CommStudies Critical/Cultural Methods

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Communication Studies

Southwestern University

COM 75-804-01

Fall 2025

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OFFICE HOURS: M 2:00-3:00pm; Tu-Th 11:45am-12:45pm; Virtual or MBH 104; by appointment using shared Google doc
CLASS MEETINGS: 1:00-2:15pm T-Th, FWO 323

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This writing intensive course trains students in qualitative methods used to produce scholarly writing about diverse forms of communication within communication studies, especially rhetorical and critical media studies. Students will work together in a collaborative community of scholars to research, analyze, write, workshop, and revise using critical/cultural methodologies. As they do, students will demonstrate proficiency in all of the basic practices required for the kinds of communication studies research projects they will do later in Capstone. This class is required for the major. **Prerequisites:** COM 75-134; 75-204; 75-604.

The main function of Critical/Cultural Methods is to take what you have learned in the intro-level Critical/Cultural CommStudies class, CommStudies electives, and the two required theory classes (Rhetorical Theory and Critical Media Theory) and prepare you to be able to effectively design and conduct a large-scale independent scholarly research project in Capstone. The early focus in this class is on reviewing theories familiar to you from previous core classes. Reviewing these will remind you of the central critical/cultural communication theories you know as well as show you how to engage these and other theories in developing what we call a *theoretical framework* for your scholarly analysis and argument. From there, we will review/learn specific methods for researching and analyzing different kinds of research objects you could potentially study for this class or for Capstone: written texts, pictures, material objects, spaces, film/video, social media apps/networks, media framing, and reception/uses/practices. For each type of research object, we will work to understand how different research objects demand different analytical approaches from the very beginning of your research process. These analytical approaches are what we call *analytical methods*.

Understanding how to work with theoretical frameworks and analytical methods will give us a foundation in the two components of what we call *methodologies*. A theoretical framework is a way of thinking and a method is a way of doing, so a methodology is a structured way of thinking through and with the things that you are doing to analyze a certain research object. Methodology = method + theoretical framework. Notice also the two words embedded within the word methodologies: Methodologies are disciplined methods of analyzing certain phenomena; they bring with them a certain logic that affords and constrains what you do to analyze them as well as the kinds of conclusions you can draw from the analysis you do. How you define your research object affects which methodologies you can use, and vice-versa. And then the methodologies you use determine the kinds of evidence you produce, which affects the kinds of arguments you can make validly from that evidence. In this class, we will focus exclusively on *qualitative* methodologies instead of quantitative methodologies, meaning that our methodologies will produce data that we analyze and interpret rhetorically and discursively, not mathematically.

Finally, while research methodologies are complex, there is then one more complication to understand: while you work through a methodology to analyze your research object, there is another set of methods to learn and use: disciplinary-specific methods of writing an argument. That is, there are specific methods for analyzing particular research objects, but also more general methods for analyzing the data you produce in analyzing those research objects as well as methods for producing a persuasive and well-structured written analytical argument. These are the discipline-specific ways of doing research, analysis, and writing that cut across all critical/cultural methodologies and are essential for any scholarly argument

you will make in CommStudies, and they include attention to: context/description, lit review, coding, and argumentation. These also are the things all of you will do together in a collaborative research workshop setting, here and in Capstone, regardless of the kind of research object or methodology you choose.

The end result of this work you will do--individually and with me and your colleagues--will be a staged scholarly research project that will unfold as a didactic practice run for Capstone: a smaller-scale lower stakes version of a project you may or may not expand into a Capstone project, but that will certainly train you in all of the processes the CommStudies Department needs you to know before you embark on Capstone.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Readings determined by the professor and/or the class, all of which will be shared at the unique Course Webpage:
http://people.southwestern.edu/~bednarb/methods

RECOMMENDED TEXT:
Gerald Graff & Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, 2nd or 3rd Edition

Please note that I use this customized Course Webpage instead of Moodle, so look to the course webpage for all readings, workshop resources, and any agreed-upon changes to the schedule.

GRADING:
I design my classes with a number of different kinds of low stakes and high stakes assignments focusing on different communicative forms and assignment formats to make sure that each student has maximum potential to demonstrate existing skills and knowledge while developing new ones. I go into every class, every assignment, and every student encounter with a growth mindset--the belief that every student is capable of both succeeding and improving--and see that my responsibility is to give you the tools you need to succeed and improve while also being clear about my expectations and evaluations.

Grades are given a lot of power in dominant culture, but it is important to remember that grades are not a reflection of your worth as a person but a reflection of your performance under a certain set of defined constraints. To level the playing field and fight against a scarcity model of grading, which reinforces unearned advantages and inherited cultural power, I do not grade on a bell curve to place your graded assignments or final grade into a pre-determined grade distribution, where only a certain number of students can get an A, B, C, D, or F. The grades I assign reflect my evaluation of your performance within the constraints outlined in the syllabus and in assignment handout rubrics. Grades for particular assignments thus measure your performance on that assignment relative to the requirements of the assignment, not relative to other students, and final course grades measure your performance in the class overall.

Based on my goal to both minimize grade focus/anxiety while also teaching you to be independent thinkers and self-advocates, I do not post grades that are calculated in real-time throughout the semester. Increasingly, students are being trained to expect real-time grades computed as courses unfold, which creates an unbalanced extrapolation of a snapshot of your performance, treating your current performance as a predictor of your final grade. I myself do not compute your grades until the very end of the semester unless I see a major concern emerge or a student requests it. Because the work we do continues to build to higher and higher stakes over the course of the semester, I see grades on smaller assignments along the way as signals about what to do in the future, not an accurate prediction of what your final grade will be. The only way they become predictive is if you ignore the feedback you are getting along the way or do not take it as a stimulus for growth.

