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Office Hours: By appointment, Monday, 12:00-2:00, 4:00-5:00 pm, Tues, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

## **TLS 681, Fall, 2019**

### **Critical Content Analysis of Text and Image**

#### **Catalog Description:**

This research methodology course explores the critical theory frames and research processes for critical content analysis of text and image. The focus is on engaging in textual analysis through a critical lens of locating power in social practices.

#### **Course Description**

This research methodology course explores the theoretical frames and research processes for critical content analysis of text and image, with an emphasis on children's and adolescent literature as texts, although class members may look at other forms of text, such as advertisements, web sites, documents, etc. Text can be defined as a chunk of meaning that has unity and can be shared with others and so can be created from a range of sign systems, including visual images, a dance, a piece of music, a mathematical formula. Content analysis is a conceptual approach to understanding what a text is about, considering content from a particular theoretical perspective. What makes a study "critical" is not the methodology but the theoretical framework used to think within, through, and beyond the text. We will explore the critical within content analysis as an interest in locating power in social practices and in understanding, uncovering, and transforming conditions of inequality, using theoretical frames such as critical discourse studies, postcolonialism, and critical race theory.

Despite the frequent use of content analysis as a research method to examine text, the procedures for this analysis are often not described in detail in published studies or research methodology textbooks. This analysis involves determining a research focus/interest, identifying possible texts, and examining the theoretical frames of most relevance to this focus before moving into analysis. We will explore the range of methodological tools that can be used alongside different critical theories to analyze text and image. Critical theories are put into dialogue with texts so that we can more deeply understand the cultural, social, political, and economic contexts of texts and the ways in which these texts shape how readers view and interact with the social world. In turn, these theories and approaches to critical content analysis provide tools and understandings that can be used to engage students as critical readers of texts.

#### **Course objectives**

During this course, students will have the opportunity to:

- Discuss the characteristics of critical content analysis as a research methodology and explore how critical content analysis differs content analysis and document analysis, particularly related to issues of power and thinking about data through critical theory.
- Explore a wide range of critical theories and their major theoretical tenets and discuss how to find a theoretical lens that is a fit with a specific research purpose and text(s).
- Read critical content analysis studies and document their research design and the procedures for data collection and data analysis in those studies, both for written text and visual images, through individual analysis and small group discussions.
- Learn about procedures for analyzing visual and written text and develop a toolkit of analysis processes and procedures from which to pull in developing their own studies.
- Apply critical content analysis procedures to a design and implement a study developed from their own research interests and write a research report from that analysis.
- Meet with peers who have similar research interests to discuss in-process studies.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to

- Identify the key characteristics of critical content analysis
- Recognize differences between critical content analysis and other forms of content analysis and document analysis in research purpose and design.
- Assess a range of critical theories to determine a critical theory that is a fit with a specific research purpose for a text(s).
- Examine published critical content analysis studies to identify the research design and the procedures for data collection and data analysis.
- Use a range of research procedures and processes in data collection and analysis.
- Apply those procedures to design and implement a study developed from own research interests.
- Write a research report that includes the components for a critical content analysis study.

## **Our class experiences are based on the following beliefs about learning:**

- Learning is an active process.  
We will immerse ourselves in reading, writing, talking, and responding to theory and research and to adolescent and children's literature as well as engaging in analysis of texts.
- Learning is a social process of collaborating with others.  
We will explore our thinking about our reading and experiences through dialogue.
- Learning occurs as we make connections to our own experiences and as we explore tensions with our current beliefs.  
Responses to our readings will focus on connections to our own research interests and experiences with texts and life. We will also identify and explore tensions with our beliefs and experiences to interrogate our values. We will explore the tensions that arise from exploring alternative critical interpretations of literature.
- Choice allows learners to connect to their experiences and feel ownership in their learning.  
We will have choices in the books and studies that we read, the data we collect, and the specific focus of the final project.
- Learning is reflective as well as active.  
We will have many opportunities to reflect on what we are learning through writing, talking, charting, sketching, and self-evaluations
- Learning occurs in a multicultural world with many ways of knowing.  
We will explore a range of critical theories that reflect differing cultural perspectives on the world and that challenge hegemonic assumptions, particularly those based in mainstream Western views of the world. We will also explore the range of interpretations of our readings that arise from our differing sociocultural experiences.
- Learning is a process of inquiry.  
As learners we need to search out the questions that matter in our lives and to develop strategies for exploring those questions and sharing our understandings with others.

