

Course Reflection

CMNS 3000

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Topics of Learning

1

Introduction to Research

2

Positivism

3

Hermeneutics

4

Critical Theory

5

Indigenous Knowledge

6

Research Structure

7

Textual Analysis

8

Qualitative Research

9

Ethnography

10

Quantitative Research

11

Information Design

12

Mixed Methods

Brief Summaries

The following readings really shaped my learning and understanding of the course

Baranov - Conceptual Foundations of Social Research Methods

- Lays a foundational definition of what research is and the different research methods there are.
- Shows how ontology and epistemology are methodology.
- The effects of research philosophy.
- States a good research question is clear, focused and answerable.
- Describes theory and how important it is to shaping a researchers view of the world (interpretivist and critical paradigms).
- The process of research.
- Different inquiries of knowledge.
- The importance and shortcomings of objectivity.
- Researchers must be ethical and honest, avoiding misinformation.

Hall - Deviance, Politics and the Media

- Covers that modern media doesn't just report deviance but actually contributes to it and defines it.
- The hierarchy like officials have the power to shape how deviance is presented.
- Media uses dominant cultural values to frame what's "normal" and what is "deviant".
- Dominant ideology keeps current power structures as the norm.

Cajete - Philosophy of Native Science

- The importance of the relationship between people, land, and animals.
- Learning to honour relationships and science holistically.
- Indigenous science is all based on the environment and the cycle of nature.
- How meaningful storytelling is in cultural knowledge and research data.
- Challenges traditional views of obtaining knowledge strictly through academic sources like books and labs.
- Obtaining knowledge requires responsibility.
- Western science separates researcher from research, while indigenous science keeps them connected.

Fürsich - In Defense of Textual Analysis

- Research rarely remains neutral rather it's embedded with implicit patterns, underlying ideological and cultural assumptions.
- Importance of interpretation of text.
- Qualitative method to analyze media.
- Covers a range of possible meanings in a text.
- Unique methodological position of media content between producers' intentions and audience interpretations.

Patton - What Makes Qualitative Data Qualitative

- Covers core purpose of qualitative research.
- Encourages openness in research.
- Describes different collection methods such as interviews, case studies and documentation.
- Covers role of researcher collecting and interpreting data.
- Importance of empathy and active listening in research.
- Describes reality as a social construct.
- Constructivist and interpretive paradigms.
- Use of purposeful sampling.
- Use of quotation, narration, and storytelling to present findings.
- Ethical considerations of participants.

Cribb et al. - Digging Deeper: A Canadian Reporter's Research Guide

- Data journalism is when a stories are told through numerical or statistic data.
- Data can often reveal issues like crime, health risks, and other societal issues through clear evidence.
- Critical thinking is needed to decipher numbers.
- Charts, maps, and graphics often help audiences digest complex findings.
- Important role in government accountability.
- Data can lead to lots of ambiguity and don't always represent the whole truth.

My Learning



Research is grounded in the philosophical assumptions of ontology, epistemology, and methodology.



Knowledge doesn't come without the infiltration of power, ideology, and debate.



Meaning is socially constructed, and humans interpret the world through semiotics.



Qualitative research covers depth of emotion and meaning that raw data simply cannot capture.



Quantitative research measures variables, while data journalism transforms the numbers into understandable insight.



Western paradigms, although are most commonly found, are not the only valid form of knowledge.