If you ever want to compute your emerging overall grade average yourself at any point during the semester, here is what you need to know to compute grades yourself in this class. Final course grades are assigned a final letter grade based on a range of averages for individual assignments based on a 100-point scale. For example, a final average of 88-89% would be recorded as a B+; a final average of 83-87% would be recorded as a B; and 80-82% would be recorded as a B- (extrapolate from there if it is higher or lower than a B). For the purposes of averaging individual project letter grades into a final grade, I use the following system to assign a numerical grade based on a letter grade on an assignment: B+=88%; B=85%, and B-=82% (and so on). For example, if you got a B- on an assignment that was weighted 25% of the final grade, you would receive 20.5 points for that assignment (or *lose the possibility of getting* 4.5 points out of 100 overall). The only exception for that is if you achieve an A+ on an individual assignment, where it will score as a 100% of the available points, where in this example you would receive the full 25 points.

At any point along the way, if you are curious, you can see how your grade is tracking: multiply the score of an individual assignment grade by the percentage it is weighted and that will reveal the total points you have earned for that assignment grade; add it to other determined grades; and then divide it by the highest potential scores for all the completed assignments combined. For grades that are composite, such as graded Classwork, you can calculate it the same way to track your ongoing composite score. If Classwork is determined by completion grades instead of scoring, you can average that score based on the number of assignments you have completed divided by the ones you have not. Please note that I do not compute

cumulative class participation grades until the very end of the semester, so if you want to get a sense of where this score is tracking before that, you will need to discuss it with me. Finally, if you have excessive absences or a pattern of late submissions, you will need to factor them in as well. If you have questions about this grading system at any time, please consult me.

Here is how each assignment or set of assignments is weighted in this class:

Context/Description Paper	10%
Lit Review	10%
Analysis Paper	10%
Classwork	10%
Daily Class Engagement	10%
Peer Critique Engagement	2.5%
Final Self-Reflection	2.5%
Final Project	
Final Paper	25%
Poster Session	10%
Workshop Draft	10%

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Critical/Cultural Methods is designed to build on and implement the foundational training provided by courses throughout the major thusfar, which have widened and deepened your reflexive understanding of CommStudies theories, methodologies and practices. The Learning Outcomes for this course are basically the same as Capstone, just with lower expectations because you will be doing the work for the first time while being trained to do the work. The Outcomes focus on developing proficiency with theory, methodology, analysis/interpretation, argumentation, research, collaboration, revision, grammar/mechanics, and presentation.

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate:

- Proficiency in understanding and mobilizing **theory** from rhetorical studies and critical media studies.
- Proficiency using a particular research and analytical **method or set of intertwined methods**.
- Proficiency in designing research projects that **develop an analytical argument aligned to a well-defined methodology** (theory + method of analysis).
- Ability to critically engage theory and critical methodologies in framing arguments that **analyze and interpret** particular communicative texts, objects, performances, and spaces.
- Proficiency in **argumentative writing** that has a clear object of analysis and methodology and that logically and coherently develops a clearly identifiable persuasive thesis.
- Proficiency in developing effective **research** strategies for identifying primary and secondary sources pertinent to the contextualization, analysis, and interpretation of communicative texts, objects, performances, and spaces.
- Proficiency in **collaborating** in a critique workshop environment, where peers critique your work and you critique their work in a community of scholars.
- Proficiency in negotiating feedback from the instructor and from peers in **revising** scholarly work for public communication.
- Proficiency in **grammar** usage, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and **mechanics**.
- Proficiency in translating the work you do in the written research paper to an effective **public presentation**.

PROCEDURES AND POLICIES:
We will discuss more specific guidelines for the class assignments as the course progresses, but here is a short outline to help orient you at the outset:

• **METHODS FINAL PROJECT**: The key to successful scholarship in CommStudies is developing an argument built from the detailed analysis of a well-defined research object within a well-articulated methodology built from a particular analytical method and theoretical framework. To ensure that you are approaching the Final Project rigorously in a way that prepares you for Capstone, the final project will unfold in a series of staged assignments similar to ones you will do in Capstone. There is an **Initial Proposal**, a **Context/Description Paper**, a **Lit Review**, an **Analysis Paper**, and a full-scale **Workshop Draft** of your Final Paper. The last two parts are submitted, evaluated and workshopped before you turn in your **Final Paper**. And in

between the draft workshop and completing your final paper, you will present your work publicly in the **Poster Session** the last week of the semester alongside the Capstone Presentations. These important steps along the way will demand not only effective writing, analysis, and argumentation, but also diligent adherence to agreed-upon deadlines and a commitment to the recursive and collaborative process of research, writing, critique, and revision. These steps will of course also provide you with the rigorous evaluative feedback you will need to effectively deepen, revise, and refocus your work.

• **FINAL PAPER:** The main focus of all of this class is producing a 16-18 page persuasive, analytical scholarly research Final Paper that explicitly critically engages at least 18 peer-reviewed scholarly sources not assigned in this class, performs explicit analysis of your communicative research object(s), builds and sustains an effective persuasive argument, situates your work within one or both of the two Core Areas of the Communication Studies major at Southwestern (rhetorical studies and/or critical media studies), and situates your project within Communication Studies as a discipline.