## **Course Format**

The course is divided into three parts. The course will begin with an introduction to content analysis, critical theories, and critical content analysis as a methodology. We will then move to the major focus of the seminar on examining critical theories that can frame critical content analysis and analyzing critical content analysis studies to examine their theoretical frames and analysis procedures. We will try out

analysis strategies on short texts in class sessions. The third part of the class will focus on the book inquiry groups and final projects of your own critical content analysis.

### **Learning Experiences and Course Projects:**

#### 1. Participation and attendance

Attend class regularly and participate in discussions, sharing, small groups, research analyses, and class activities. An essential aspect of participation is to read and prepare for discussions and analyses of the literature and the professional readings. Preparation and participation in class is significant, not only for your learning, but for the learning of others.

If you are absent or not prepared for a class session, your actions will have a significant impact on others in the class as well as on your own learning. If you absolutely must miss a class session due to illness, leave a message on e-mail or call 621-9340. Contact a class member so that you are fully prepared for the next class meeting. Meet with me at the next class session to determine how you will make up the work for the class you missed. **More than one absence or excessive tardiness/leaving early will affect your grade for the course.** Your attendance and active participation in course engagements is highly valued and an essential aspect of the course.

#### 2. Seminar Readings

We will read articles and chapters from a range of sources on content analysis, critical theories, and critical content analysis studies as well as several pieces of literature to give us a body of common readings to discuss during class sessions. Since these readings will form the basis of our discussions, each class member will need to prepare for these discussions weekly in some way such as writing notes in the margins of the book, using post-its to mark particular pages, or writing reflective journal entries on the readings. You will be asked to document the theoretical frame and analysis procedures for studies and these entries go into your research notebook along with any other reflective entries.

- a. Format for documenting critical content analysis studies – Purpose of the study, research question, theoretical frame and tenets, selection of texts, analysis procedures, major themes or categories for reporting the findings.
- b. You need a copy of *Critical Content Analysis of Children's and Young Adult Literature*, Johnson, Mathis, & Short (Routledge, 2016) and *Critical Content Analysis of Visual Images in Books for Young People* (Johnson, Mathis & Short (Routledge, 2019). Other readings are chapters and articles on d2l.
- c. Need the children's novel – *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai. You can purchase a paperback copy or borrow a library copy.

Additional, self-selected readings will be based on your own interests and final project and will be woven throughout the course. Books and articles on critical content analysis and critical theories will be available for check-out during class sessions. Some class sessions will involve you finding one or two articles that relate to the class focus and your interests to bring to class for discussion.

- a. Critical Theory Reading--Choose a critical theory that particularly interests you in relation to your own work and read about that theory. Prepare a handout listing the major beliefs and possible themes/ issues/questions that could be used to frame an analysis.
- b. Critical Content Analysis Readings – Small group inquiry around a selected book or set of articles that are critical content analysis studies and relate to your area of interest for your

study. Read and discuss the studies to explore the research designs and findings. Share your insights with your group and write reflections on this reading.

3. Research Notebook The research notebook will collect and organize the various research activities and readings in which you engage as part of this seminar. You can personalize this notebook in your own way to create your research toolbox by including sketches, photographs, artifacts, and other items to document your process of inquiry. You will need a loose leaf notebook and dividers for several sections.

a. Reading Reflections: This section of the notebook will be a place for you to keep reflections on your readings, both the required readings and additional self-selected readings.

b. Critical Theories: This section will contain theoretical readings, handouts, and reflections on possible critical theoretical frames that could be used to frame analysis.

c. Research Strategies. This section will contain research studies and your documentations of research designs, approaches and strategies for critical content analysis.

d. Final project - paper on your critical content analysis using a research report format.

f. Research artifacts related to final project

#### 4. Individual or Collaborative Final Project

Based on your objectives for the course, participate in an individual or collaborative project related to critical content analysis of text and/or image. *Each course participant will plan, conduct, and report on a research project involving critical content analysis of a text or small group of texts.* These texts may include written and/or visual texts and can be digital texts or documents of some kind.

Each participant will complete a research proposal outline (1-2 pages) and receive responses from the instructor and class members. The outline should also include a bibliography of 7-10 critical content analysis studies related to your focus. Final projects will be shared with other class members as well as submitted in a written research report form.

