Mass Communications 600 Seminar in Research Methods
Fall 2013

Professor: Dr. Melissa Wall  Phone: 818/677-5677  Office: Manzanita 330
E-mail: melissa.a.wall@csun.edu  Office Hours: 3-4 W & 6-7 p.m. Th

Course description
Mass Communication 600 is an introduction to conducting research. Key research methodologies include in-depth interviewing, and various forms of textual analysis. The focus is on qualitative research. Expectations for your engagement with course materials are high. Class attendance is mandatory.

Competencies/Objectives: By the end of the semester, students are expected to be able to:
• Understand and apply basic practices of qualitative research, including analysis of texts
• Able to develop applied research plan and carry it out, including
  o Collect data
  o Analyze data
  o Present data
• Apply academic research methods to journalism, particularly participatory research
• Able to carry out journalistic and scholarly interviews

Grading:
Pop-Up Newsroom CicLAvia 20%  Due: Oct. 6  (will include participation in the event and related assignments prior to and after the event)
Pop-Up Newsroom Global 40% Due: Nov. 16  (will include participation in the event and a related assignments prior to and after the event)
In-class analyses/exercise/quizzes 20%
Class citizenship & participation 20%**

*All written assignments must be in grammatically correct and appropriate for graduate level work.
** Citizenship includes actively taking part in the class through thoughtful, relevant comments made each class session. Speaking too frequently or too aggressively so as to disrupt class discussions will result in a lower or potentially failing grade. This applies as well to inappropriate comments or other disruptive behavior as determined by the professor.

Department policies: Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated, and anyone caught cheating will be reported to the University for possible further action. For a further explanation of the behavior defined as academic dishonesty, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult the current CSUN catalog. Please remember that much of the information posted on the Internet is protected by U.S. copyright laws. Passing this information off as your own is a violation of CSUN’s plagiarism policy and carries the penalties outlined above. Your work should be your own. Tests and papers should be done individually. Cheating or plagiarism will result in an F for the course and possibly your dismissal from the program.

Student Learning Objectives for Mass Communication Graduate Program:
You can identify and explain seminal works and key concepts in the field of mass communication with a focus on critical and cultural theories as applied to journalism.

You can appraise and evaluate the practices of mass communication in society with a focus on economic structures, cultural practices and international connections as applied to the practice of journalism.

You can create a plan for and conduct independent research about mass communication with an emphasis on journalism as either a research topic or through the reflective application of journalism.

REQUIRED READINGS
All reading assignments are posted on Moodle. These may change as the semester unfolds. Check with Prof. Wall.
Schedule

Please note that this syllabus is a guide. Our schedule may change as the course unfolds. I will keep you posted about any such changes.

Week 1 August 29 Introduction to course

Week 2 Sept. 5 New forms of journalism | How to read academic work | Lit Review
Before class read:

Week 3 Sept. 12 Interviewing
Before class read:


Guidelines for conducting effective email interviews. Drawn from Meho, L. I. (2006). E-mail interviewing in qualitative research: A methodological discussion. Journal of the American society for Information Science and Technology, 57(10), 1284-1295. (3 pages)


Week 4 Sept. 19 Focus Groups & Oral History
Before class read:


Week 5 Sept. 26 Participant Observation | Twitter | Research Prep
Before class read:

Week 6 Oct. 3 Twitter | Research Prep

Sunday Oct. 6 Pop-Up Newsroom CicLAvia Project
Week 7 Oct. 10 Pop-Up Newsroom Debrief | Analyzing data: Grounded theory
Before class read:


Week 8 Oct. 17 Qualitative Content Analysis | Narrative, framing, etc.
Before class read:

Hanson, C. (1999, August). The power of the story: Narrative analysis as a tool for studying the news. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Miami, Florida (7 pages)

Week 9 Oct. 24 Sampling | Poverty: Background Research
Before class read:

Week 10 Oct. 31 Quantitative Content Analysis | Poverty: Background Research
Before class read on Moodle:

Week 11 Nov. 7 Covering Poverty | Twitter
Before class read:
TBA

Week 12 Nov. 14 Pop-Up Newsroom Preparation

Saturday Nov. 16 Pop-Up Newsroom Global Reporting project

Week 13 Nov. 21 No formal class meeting

Week 14 Nov. 28 No class: Thanksgiving

Week 15 Dec. 5 Last day
Final assignments due