• **POSTER SESSION PRESENTATION:** The course features a public presentation of your work designed to get you practice "owning" your work in a public forum. Your poster will be visually engaging and work with two different audience scales at once: 1) it will be readable from a distance to allow people skimming it in a hurry to get a sense of your project without having to read it carefully, and 2) it will contain enough detail for anyone who reads it more carefully to be able to identify and contextualize your research object, see a list of some of the key sources you have engaged, and see a condensation of the key points of your researched, analytical argument. There is an example of previous project virtual posters linked at the bottom of our Course Webpage.

• **CONTEXT/DESCRIPTION PAPER:** This is the first of several intermediate, staged portions of your overall project. While other stages will articulate your methodology, lit review, and analysis, the Context/Description Paper focuses on building a context for understanding your research object by establishing what it is and the general cultural significance of it (describing it in detail in terms of Who, What, When, Why, How, So What and showing where it is located culturally, historically, politically, etc.). There is a separate handout for this assignment included in the syllabus.

• **LIT REVIEW:** This stage shows how you have organized the scholarly sources you are using to set up your analysis of your particular research object as well as your theoretical framework(s) and methodology. This is not an annotated bibliography that simply summarizes a bunch of scholarly work you have been reading; it is a powerful tool you use to show which scholarly conversations you are engaging as you build your argument. Indeed, it is a part of the argument itself. The lit review is usually broken up into several sub-headed sections that collect a set of scholarly sources and show the patterns among them. In terms of our readings in this class, the Lit Review lays out in detail your fundamental claim for the significance of what you are doing by showing the basic They Say/I Say structure of your argument, where you present your extensive characterization of scholarship already published on your specific research object and your specific methodologies as well as any directly related work (including not only other work related to your specific topic and methods but also to the critical theorists and theoretical texts you are critically engaging), and specifically show where and how your work promises to add to those conversations. In the case of emergent contemporary topics where there is not much direct scholarly work done on the topic, the Lit Review not only draws direct comparisons to similar longer-standing objects of scholarly attention but also articulates your work's relationship to scholarly work done only adjacent popular culture discourses. There is a separate handout for this assignment included in the syllabus.

• **ANALYSIS:** The Analysis paper focuses on the close reading and coding of your particular research object composed of words, picture(s), object(s), film(s)/video(s), space(s), app(s)/network(s), discourse(s), and/or communicative practice(s)--using your methodology. We will do a Peer Critique process to evaluate and suggest revisions for each student's Analysis Paper. There is a separate handout for this assignment included in the syllabus.

• **WORKSHOP DRAFT:** To ensure that you not only produce a complete draft early enough to think through your own revision strategies but also receive detailed constructive feedback from me and your colleagues in the class, you will turn in a complete Workshop Draft for Peer Critique. When I say that the Draft needs to be a complete draft, I mean that you should think of it as the best draft you can produce on your own in the time constraints and without our close critical response to it. In short, it is not a "rough draft," but your best individual effort. The Peer Critique Process will strengthen your paper by either confirming your decisions or challenging you to produce a better essay by forcing you to think through your assumptions and omissions in productive ways. The Proposal handout included in the syllabus serves as the handout for both the Workshop Draft and the Final Paper

• **PEER CRITIQUES:** We do types of peer critiques in this class: an asynchronous paired written peer critique of the Analysis paper, and a live WorkGroup critique of your First Full Draft. I do our Full Draft peer critiques in a live, collaborative format, where we meet in smaller WorkGroups and discuss each paper in that group in detail and work towards a collaborative

evaluation of it. This format requires a significant amount of preparation as well as a constructive, cooperative attitude and a commitment to actively working through multiple critiques of your writing and the writing of your colleagues, all accomplished in the compressed time-frame of the workshop format. When everyone takes the critiques seriously, everyone benefits significantly from them.

• **FINAL SELF-REFLECTION**: All students will produce a Final Self-Reflection that demonstrates how your Methods project and your experiences in the collaborative Methods class as a whole have helped you integrate, extend, and even challenge your learning in the major. As such, it serves as one of the departmental Paideia "Making Connections" assignments that demonstrate our departmental commitment to Paideia, which fosters integrative learning across disciplines; encourages civic engagement and ethical reasoning beyond the classroom; and encourages connections to other courses or real-world issues. This short 1-2 page essay also will help the Department assess how the sequence of classes at the core of the major works to draw from previous classes while also preparing students specifically for Capstone.

• **CLASSWORK**: Your Classwork grade will be determined by your performance on the Group Theory Review and the scholarly article Annotation assignments, which all are designed not only to confirm for me that you are reading and comprehending the readings but also to help you sharpen your ability to *critically engage* the readings (which is essential training not only for participating fully and doing well in the course, but also for understanding, evaluating, and producing research in Communication Studies). You will have one of these Classwork assignments due with each published common reading assignment we do for the class, so these assignments are concentrated in the first part of the class (see Schedule for a list of these assignments). There is a separate handout for this work included in the syllabus. Like all assignments in this class, these will be submitted electronically before class, and these assignments will be graded on a 10-point scale. Note that because these Classwork assignments are designed to help prepare you to better participate in class discussions and because our discussions will thus work through the material in class, you cannot receive full credit for missed Classwork made up after the deadline. Therefore, *make-ups after the fact for missed article Annotations will count for no more than half of the original assignment grade, meaning that you would be able to score at most 5 out of 10 points instead of 10 out of 10*. Please note that by the end of the semester, if you did not submit all of the annotations when they were scheduled earlier in the semester, I will accept late, half-credit versions of them until the last week of classes.