#### 5. Evaluation

Self-evaluation is an integral part of this course. You will submit an initial statement of goals for the course. For each project, you will turn in a self-evaluation in which you state your goals for that project and evaluate the product and process you went through in reaching those goals. You will receive evaluative comments for each project based on your goals and the project intent. You may resubmit projects that are not satisfactory in meeting the goals and intent. At mid-semester, you will evaluate your learning at that point and will receive evaluative comments from me. At the end of the class, you will write an overall self-evaluation of your learning throughout the class.

Your final grade will be based holistically on both my evaluation and your self-evaluation of your growth and learning related to the course objectives, the quality of your projects, and your attendance, participation, and preparation for class sessions. Note that in this class, all of the course projects are interconnected with and build towards your final paper, which is your report of your critical content analysis research.

*While you can negotiate with the instructor the ways in which you define a specific project, you must complete all projects to fulfill course requirements and your final grade for the course will be based on the thoughtfulness and quality of this work with a B reflecting the completion of all course projects at a*

*satisfactory level. To receive an A, the final course paper must be completed in ways that go beyond minimum requirements.*

- The instructor will not give Incompletes for the course except in extreme situations and only with prior approval.
- Late assignments without a valid excuse will affect your final grade.

A - Complete all assignments for the course at a satisfactory level and meet attendance and class participation requirements. In addition, complete the final course paper in ways that go beyond the minimum requirements in quality and thought.

B - Complete all assignments for the course at a satisfactory level and meet attendance and class participation requirements.

C – Issues with several missing or incomplete assignments or attendance, tardiness, leaving class early, or participation in class sessions

D – Unsatisfactory in multiple areas related to assignments, attendance and participation.

E – Failure to complete multiple assignments at a satisfactory level and/or multiple absences from class.

6. Optional - Consider submitting a review of a book from your critical content analysis to WOW Review at the wowlit.org web site. Reviews for an unthemed issue are due on February 15, 2020. We invite reviews of any children's or adolescent title that is global or multicultural in nature and of any genre. The review should take a critical stance in terms of the book's cultural authenticity and accuracy. Select a recent title or a title from a small press. Carefully read the guidelines for the required format and expected content. Also read several published reviews and use the same format for a submission. If you have questions regarding a submission, please email Susan Corapi, [scorapi@email.arizona.edu](mailto:scorapi@email.arizona.edu) or Prisca Martens, [prisca@martensart.net](mailto:prisca@martensart.net)

### **University Policies**

- Approved Absences All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion, Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored
- Students with Disabilities: At the University of Arizona we strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to explore reasonable accommodation. If our class meets at a campus location: Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

Policies against plagiarism. The Student Code of Academic Integrity prohibits plagiarism. <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/code-academic-integrity>

Policies against threatening behavior by students. The ABOR Student Code of Conduct Policy 5-308 prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community. <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/accountability/disruptive-student-behavior>

Policies on nondiscrimination and anti-harassment – Human Resources Policy 200E explains prohibited behaviors.

<http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>

### **TLS Position Statement on Social Justice (3/25/2014)**

The members of the TLSS community are committed to providing equal opportunity and nurturing an academic climate dedicated to social justice. Injustice takes many forms. Oppressive acts are sometimes overt, but most are subtle, and are difficult to document. These hidden forms of discrimination are identified in the literature as microaggressions, often resulting from unexamined attitudes and beliefs. Macroaggressions are expressions of both the overt and systemic forms of injustice.

Our commitment to social justice reflects an orientation to our goals and practices in education and ultimately, an orientation to life that values a diversity and inclusion of viewpoints and experiences of all as valuable contributors to the experience of schooling and society. This stance recognizes that individuals bring a variety of linguistic, social, and cognitive strengths from their families and communities into the classroom; we view these strengths as assets.

- We value and honor human diversity.
- We recognize that all relationships include dynamics of power. We are committed to relating to each other with conscious awareness and sensitivity to these power dynamics.
- We pledge to contribute to expanding the linguistic and cognitive strengths that learners possess and bring with them to the classroom.
- We understand that systemic policies, traditions, and laws along with personal beliefs, experiences and attitudes affect personal relationships and equitable treatment and opportunity for all.
- We strive to provide a context where we all have the venue, the opportunity, and the confidence to express our experiences and that these experiences will be heard constructively, critically, and with sensitivity.
- Hence, we are not color blind. We will not erase who someone is in the name of equality, nor deny the historical, material and emotional impacts of racialized and gendered identities, and colonial legacies.

