

University of Amsterdam

Content Analysis 2nd Semester, 2014

Dr. Jessica Taylor Piotrowski

j.piotrowski@uva.nl

Office E 1.14, Bushuis/ Oost Indisch Huis

Course Period: 2014, Semester 2, block 1

Course Meeting: Mondays 15:00 – 17:00, Oost Indisch Huis D3.06

Wednesdays 11:00 – 13:00, Oost Indisch Huis D3.06

Language: English

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Content analysis is one of the major data-gathering methods in communication studies. Its purpose is to systematically describe symbolic material of all sorts - in our case text, sound, still and moving pictures in media content, or in the messages of other channels of information. Communication researchers conduct content analyses to learn about sources that are not available or not able or willing to tell us about their intentions. Content analysis also yields valuable information about society and culture. Sometimes we use content analysis to find out about the audience: Who could be attracted by such a message? Or we may want to say something about the potential effects of a message. In other words, content analysis is a versatile tool for making inferences on all elements of the communication process. But this is not without challenges: the analysis itself has to be conducted reliably, and the validity of the conclusions that we want to draw from a “text” to its production, reception, and must be carefully justified.

Topics of the course:

- What is content analysis? The value and the validity of content analyses.
- Systematic Quantitative Content Analysis (SQCA).
- Systematic Interpretative Content Analysis (SICA).
- Computer-Assisted Content Analysis (CACA).

COURSE GOALS

Upon completion of this course, students should...

- (1) ... learn the technical steps of a content analysis and practice them—from a sensible research question via category building and sampling to coder training and finally to ways of analyzing the data gathered. Variants of content analyses, such as computer-aided ones, will also be covered. [knowledge]
- (2) ... reflect upon the underlying epistemological problems. Also, the study of classic content analyses helps to both understand these methods better and inspire applications in our own research. [understanding]
- (3) ... learn techniques for a critical and comprehensive analysis of communication of all sort and become familiar with methods they can use for their MA thesis. [Discipline-specific]

STUDY LOAD

A master’s elective seminar involves 6 ECTS, or 168 hours of study load. This means you will need to devote approximately 20 hours per week to this course.

COURSE SET-UP

There are two meetings every week. In most cases, the first meeting is a lecture while the second is a practicum. In the lectures, we pay attention to all aspects of content analysis and discuss the literature and example studies. In the practicums, we concentrate on developing skills needed in performing content analysis. This typically means that you will be working on assignments in pairs or small groups of students. See course schedule in this document for more information. Students are expected to read the compulsory literature before the meetings and prepare (and share on black board) questions that can be discussed the lectures. For most practicums, students prepare assignments which are subsequently handed into the instructor one week later (each assignment has a specific deadline, see course schedule in this document).

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes, be prepared to discuss assigned readings, and participate fully in class activities. Attendance will be considered in the determination of overall achievement of class learning objectives. Nonattendance is only permitted with a valid reason that is announced to the instructor before the meeting. When you miss a meeting, you are still expected to submit any written assignments or exercises that are associated with that lecture.

Regarding Late Arrival: Students are expected to arrive at class on time. Lateness will be noted and considered in the determination of overall achievement of class learning objectives.

Class Participation & Expectations

Classroom learning is a group activity that depends upon everyone's full participation in order to succeed. Students are expected to: be prepared to begin class on time, silence cell-phones and refrain from texting during class, read and be prepared to discuss assigned readings, and participate fully in class activities.

Electronic Communication

This course has an accompanying Blackboard website. Please check this website frequently as all announcements, assignments, lectures, and additional readings will be posted here. In addition to posting all course information on the class website, primary means of communication outside of regular class hours is email. It is important that you check your UvA email account regularly. If you do not use your UvA email address as your primary email account, please arrange to have UvA email forwarded to your preferred account.

Readings and Assignments Submission

All assignments and due dates can be found under the Course Schedule section of your syllabus. Make/keep a copy of anything that you submit. The attached course calendar indicates an approximate timeline, but the exact due dates may change as per our progress. Any changes will be announced in class and on blackboard.

Assignments are to be handed in on time (see deadlines in schedule) and via the drop box on Blackboard with readable lay out and name and student number on the first page. Language use should be clear (English), concise, and without mistakes. Assignments must adhere to APA citation style and be consistent in the use of that style throughout. Assignments that do not fulfil these requirements will not be graded – they will automatically receive a grade of 0.

Regarding Late Assignments. Late assignments will not be accepted. They will automatically receive a grade of 0.