• **CLASS ENGAGEMENT**: In taking this class, you have joined a group, where your peers and I will all have expectations about your engagement. More important, this is not a lecture class, where you come to class every day expecting the teacher to deliver knowledge to you. This is a seminar, where we all will work together to produce knowledge in active and critically engaged dialogue. I will lead the discussion and do everything I can to make our classroom an inclusive space welcoming of diverse perspectives, but the class depends on and rewards your active engagement every day. Good Class Engagement means more than merely attending class, which to me is a given. Minimally, it means reading the assigned course materials and coming to class ready to critically engage them with me and your colleagues—and actively contributing to the class discussions and collaborative workshops by speaking *and* listening not only to me, but to your classmates as well. More substantially, it means working to make our class a space of open, respectful, responsible, and challenging engagement with ideas, perspectives, voices, and embodied experiences both similar to and different from your own.   The bottom line is that we all share the responsibility for making this class work, and your role in this will determine your Class Engagement grade. Class Engagement will be evaluated on a 10-point scale.

• **ATTENDANCE**: Because this is a workshop-oriented seminar, it is important that you be prepared and in class every day. Remember that attending class is not just about you but about your relationship to your colleagues in the class and to me. Put simply: we can't work together if we are not present together. If you will be absent, for whatever reason--because you are observing a religious or cultural holiday not recognized by the normative University schedule, because you are participating in an intercollegiate sport or another activity where you are officially representing Southwestern, or "just because"--you still are responsible for completing all your assignments by the deadline. More specifically, you are responsible for notifying me of the absence <u>in advance</u> and are responsible for arranging the means of making up and turning in applicable work <u>in advance</u> of the absence. I do not enforce a pre-determined penalty for absences as absences, but if you end up missing more than a couple of days throughout the semester, your Class Engagement grade will suffer significantly.

• **READING ASSIGNMENTS**: All reading assignments must be completed before class on the day scheduled for discussion of the readings. Readings in the first part of class focuses on published scholarship; readings in the second part of the class focus on student work.

• **LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** All assignments are due at the times and days indicated in the schedule. We are on a tight schedule of assignments, so getting behind even on one will start to put pressure on everything else, so it is important that you make every effort to stay with the schedule, and work with me ASAP if you get off track. For daily Classwork, you will

email me your Annotations by noon each day they are due, and they are considered late if they are not emailed to me before class starts on the due date (see above for details about the late penalties for Classwork).   Major papers (i.e., the Group Theory Review project, the separate stages of your final project, your poster, and your final paper) are due by the date and time indicated in the syllabus schedule. I will consider a paper late if it is not submitted within 8 hours of the posted deadline, and then take a letter grade off for every 24 hours it is late after that. Any flexibility beyond that will be exceptional and will need to be the result of direct negotiations between me and you, so clear and open communication between us will be key. Once we get to the last stage of the final paper before you complete it (Workshop Draft), when you have other students waiting on your paper in order to prepare their peer critiques, not just me, anything submitted more than 8 hours past the deadline will neither be graded by me nor critiqued by your colleagues. Either way, not submitting work for any of the stages will have a significant impact on the development of your project, so please do whatever you can to meet the deadlines. Missing the deadline on the Poster Sessions is even more absolute: you have to produce a poster by the deadline and show up to participate in the Session to have your assignment graded.

  • **INCLUSIVITY**: I work hard to create a classroom space that is dynamic, engaging, and inclusive for all students, where we work together from diverse perspectives and diverse ways of doing within fair and clearly-defined expectations for student engagement and performance. I expect each of you to conduct yourselves with openness to each other's perspectives and respect for each other as persons. If substantive issues arise in the group dynamic, I will ask all of us to engage in restorative practices to maintain the inclusivity of our group. If at any time you sense a dynamic emerging in our class that makes you feel unsafe or unwilling to participate fully, please reach out to me by email or after class so that I can address your concerns. I value direct communication and want your feedback about how things are working for you.

  • **ACCOMMODATIONS**: As part of my commitment to inclusivity, I make regular accommodations for students with documented learning differences that challenge their ability to have equal access to engage and perform in the course. The Center for Academic Success coordinates reasonable, individualized accommodations for students with documented disabilities (medical, learning, and/or psychological). To receive formal accommodations, students must be registered with the Associate Director of Academic Success, Prothro Suite 120, (512) 863-1536. Students seeking accommodations should notify their office at least two weeks before any services are needed. It is your responsibility to discuss any necessary accommodations with me as well.

  • **CULTURE OF CARE:** Southwestern has adopted a proactive advising approach, and in order to support this, faculty and staff submit concerns about students to our retention management system called Navigate360. This alerts the student's advisor, who then reaches out to the student to offer support and make referrals to resources. This safety net is in place because our community prioritizes student welfare and wants to do everything possible to support students when they are having difficulty. Please know that if I raise a concern about you as the instructor of this class, it is so that we can empower you to succeed in this and other classes, not to discipline you.

  • **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY and OPEN DISCLOSURE**: All in-class and out-of-class assignments are subject to the Honor Code. Unless I explicitly direct you otherwise, you should assume that all work you submit for the class will be accompanied by an honor code statement, including the full pledge statement (typed or hand-written) and your physical or electronic signature. If you sign the honor code with no disclosure statements attached to it, it means that you have produced the work without the intent to deceive and produced it entirely by yourself without receiving assistance from other people or from generative AI tools. Anything other than that must be accompanied by a disclosure statement that explicitly and specifically delineates acknowledgements of any assistance you received in the production of your work, whether through human assistance in the form of peer-editing, etc., or through the use of generative AI for anything from brainstorming and outlining and information searches to copy editing. In this class, where you are being trained to produce original research, it is a violation of the honor code to use AI to directly generate significant amounts of content for writing assignments and/or present any content produced by AI without disclosing it. For collaborative assignments, these same policies apply but must be accompanied by a single *collaborative* honor code statement produced and signed by the whole group. Field research and interviews involving human subjects must be reviewed by the Institutional Research Board at Southwestern. <u>For verification purposes, all pledge disclosure statements must also contain contact information for any people you have directly interviewed, observed, and represented in your work.</u> Students who violate University policies on Academic Dishonesty by representing another's work as their own are subject to review by the Honor Code Council, which includes the possibility of both academic penalties for this particular class as well as broader disciplinary penalties.