We stand alongside and speak out with our colleagues, staff, students, and community members when any of us or others experience micro- or macroaggressions. We recognize that those of us who enjoy privileged status due to our racialized, gendered, heteronormative, or otherwise privileged aspects of our identities may be unaware of the ways this privileged status marginalizes others. We pledge to listen to our colleagues, students, staff, and community members when any of us make efforts to remain diligent in maintaining awareness of micro, macro aggressions, and raise our awareness around issues of invisibility, marginalization, normativity, power, and privilege. We view these goals as both crucial and ambitious. The entrenched nature of oppression requires both institutional restructuring and new social discourses. Therefore, our stance on disrupting existing and persisting inequities requires attention to micro and macro level interactions. Every interaction is an opportunity for disrupting processes of marginalization, whether overt or subtle, both through person-to-person exchange and through resisting oppressive structures and systems. We commit to holding one other and ourselves accountable, through our research and practice, to rejecting entrenched inequalities, and to cultivating new discourses as groundwork for imagining new social worlds.

**Tentative Course Schedule:** Tuesday, 7:00-9:30 pm

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August 27	Course Introduction: What is analysis?
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September 3	What is critical content analysis?  <b>Read</b> CCVA, Chapter 1 and skim CCA, Chapter 1 Read C. 6 and 10 in CCA <b>Due</b> Document the research design in C. 10 and 6
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September 10	What is the tradition of critical content analysis within the field of literary criticism?  <b>Read</b> CCA, C. 2 and the two related articles, John Stephens editorial <b>Due</b> List the critical theories and the analysis procedures Document the research design in Bradford's studies
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September 17	Exploring critical content analysis of texts  <b>Read</b> CCA, C. 3, 4, 5 and <i>Inside Out and Back Again</i> <b>Due</b> Document the research designs of 2 of these studies
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September 24	Exploring critical content analysis of texts  <b>Read</b> CCA, C. 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 <b>Due</b> Document the research designs of 2 of these studies Reflection on possible research focus and texts for own study
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October 1	What is the "critical" in critical content analysis?  <b>Read</b> Chapters 1-4 from Willis <b>Due</b> Reflection on definitions of critical, listing of possible critical theories that could fit your study Read your text(s) and write an initial response as well as note criteria for choice
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October 8	Theoretical frames for critical content analysis  <b>Read:</b> Jackson & Mazzei, C. 1 Choose a critical theory that relates to your study and read about that theory, Including at least one primary source <b>Due:</b> Reflection on critical theory readings
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October 15	Theoretical frames for critical content analysis  <b>Read</b> Discussions of the critical theory that relates to your study. Also locate and read a study that uses the critical theory as a frame (bring to share in your group) <b>Due:</b> Handout that defines the theory and lists major themes/issues/questions Presentation to class on that theoretical frame.
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October 22	Engaging in critical content analysis of visual images  <b>Read:</b> CCVA, C. 2 and Reading Visual Narratives, Chapter 2 <b>Due:</b> Bibliography of related critical content analysis studies for your study Midterm reflection
October 29	Engaging in critical content analysis of visual images  <b>Read:</b> CCVA, C. 3, 4, 5, 6 <b>Due:</b> Document the research designs of 2 of these studies Reflection on research focus, questions, critical theory, and texts for own study
November 3	Engaging in critical content analysis of visual images  <b>Read:</b> CCVA, C. 7, 8, 9 <b>Due:</b> Document the research designs of 2 of these studies Research the sociohistorical contexts that might frame your study and hand in a reflection on the sociohistorical contexts that you see as most significant to your study.
November 12	Engaging in critical content analysis of visual images  <b>Read:</b> CCVA, C. 10, 11, 12, 13 <b>Due:</b> Document the research designs of 2 of these studies List of visual tools that would be useful in your study Draft of first section of final paper (purpose, questions, texts, critical theory, and context)
November 19	Engaging in critical content analysis – Analysis strategies  <b>Read:</b> Chapter on constant comparative analysis Articles or chapters of research related to your study <b>Due:</b> Draft of literature review and analysis procedures Data Analysis/Project Groups
November 26	Engaging in critical content analysis and CCA as critical literacy  <b>Read:</b> Chapters/articles selected by your inquiry group CCA, C. 13 and CCVA, C. 15 <b>Due:</b> Data analysis to share in Data Analysis/Project Groups
December 3	Data analysis/project groups
December 10	Project Presentations <b>Due:</b> Final Projects and Research Notebooks
December 17	Project Presentations <b>Due:</b> Final Self-evaluations