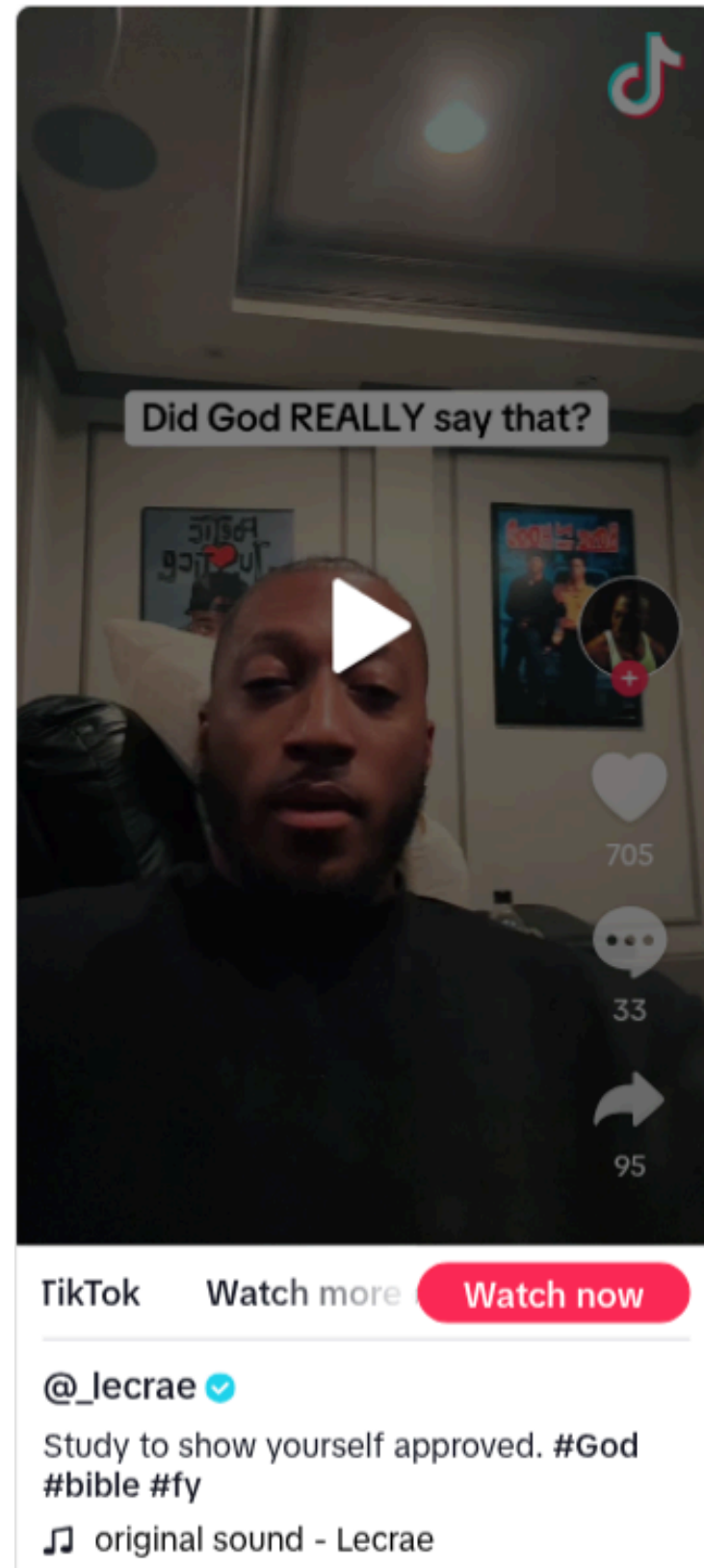


Mixed methods work best for complex social problems, offering statistics and lived experience.



Critical analysis helps decode the hidden meanings and narratives in media.

Relationships between Paradigms



Hermeneutics + Qualitative Methods

Hermeneutics and qualitative methods both focus on meaning. While hermeneutics looks at meaning philosophically, qualitative aims to understand people's view of the world which requires hermeneutics. Both of these concepts are used to study the human experience.

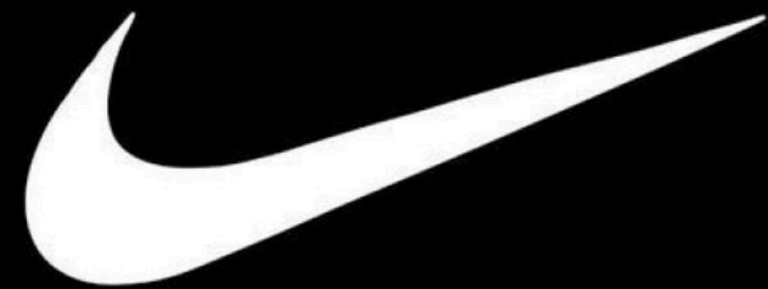
A modern example of this could be a researcher studying how young Christians understand a Parable in the bible. Using Bible hermeneutics, they interpret the story's original meaning and context. Then, using qualitative methods like interviews or connecting through comments, they explore how people today apply the story to modern life.

Critical Theory + Semiotics

Semiotic sunpacks meaning through looking at different, symbols, signs, and images while critical theory takes those interpretations and adds a layer by asking: what power structures and history has led to this? Critical theory challenges media through a marxist lense and recognizes the effects of power and ideology behind things and their place in society.

A modern example of ths relashionship would be a Nike Black Lives Matter ad. The ad shows how semiotics and critical theory work together. Semiotics interprets the images, symbols, and slogans to show messages of protest and solidarity. Critical theory then asks why these messages exist, highlighting the power, history, and corporate interests behind them, and how society responds to race and inequality. This demonstrates how meaning and ideology are connected.

For once,
Don't Do It.