PLANNED SCHEDULE

Aug	26:	Mapping the Course; Introductions
	28:	Discussion: Designing Critical/Cultural CommStudies Research Projects
		Read: Boy & Uitermark; Hautea et al; Rose

| Sep | 2: | Workshop: Theory Review Group Projects |
| | 4: | Discussion: Joining Scholarly Conversations |

	9:	Discussion: Thinking Through Theory; Annotations
		Due: Theory Review Group Projects
		[electronic submission, by 12:30pm]
	11:	Discussion: Thinking Through Theory (cont)

	16:	Discussion: Methods for Analyzing Media Framing
		Read: Edrington & Gallagher, Duffy
		Due: Annotation Classwork 1
		[electronic submission, by 12:30pm]
	18:	Discussion: Methods for Analyzing Film/Video and Social Media Discourse
		Read: Hawkins & Richardson; Sweeney-Romero
		Due: Annotation Classwork 2
		[electronic submission, by 12:30pm]

	23:	Discussion: Methods for Analyzing Objects, Spaces, and Practices
		Read: Utley; Aiello & Dickinson
		Due: Annotation Classwork 3
		[electronic submission, by 12:30pm]
	25:	Workshop: Doing Qualitative Analysis
		Due: Potential ROs
		[electronic submission, by 12:30pm]

	30:	Workshop: Doing Qualitative Analysis
		Due: Potential ROs
		[electronic submission, by 12:30pm]
Oct	2:	Discussion: Staging out your Methods Research Project
		Due: Research Project Proposal
		[electronic submission, by 12:30pm]
		[schedule a mandatory research consultation for b/w 10/3 and 10/8]

	7:	{Research Consultations}
	9:	Discussion: Lit Review
		Due: Context/Description Paper
		[electronic submission, by 12:30pm]

| | 14: | {No Class-Fall Break} |
| | 16: | {Research Consultations} |

	21:	Discussion: Analysis/Coding
	23:	{Research Consultations}
		Due: Lit Review
		[electronic submission, by 12:30pm]

| | 28: | {No Class-Sunity Day} |
| Oct | 30: | Discussion: Developing an Argument |

Nov   4:   Discussion: Structure and Voice
                    Due: Analysis Paper
                        [electronic submission, by 12:30pm]
        6:      {No Class—Peer Critiques}
                    Due: Peer Critique of Analysis Paper
                        [electronic submission to me and your critique partner, by **2:30pm]**

        11:     {Research Consultations}
        13:     Discussion: Completing Projects
                    Due: Full Draft of Final Paper
                        [electronic submission, by 12:30pm]

        18:     Critique Workshop: Full Draft of Final Paper
                    Due: Prepare for Live Peer Critiques of each Full Draft
        20:     Poster Workshop

Nov   25-27: {No Class-Thanksgiving Break}

Dec   2:   Poster Workshop
                    Due: Research Project posters
                        Methods Poster Session 4:00-4:45PM, Olin Lobby
                        Capstone Presentations 5:00-7:00PM, Olin 105
        4:      Conclusions/Course Evaluations
                    Due: Final Self-Reflection
                        [electronic submission, by 12:30pm]

Dec   9: (Tu) **Due: Final Paper**
                        [electronic submission, by 9:00pm]

Course PDF Bibliographic Citations

Aiello, Giorgia, and Dickinson, Greg, "Beyond Authenticity: A Visual-Material Analysis of Locality in the
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        Institute of British Geographers*, 42 (2017), pp. 612-624.
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        The Communication Review 16 (2013), pp. 132-154.
Edrington, Candice L., and Gallagher, Victoria J., "Race and Visibility: How and Why Visual Images of
        Black Lives Matter," *Visual Communication Quarterly* 26 (2019), pp. 195-207.
Hautea, Samantha, Parks, Perry, Takahashi, Bruno, and Zeng, Jing, "Showing They Care (or Don't):
        Affective Publics and Ambivalent Climate Activism on TikTok," *Social Media + Society* 7/2 (2021), pp. 1-14.
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        Mediation," *Popular Music & Society* 30/5 (2007), pp. 605-629.
Rose, Gillian, "Designing a Visual Methods Research Project," in Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies:
        An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*, 5th Ed. (London: Sage, 2023),
        pp. 90-104
Sweeney-Romero, Katlin Marisol, "Social Mediated Latinas in the Online Beauty Community: Creating
        and Critiquing Latina Beauty Gurus through YouTube," in *The Meanings of Dress*, 5th Edition, edited by Kimberly A
        Miller-Spillman, Andrew Reilly, & José Blanco, pp. 205-213. New York:" Bloomsbury/Fairchild, 2024.
Utley, Ebony A., "What Does Beyoncé Mean to Young Girls," *Journal of Popular Music Studies*
        29 (2017), pp. 1-12.

