



Discourse Analysis

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9:00am – 4:30pm

Summary

This workshop aims to introduce participants to the basics of social science discourse analysis (and similar approaches such as narrative analysis), i.e. to a family of (interpretive) approaches that emphasise the constructed nature of the social and the importance of struggles for interpretive hegemony for the definition of social and political “realities”.

It starts with an introduction to the theoretical and epistemological bases of (poststructuralist) discourses analysis, then moves on to practical exercises whose aim is to illustrate how discourse analytical research is concretely done. These exercises will also raise issues such as validity criteria, the nature and limits of interpretation, and how to write up this type of research convincingly. Finally, we will briefly consider various “schools” of discourse analysis and discuss the usefulness of discourse analytical work for various disciplines.

The workshop will consist of (interactive) lectures and various practical exercises. By the end of the workshop, the participants should have gained a basic understanding of:

- The theoretical bases of discourse analysis and the type of research questions that it can help to address;
- Some key tools of discourse analysis and how they can help "opening up" data (analysis of systems of meanings, framings, categorisations, genealogical analysis, etc.);
- The practical steps of a discourse analytical approach;
- The typical limitations and problems of discourse analysis, applicable quality criteria;
- What to pay attention to when writing up discourse analytical research.

Audience

The workshop welcomes participants with a variety of backgrounds. However, it will be particularly useful to:

- participants with little or no prior knowledge of discourse analysis who wish to get some insights into this methodology
- participants who have some acquaintance with discourse analysis but who feel the need to discuss and reflect on their own practices.

Participants who have little or no background in qualitative data analysis may want to consider also attending the [Thinking Qualitatively: Introduction to Qualitative-Interpretive Methods](#) workshop.

Note: The instructor will often refer to practical illustrations in the fields of political science, sociology and gender studies. However, participants from other social science disciplines as well as from interdisciplinary fields (environmental studies, health studies, etc.) or the humanities (linguistics, history) are also welcome to attend.





Outline (Provisional – will be adjusted depending on the level and interests of the participants).

Day 1

- Why discourse analytical research?
- Types of research question that can(not) be addressed with discourse analytical tools
- Introduction to social science discourse analysis (theoretical assumptions, traditions etc.)
- Methodological tools for discourse analytic research (categorisations, demarcations, frames, etc.)
- Exercises

Day 2

- Exercises (ctd)
- The process of data analysis in discourse analytic research
- Using "theory" in discourse analytic research
- Interviewing for discourse analytic research
- Writing up discourse analytical research

Readings

Please read the following text ahead of the workshop. If you are new to discourse analysis, I'd recommend you read the first three (Gill, Chilton/Schäffner and Bacchi) in this order. Rebrovick and Szeligowska are two practical applications of DA that you can read ahead of after the methodological readings, whatever you find more intelligible.

Gill, Rosalind (2000). "Discourse Analysis", in Bauer, M. and Gaskell, G., *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*. London: Sage, pp. 172-190.

Chilton, Paul and **Schäffner**, Christina (1997). "Discourse and Politics", in Van Dijk, Teun A. (eds). *Discourse as Social Interaction*. London: Sage, pp. 206-230.

Bacchi, Carol (2012). "Why Study Problematizations? Making Politics Visible." *Open Journal of Political Science*, 2(01): 1-8.

Rebrovick, Tripp (2015). "The Politics of Diet: "Eco-dietetics," Neoliberalism, and the History of Dietetic Discourses". *Political Research Quarterly*, 68(4), 678–689. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912915605183>

Szeligowska, Dorota (2014). "Patriotism in Mourning". *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 28(3): 487-517.

Credit Students: see [Course Reserves website](#)

Non-Credit Students: if you are unable to access these readings through your home institution, please email us at wssr@concordia.ca and we will do our best to assist you.

Additional Resources

Bevir, Mark and Rhodes, R.A.W. (2006). "Defending Interpretation". *European Political Science* EPS 5/2006: 69-83.

Hook, Derek (2005) Genealogy, discourse, 'effective history': Foucault and the work of critique, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2:1, 3-31, DOI: 10.1191/1478088705qp025oa

Lucas, Barbara (2004). "Reducing Discursive Complexity: the Case of Alcohol Policies in Europe (1850-2000)", in Muller, Richard and Klingemann, Harald (eds). *From Science to Action? 100 Years Later – Alcohol Policies Revisited*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Milliken, Jennifer (1999). "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods". *European Journal of International Relations* 5:225-254. DOI 10.1177/1354066199005002003

Mills, Sara (2004). *Discourse*. New York: Routledge, pp. 26-42 and 43-68.

Squire, Corinne (2009). "Experience-Centred and Culturally-Oriented Approaches to Narrative", in Andrews, Molly, Squire, Corinne and Tamboukou, Maria (eds). *Doing Narrative Research*. London: Sage, pp. 41-63.

Yanow, Dvora (2006). "Neither Rigorous nor Objective? Interrogating Criteria for Knowledge Claims in Interpretive Science", in Yanow, Dvora and Schwartz-Sea, Peregrine (eds) (2006). *Interpretation and Method. Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. Armonk NY: M.E. Sharpe.