Hermeneutics + Indigenous Methods

Indigenous methods and hermeneutics both emphasize respecting context, culture, and relationships when interpreting meaning. For example, a researcher using interviews with Indigenous elders to understand traditional storytelling would use hermeneutics to interpret the stories' meanings, while Indigenous methods ensure the process honors cultural protocols and relational knowledge.

Qualitative & Quantitative + Mixed Methods

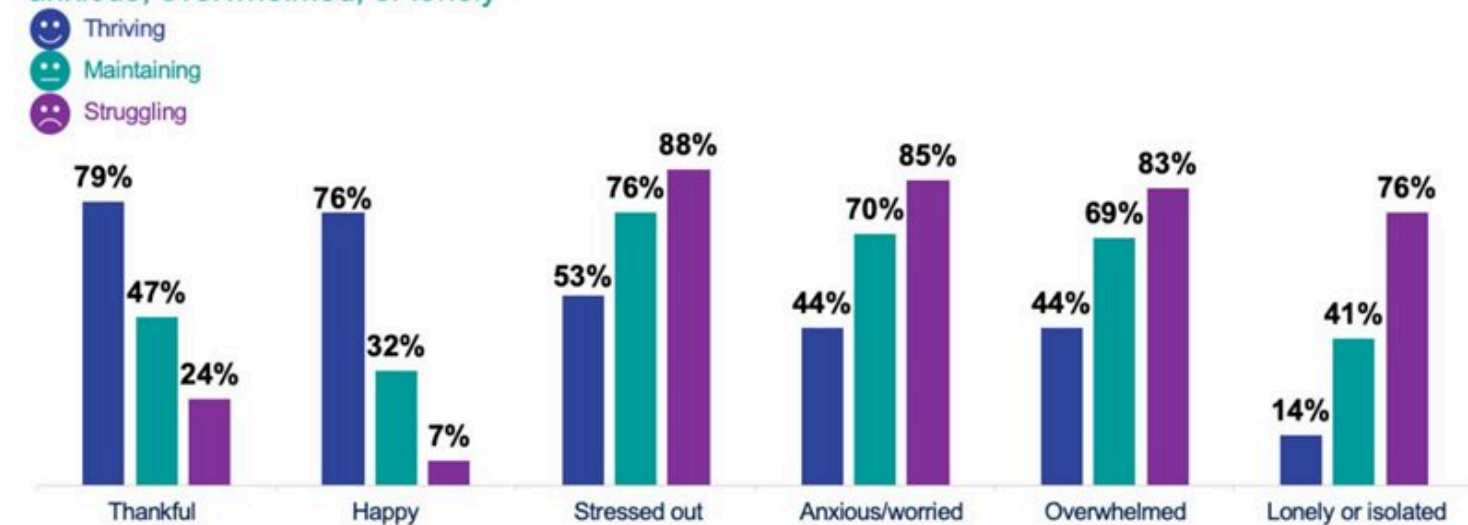
Qualitative and quantitative methods relate to mixed methods, as mixed methods is a research design that combines the strengths of both: qualitative research gives depth and rich stories, while quantitative research provides breadth and measurable data.

A study on student stress could use surveys (quantitative) to measure how many students feel stressed and interviews (qualitative) to explore why and how stress affects their lives. Mixed methods give a fuller picture than either method alone.



STUDENTS FEEL THESE EMOTIONS “ALL THE TIME” OR “OFTEN”

Thriving students are more likely to feel thankful and happy – and less likely to feel stressed, anxious, overwhelmed, or lonely



Source: 2024 Thriving College Students Index Report

www.thrivingcollegestudents.org

The Course's Impact on my Future and Career

The knowledge I have gained in this course will significantly shape both my personal growth and my future career as a Communications and Digital Journalism student. I now have the ability to select appropriate research methods for stories or projects, which ensures credibility, fairness, and depth in my reporting. My experience as a student-athlete and community leader is enhanced by an understanding of power structures through critical theory, allowing me to advocate more effectively for marginalized voices, while hermeneutics helps me interpret diverse perspectives within teams and communities. Learning about empathy and deep listening, through Patton's frameworks and Dadirri, aligns with my relational values and strengthens my capacity for leadership roles that involve coaching, conflict resolution, and mentoring. Additionally, modules on critical theory, semiotics, and representation have increased my awareness of stereotypes, algorithmic bias, and cultural assumptions in media, skills that are essential for digital strategy or journalism careers. Quantitative knowledge improves my data literacy, enabling evidence-based decision-making, and applying mixed methods provides flexibility to tackle complex real-world problems from multiple perspectives rather than a single paradigm. Together, these skills equip me to produce thoughtful, ethical, and impactful work while fostering inclusive and informed leadership.