Bednar
Critical/Cultural Methods
Group Theory Review Assignment

Working with your group, *identify* each theoretical concept below by providing: the primary theorist, or one of the primary theorists if it is a broad theory; an explanation of the theory; key terms associated with the theory; the citation where the primary source material for the theory can be found (usually where it was first published); and a citation for a scholarly journal article that uses the theory.

You will all collaborate in small groups to produce one paper per group that identifies all of the theories. Because each person in the group is equally responsible for the functioning and output of the group, these assignments will be assigned a group grade. All group members will sign the honor code. To act with integrity in a group means not only that you take responsibility for "carrying your weight" by producing your part of the group's work with integrity (as you would with individual work), but also that you have produced the work *as* a group. This means that you each have taken responsibility for working together productively with your group to produce a coherent and cohesive document that you all approve and submit as a group. Your ability to work together to assign each other tasks and edit the final document together is part of the grade. If collaborative issues emerge in the group, they need to be resolved *within the group*.

1. Affordances/constraints
2. Constitutive rhetoric
3. Culture Industry
4. Denotation/connotation/myth (Barthes)
5. Disidentification
6. Dramaturgy
7. Encoding/decoding model (including dominant/negotiated/oppositional readings)
8. Equipment for living
9. Feminist rhetorical criticism
10. Hegemony
11. Identification (Burke)
12. Ideographs
13. Interpellation
14. Intersectionality
15. Masculine/Male gaze
16. Media framing
17. Narrative paradigm
18. Panopticon/surveillance
19. Parasocial relationships
20. Performativity
21. Persona (First, Second, Third & Fourth)
22. Polysemy/polyvalence
23. Postcolonial/anti-colonial rhetorical criticism
24. Publics/counterpublics
25. Queer theory/Queer of color critique
26. Racial rhetorical criticism
27. Semiotics/semiology
28. Third-wave media

Regular Classwork Assignments:
Annotating CommStudies Research Articles

As part of your training in designing effective research projects in Critical Cultural CommStudies, each time you read an assigned research article in this class, you will "reverse engineer" the article to identify the following:

1) **RO (Research Object)** being analyzed in the article, defined as specifically as possible (This is not the general "topic" or "theme," but the actual thing the authors mobilize their methodology to directly analyze to answer their RQs and build an argument around, such as a music video, a print media text or defined set of texts, a TV show episode or defined set of episodes, an image or defined set of images, a social media post or defined set of social media posts, a specific audience group, a place or defined set of places, etc.)

2) **RQs (Research Questions)** that implicitly or explicitly drive the project. (Whether stated explicitly or not, RQs ask specific analytical/interpretive questions about the RO while reaching for larger and larger frames of significance important to scholars. In most cases, when there is more than one RQ, at least one will pertain directly to the RO itself and at least one will pertain to some larger topical question within CommStudies about how culture, power, identity, and communication work in general. Often there is also a third RQ in between these two scales, usually pertaining to the general cultural topic or theme.)

3) **Central claim** made about the RO (The claim should essentially answer the RQs and show how the article adds to existing scholarly conversations; sometimes it is called the argument or thesis.)

4) **Methodology**, including theoretical framework(s) and analytical method(s) employed for analyzing the RO directly to answer the RQs (How do they use theory to frame their study, and how do they describe their method(s) of analyzing the RO?) Note that these theories and/or methods are not limited to ones you have studied in previous CommStudies classes and are definitely not limited to the ones on our Theory Review. Also note that regardless of the specific method(s) of analysis they employ, all scholarly authors must later code and interpret the results of their analysis, so what you need to identify here is: what do they say they did to analyze the specific RO as a specific kind of RO? Finally, also notice that authors sometimes *generate* theory as they make their claims, but that is not what you are looking for here. You are looking for theories that existed before the article was written—theories that the author critically engages and uses to structure and explain their analysis, not what they conclude as the outcome of their analysis or claim to contribute to the literature.

5) **Lit Review**, or survey of previous pertinent scholarly work they use to frame the current project's contribution to what we call the "scholarly literature" (Which scholars do they critically engage, and how do they characterize/review the pertinent scholarly literature as they articulate their argument? Where in the article do you see them doing lit review, and how do they organize the lit review into groups of scholarly "conversations" or themes?)

6) **Context/Description**, or neutral, factual information provided about the RO and topic (What kinds of information does each author provide to describe the RO and provide cultural/historical context about the RO/topic for readers?)

Please note that some of these items are easier to identify than others, and that some authors are more explicit in stating them than others. That means that there might be multiple right answers for each item. Also note that there will be two articles per assignment, so you need to produce full annotations of both articles assigned for the day (as noted in the syllabus).

We call this a classwork assignment because it is something you do to prepare for our class discussions the day the readings are assigned. That means that you will need to complete them before class and submit them electronically by noon each day they are due. Note that because these Classwork assignments are designed to help prepare you to better participate in class discussions and because our discussions will thus work through the material in detail in class, you cannot receive full credit for missed Classwork made up after the assignment is due.

Reminder about the Honor Pledge: After you are finished with your classwork assignment, type out and virtually sign the pledge, either with an image of your signature or the standard format for virtual signatures: "/s/Firstname Lastname" In addition to everything else it means more generally, signing the pledge on this particular assignment means that you completed your work by yourself without the intent to deceive. See syllabus for more details on Academic Integrity.

Preparing Your Methods Research Project Proposals

   The key to successful scholarship in Communication Studies is developing an argument built from the detailed analysis of a well-defined research object within a well-articulated methodology built from a particular analytical method and theoretical framework.