UvA Policy on Academic Integrity

Evidence of fraud or plagiarism will be taken seriously. UvA defines the following as examples of fraud and plagiarism: copying someone else's answers during examinations (cheating), cutting and pasting text from another source and presenting it as if it were your own work, or using someone else's text without proper acknowledgement of the source. UvA students are required to follow standard academic practices regarding citation and referencing. Students are expected to be familiar with the University of Amsterdam's regulations governing fraud and plagiarism, which can be found at <http://www.student.uva.nl/preventfraud-plagiarism>.

COURSE MATERIALS

This course uses both a textbook as well as a series of articles. The articles represent methodological literature and exemplars. **The methodological literature is compulsory and will be covered on the written examination. The exemplar studies may be the topic of cases in the written exam, but they are not subject to the exam questions themselves.** The textbook should be purchased **prior** to the start of class. All articles are available for download online using the UvA Digital Library or Google Scholar. If not available online, the materials will be made available on the course Blackboard page. A list of the assigned readings, along with their associated course dates, is included in this course handbook.

Textbook:

Riffe, D., Lacy, S. & Fico, F.G. (2005) *Analyzing media messages. Using quantitative content analysis in research*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum (Taylor & Francis) ISBN: 0-8058-5298-0 (new: 38.99 @ bol.com; also available used from bol.com and elsewhere)

COURSE GRADING

Your final course grade will be based on a percentage score reflecting your performance on three assignments as well as a final written exam.

Course Assignments [60%]

You have two assignments for this course. Assignment 1 is an individual assignment, while Assignment 2 is a team-based assignment. Information about each assignment will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard. All assignments will be graded 0 through 10. The average of both assignments must be at least 5.5 in order to pass the course. A lower assignment average cannot be compensated with the written examination.

Final Written Examination [40%]

The written examination takes place on Wednesday, March 26. The exam will cover information in the course textbook (i.e., Riffe et al., 2005) as well as the assigned methodological articles. The exam consists of open-ended questions. The grade for the written exam must be at least 5.5 in order to pass the course. A lower exam grade cannot be compensated with assignments.

Re-sit Policy

Students who do not pass the course assignments or final examination must re-sit them. The original grade will be replaced with the grade for the re-sit. The re-sit will be graded with a 6 maximum.

To be eligible for a resit, you are required to complete the original assignments on time. The re-sit will be organized within 6 weeks after the final class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Preparation	Deadline
Week 1	M: 3 Feb	Introduction	Riffe et al., Ch. 1 & 2	---
	W: 5 Feb	No class	---	---
Week 2	M: 10 Feb	SQCA, Part 1 Lecture: <i>From research questions to categories; categorizing texts, music, pictures, films.</i>	Riffe et al., Ch. 3 & 4 Emons et al., 2010	---
	W: 12 Feb	Practicum 1: <i>Measuring media content</i> [+ introduction to assign 1a]	Parry, 2010	---
Week 3	M: 17 Feb	SQCA, Part 2 Lecture: <i>Units of analysis, sampling, coding sheets</i>	Riffe et al., Ch. 5 Riffe et al., 1993	---
	W: 19 Feb	Practicum 2: <i>Sampling</i>	Schafraad et al, 2006 *bring laptop to class*	Assign. 1a Due
Week 4	M: 24 Feb	SQCA, Part 3 Lecture: <i>Recruiting and training coders, coder reliability and validity</i>	Riffe et al., Ch. 6 & 7	---
	W: 26 Feb	Practicum 3: <i>Coder reliability</i> [+ introduction to assign 1b]	Lombard et al., 2002 *bring laptop to class*	---
Week 5	M: 3 March	SICA, Part 1 Lecture: <i>Grounded theory and step-by-step interpretative content analysis</i>	Hijmans, 1996 Wester et al., 2004	---
	W: 5 March	Practicum 4: <i>Family values in Modern Family</i> [+ introduction to assign 2]	Bryman, 2008 Van den Bulck et al., 2008 Van Gorp et al., 2013	Assign. 1b Due

Week	Date	Topic	Preparation	Deadline
Week 6	M: 10 March	SICA, Part 2 Lecture: <i>Validity and reliability in SICA</i>	Van Gorp, 2010	---
	W: 12 March	Practicum 5: <i>Family values in Modern Family</i>	---	Coding 2 Episodes Due
Week 7	M: 17 March	CACA, Part 1 Lecture: <i>Computer Aided Content Analysis</i>	Riffe et al. (2014), Ch. 9 on Blackboard! Van Atteveldt et al., 2008 Jonkman & Verhoeven, 2013	---
	W: 19 March	No class - work on assignment 2	---	---
Week 8	M: 24 March	Guest Speaker: Marleen Klaassen & In-Class Exam Review	Klaassen & Peter, 2014	Assign 2 Due
	W: 26 March	In-Class Written Exam	Review: Riffe et al., Ch. 1-7, 9 Methodological Articles	---

Note: SQCA = Systematic Quantitative Content Analysis; SICA = Systematic Quantitative Content Analysis; CACA = Computer Aided Content Analysis; M= Monday; W= Wednesday

Schedule may change depending upon course needs. All changes will be announced in class, via email, and on Blackboard.

