stories: Reflexivity, queer theory, and autoethnography. *Cultural Studies? Critical Methodologies*, *11*(2), 108–116. Postill, J., & Pink, S. (2012). Social media ethnography: The digital researcher in a messy web. *Media International Australia*, *145*(1), 123–134. Caliandro, A. (2018). Digital methods for ethnography: Analytical concepts for ethnographers exploring social media environments. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *47*(5), 551–578.
Week 12 (4/13) *Fieldwork, In Practice*	Callison, C. & Young, M.L. (2020). *Reckoning: Journalism's limits and possibilities.* New York: Oxford University Press. (pp. 14–19 & Ch. 5, "Startup life," pp. 135–159). Abidin, C. (2016). Visibility labour: Engaging with Influencers' fashion brands and #OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram. *Media International Australia*, *161*(1), 86–100. Abidin, C. (2020). Somewhere between here and there: Negotiating researcher visibility in a digital ethnography of the influencer industry. *Journal of Digital Social Research, 2*(1), 56–76. Watkins, S.C. (2018). *The digital edge: How Black and Latino youth navigate digital inequality.* New York: NYU Press. (Ch. 2, "The Mobile Paradox," pp. 51–77; "Design of the Study," pp. 235–247). Lane, J. (2019). *The digital street.* New York: Oxford University Press. (Ch. 2, "Girls and Boys," pp. 27–60; "Appendix," pp. 169–188).
Week 13 (4/20)	**Observation Exercise Due**

Doing Fieldwork	*Guest: Sujatha Sosale (Reading TBA)*
Week 14 (4/27) *Putting it All Together*	**Final Paper Proposal Due** Flick, U. (2000) Triangulation in qualitative research. In U. Flick, E. von Kardorff, & I. Steinke (Eds.) *A companion to qualitative research* (pp. 178–183). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Booth, W. C. et al. (2016). *The craft of research.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Ch. 12 "Planning and Drafting," pp. 177–188; Ch. 13, "Organizing Your Argument, pp. 189-199). Healy, K. (2017). Fuck nuance. *Sociological Theory, 35*(2), 118–127.
Week 15 (5/4) *Final Presentations*	**Final Paper Presentations**
Finals Week	**Final Paper Due**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Policies and Resources

Absences and Attendance
Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing course absence policies, which vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, and University authorized activities (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences). Students may use the CLAS absence form to aid communication with the instructor who will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused; the form is located on ICON within the top banner under "Student Tools."

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have in essence agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Academic misconduct affects a student's related grade and is reported to the College which applies an additional sanction including suspension. Outcomes about misconduct are communicated through UI email (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code).

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as a mental health, attention, learning,

vision, and a physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/.

Administrative Home of the Course
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and related policies. Other UI colleges may have different policies for courses offered by that college. CLAS policies may be found here: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Classroom Expectations
Students are expected to comply with University policies regarding appropriate classroom behavior as outlined in the Code of Student Life (https://dos.uiowa.edu/policies/code-of-student-life/). This includes related UI policies and procedures that all students have agreed to regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, each student must wear a face mask when in a UI building, including a classroom. The density of seats in classrooms has been reduced, and in some instances, this will allow 6 feet or more of distance while other cases, it may be less. Regardless, wearing a face mask and maintaining as much distance as is possible are vital to slowing the spread of COVID-19. In the event that a student disrupts the classroom environment through the failure to comply with a reasonable directive of an instructor or of the University, the instructor has the authority to ask that the student to leave the space immediately for the remainder of the class period. Additionally, the instructor is asked to report the incident to the UI Office of Student Accountability, with the possibility of additional follow-up with the student. Students who need temporary alternative learning arrangements (TALA) for a future semester related to COVID-19 should visit this website for more information: https://coronavirus.uiowa.edu/temporary-alternative-learning-arrangements-tala.

Class Recordings: Privacy and Sharing
Some sessions of a course could be recorded or live-streamed. Such a recording or streaming will only be available to students registered for the course. These recordings are the intellectual property of the faculty, and they may not be shared or reproduced without the explicit written consent of the faculty member. Students may not share these sessions with those who are not enrolled in the course; likewise, students may not upload recordings to any other online environment. Doing so is a breach of the Code of Student Conduct and in some cases is a violation of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Communication and the Required Use of UI Email
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within or with UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

Complaints
Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. See this page for more information: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities.

Final Examination Policies

The final exam schedule is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals with a few exceptions made for particular types of courses such as labs or off-cycle courses: https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom

The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for people of all gender, sexual, racial, religious, and other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited in MyUI to optionally share the names and pronouns they would like their instructors and advisors to use to address them. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University's Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (https://diversity.uiowa.edu/eod; +1 319 335-0705 or (diversity.uiowa.edu)

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, please see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.