   The main focus of this class is producing a 16-18 page persuasive, analytical scholarly research Final Paper that explicitly critically engages at least 18 peer-reviewed scholarly sources, performs explicit analysis of your communicative research object, builds and sustains an effective persuasive argument, situates your work within one or both of the two Core Areas of the Communication Studies major at Southwestern (rhetorical studies and/or critical media studies), and situates your project within Communication Studies as a discipline.

   To ensure that you are approaching the Final Project rigorously in a way that prepares you for Capstone, the final project will unfold in a series of staged assignments similar to ones you will do in Capstone. There is an initial **Research Project Proposal**, a **Context/Description Paper**, a **Lit Review**, an **Analysis Paper**, and a full-scale **Workshop Draft** of your Final Paper. The last two parts are submitted, evaluated and workshopped by peers as well as me before you turn in your **Final Paper**. And in between the draft workshop and completing your final paper, you will present your work publicly as part of the Methods **Poster Session** the last week of the semester. These important steps along the way will demand not only effective writing, analysis, and argumentation, but also diligent adherence to agreed-upon deadlines and a commitment to the recursive process of research, writing, critique, and revision. These steps will of course also provide you with the rigorous evaluative feedback you will need to effectively deepen, revise, and refocus your work.

   This Research Project Proposal is where it all starts. Your Proposal must address each part of the Proposal format below as specifically and concretely as possible. Please note that you may be required to Revise & Re-submit multiple drafts even of this Proposal before your topic is approved.

   Each draft of your Proposal should be **1-2 single-spaced pages typed**, and should be **divided into the separate sections outlined below**. Each time you submit a Proposal, you also need to **include a separate page listing the current** alphabetized **bibliography** of sources you are using, with full citations using a standard citation system, such as Chicago or MLA. Eventually your project will critically engage at least 18 scholarly sources. For your Proposal to be credible even at this stage, your **proposal bibliography must contain at least pertinent 7 scholarly sources.**

   Research object. What research object exactly are you focusing on? What do you know about this research object at this point?   What are your preliminary research questions about the research object as you start to imagine the project?

   Methodology. What kind of methodological design are you working towards at this point? Which analytical method(s) and theoretical framework(s) are you planning to use? That is: What will you *do* to analyze your research object that will add to the scholarly conversation about your object and/or general topic, *how* exactly will you do the analysis, and within which theoretical framework(s)?

   Preliminary Literature Review. Which other scholars do you see doing similar and different but related work on your research object, adjacent or antecedent research objects, and more general research topic? How does your proposed methodology and set of research questions relate to theirs, even if they are analyzing different ROs? Which communication, critical, and or cultural theories and theorists seem most pertinent to your project at the outset and how/why? Note that they don't need to be a theory from the Theory Review list.

   Audience and Significance. Who is your specific scholarly audience for the project? How is this project connected to your previous work in the major? How does your project speak from and to Communication Studies as a discipline? Within which Core Area of the major—rhetorical studies or critical media studies (or intersection of the two)—is your project most directly located and how?

   Motivation. What is your personal motivation for doing this project?

Preparing Your Context/Description Paper

Once you have submitted and discussed your Project Proposal and have had your project idea approved, the next step is to begin your disciplined practices of engaging your RO (research object) in detail. Later, your Lit Review Paper will articulate your methodology and lit review, and your Analysis Paper will focus on the detailed analysis of your RO, but the Context/Description Paper focuses on describing the RO itself as neutrally as possible and building a context for understanding your RO by establishing what it is and the general cultural significance of it (describing it in detail in terms of Who, What, When, Why, How, So What and showing where it is located culturally, historically, politically, etc.). Note that while your Lit Review will engage only scholarly sources, this stage usually contains more popular media sources. If you do this paper well, it will be a first draft of writing that will find its way into either the first third or second third of your final paper.

Notice that the purpose with this particular stage of the paper is to show what the RO is for the purpose of providing context for your readers. Please avoid long, detailed descriptions of the internal workings of the RO itself; that is something we will do in the Analysis Paper. For example, if your RO is a music video, do not describe everything that happens <u>in</u> the video in a shot-by-shot plot description; instead, describe everything *around* the video that will help us know what it is, as though we are unfamiliar with it. Similarly, you should aspire to be as neutral as possible in your description/contextualization of your RO at this stage. This staged paper does not perform an analytical interpretive argument yet; at most, it performs an argument about why studying the RO is important (regardless of your ultimate perspective or conclusions).

As you work your way through this paper, you should cite ALL sources you use to document information, sources you analyze, and sources you critically engage to articulate your point. Cite the sources as full citations in a separate Works Cited section using a standard citation system, such as Chicago or MLA. Unlike your Lit Review and Final Project, this paper is likely to have more popular media citations than scholarly citations. The Works Cited section is not included in the 5-7 page count.

The Context/Description paper will be 5-7 pages double-spaced, and divided into the following subsections:

1) **Introduction.** This section introduces this particular staged paper by defining your RO and making an initial claim for why this particular RO is a productive site of analysis for someone working with the discipline of communication studies. The intro section should end by mapping out the overall structure of the rest of this particular paper.

2) **Description and Context.** This section contextualizes your RO in detail, and will take up the majority of the paper. What is your RO? What is it similar to and different from? How would you characterize it? Who is associated with its production, circulation/exhibition, and consumption? What is its history? When did it start? How long has it existed, and it what forms? If it is from the past, when did it stop? How was it originated? How do people encounter it, particularly through which media and/or platforms? What if any conversation is there about this object in popular media forms such as journalism, social media, etc.? What is the scope of the critical conversation about it (including cultural critics and media critics as well as scholars), and what are some main ideas that keep coming up in other people's critical reflections on your object? In short: what is your RO, why is it significant, and where is it "located" in terms of medium, platform, place, intersectional identities, etc.?