READING LIST

Week 1: Introduction

Riffe, D., Lacy, S. & Fico, F.G. (2005) *Analyzing media messages. Using quantitative content analysis in research*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum. Chapter 1 and 2.

Week 2: SQCA, Part 1

Riffe, D., Lacy, S. & Fico, F.G. (2005) *Analyzing media messages. Using quantitative content analysis in research*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum. Chapter 3 and 4.

Exemplar: Emons, P., Wester, F. & Scheepers, P. (2010). He works outside the home; she drinks coffee and does the dishes. Gender roles in fiction programs on Dutch Television. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 54(1),40-53. doi: 10.1080/08838150903550386

Exemplar: Parry, K. (2010). A visual framing analysis of British press photography during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict. *Media, War & Conflict*, 3(1), 67-85. doi: 10.1177/1750635210353679

Week 3: SQCA, Part 2

Riffe, D., Lacy, S. & Fico, F.G. (2005) *Analyzing media messages. Using quantitative content analysis in research*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum. Chapter 5.

Methodological: Riffe, D., Aust, C.F., & Lacy, S.R. (1993). Effectiveness of random consecutive day and constructed week sampling. *Journalism Quarterly*, 70, 133-139.

Methodological: Schafraad, P., Wester, F. & Scheepers, P. (2006) Using 'new' data sources for 'old' newspaper research: Developing guidelines for data collection. *Communications*, 31, 455-467. doi: 10.1515/COMMUN.2006.029

Week 4: SQCA, Part 3

Riffe, D., Lacy, S. & Fico, F.G. (2005) *Analyzing media messages. Using quantitative content analysis in research*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum. Chapter 6 and 7.

Methodological: Lombard, M., Snyder-Duch, J. & Bracken, C.C. (2002). Content analysis in mass communication. Assessment and reporting of intercoder reliability. *Human Communication Research*, 28, 587-204. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2958.2002.tb00826.x

Week 5: SICA, Part 1

Methodological: Hijmans, E. (1996). The logic of qualitative media content analysis: a typology. *Communications*, 21, 93-109.

Methodological: Wester, F., Pleijter, A., & Renckstorf, K.. (2004). Exploring newspaper's portrayals: A logic for interpretive content analysis. *Communications*, 29, 495-513. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/comm.2004.29.4.495>

Methodological: Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Chapter 22, Qualitative data analysis, 547-562]

Exemplar: Van den Bulck, H., Simons, N. & Van Gorp, B. (2008). Let's drink and be merry: The framing of alcohol in the prime-time American youth series THE OC. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 6, 933-940.

Updated: January 27, 2014

Exemplar: Van Grop, B. Rommes, E. & Emons, P. (2013) From the wizard to the doubter Prototypes of scientists and engineers in fiction and non-fiction media aimed at Dutch children and teenagers. *Public Understanding of Science*. Online first article. doi : 10.1177/0963662512468566

Week 6: SICA, Part 2

Methodological: Van Gorp, B. (2010). Strategies to take subjectivity out of framing analysis. In P. D'Angelo and J. A. Kuypers [Eds.] *Doing news framing analysis. Empirical and theoretical perspectives..* New York, Routledge: 84-109.

Week 7: CACA

Riffe, D., Lacy, S. & Fico, F.G. (2014) *Analyzing media messages. Using quantitative content analysis in research.* Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum. Chapter 9. (*NOTE: THIS IS ON BLACKBOARD – CHAPTER FROM NEWER EDITION OF BOOK*)

Methodological: Van Atteveldt, W., Kleinnijenhuis, J., & Ruigrok, N. (2008). Parsing, Semantic Networks, and Political Authority Using Syntactic Analysis to Extract Semantic Relations from Dutch Newspaper Articles. *Political Analysis*, 16(4), 428-446.

Exemplar: Jonkman, J. & Verhoeven, P. (2013) From risk to safety: Implicit frames of third-party airport risk in Dutch quality newspapers between 1992 and 2009. *Safety Science* 58 (1), 1-10.

Week 8: Guest Speaker

Exemplar: Klaassen, M.J.E., & Peter, J. (2014, February). *Gender (in)equality in internet pornography: A content analysis of popular pornographic internet videos.* Paper presented at the Etmaal van de Communicatiewetenschap, Wageningen, Nederland.