3) **Initial Conclusions.** This section concludes the Context/Description Paper by drawing out your initial observations about the RO itself and how it connects to other related (similar and/or different) communicative ROs that are already significant to communication studies scholars. Those conclusions can be in the form of questions you hope to answer later in the project when you dig into your analysis of the RO more directly, but you at least should have some very specific observations to share here based on the research you did so far to be able to describe, characterize, and contextualize your RO.

Preparing Your Lit Review Paper

      Once you have had your topic approved and done the work of Describing and Contextualizing your RO (research object), the next step is to produce an overview of scholarship pertinent to both your RO and methodology. The Lit Review staged paper focuses on defining the scope and scale of your project and situating your approach to your RO within the existing scholarly discourses that impinge upon the RO and your methodology. It will contain your 3 central RQs (research questions) and may contain a hypothesis, but it will not contain your claim or thesis, which will emerge only later, after you actually perform your analysis. If you do this paper well, it will serve as a first draft of parts of the first third of your final paper.

      Your Lit Review paper will be 5-7 pages double-spaced and contain two separate parts: Introduction and a Literature Review for both your RO and your Methodology. Although each project is different and each author may choose to engage their sources in different sections and in different ways, a good rule of thumb for the scale of each section would be: Intro 1-2 pages; Lit Review for 5-6 pages. Here is what each section should do:

1) **Introduction.** This section introduces your project by articulating your central RQs about your RO that propel the project. You should clearly state your 3 RQs: one about your specific RO, one about your more general topic, and one about what your project contributes to larger questions CommStudies asks as a discipline. Your introduction should also establish the significance of the project—by addressing the "so what?" and "who cares?" questions (See Graff & Birkenstein), and briefly define/describe your methodology (analytical method(s) and theoretical framework(s)).

2) **Literature Review.** This section shows how you have organized the scholarly sources you are using to set up your analysis of your particular RO as well as your methodology. This is not an annotated bibliography that simply summarizes a bunch of scholarly work you have been reading; it is a powerful tool you use to show which scholarly *conversations* you are entering as you build your argument. Indeed, it is a part of the argument itself. The lit review is usually broken up into several sub-headed sections that collect a set of scholarly sources and show the patterns among them. In terms of our readings in this class, the Lit Review lays out in detail your fundamental claim for the significance of what you are doing by showing the basic They Say/I Say structure of your argument, where you present your extensive characterization of scholarship already published on your specific RO and your specific methodologies as well as any directly related work (including not only other work related to your specific topic and methods but also to the critical theorists and theoretical texts you are critically engaging), and specifically show where and how your work promises to add to those conversations. In the case of emergent topics where there is not much direct scholarly work done on the topic, the Lit Review articulates your work's relationship to critical work done on adjacent and antecedent ROs. Either way, by definition, the Lit Review only pertains to published, peer-reviewed, scholarly work, so the only sources we should see in your lit review are scholarly sources (use popular media sources in the Context/Description and Analysis stages of the paper). Please notice that this section does lit review not only on your RO and topic but also on your methodology—your *analytical method(s)* and interpretation with a particular *theoretical framework* or *frameworks*. Either way, you must show which other scholars you see doing similar and different but related work on your RQs and how your methodology relates to theirs.

      Like everything you write in this class, your Lit Review lists the sources you are using as full citations using a standard citation system, and they should function <u>as</u> Works Cited, where by definition we are seeing citations only for the work you critically engage somewhere in the Lit Review paper. You will continue to gather and engage scholarly sources as the project progresses. I expect to see you critically engage at least 10 separate pertinent scholarly (peer-reviewed journal articles, edited book chapters, and/or books) sources somewhere in this paper. The Works Cited section is not included in the 5-7 page count.

Preparing Your Analysis Paper

The key to successful scholarship in CommStudies is the production of a persuasive interpretive argument built from the detailed analysis of a well-defined RO (research object) within a certain methodology designed to answer specific RQs (research questions). While your Context/Description Paper focuses on describing the RO itself carefully and building a context for understanding your RO, and your Lit Review articulates your methodology and lit review, this paper focuses on the close reading and coding of your RO <u>using</u> your methodology to analyze your RO. Thus the Analysis Paper should be a coherent interpretive, argumentative essay that focuses on analyzing your particular RO directly and in detail within a particular methodology.

For this paper, it is likely you will cite sources as you establish your framework (especially RO itself), but the focus should be on *your perspective* as you demonstrate your analysis of the RO. Therefore, you will also likely need to extensively refer directly to and cite your RO itself, to indicate exactly which parts of it you are analyzing at a given moment. As always, you should cite ALL sources you use to document information, sources you analyze, and sources you critically engage to articulate your point. Cite the sources as full citations in a separate Works Cited section using a standard citation system, such as Chicago or MLA. Unlike your Lit Review and final project overall, this paper is likely to have more popular media citations (especially direct references to your RO itself) than scholarly citations. The Works Cited section is not included in the 8-10 page count.

The focus here should be on your detailed analysis and interpretation of your RO. The analysis paper does not need to replicate the work you produced in your previous stages, but the analysis does need to provide enough background and context for your project so that it is clear how the analysis fits into the larger project. In other words, this paper must include an introduction, thesis statement and/or RQs, and a very brief explanation of RO and methodology, but <u>the vast majority of the paper will be your analysis itself: you performing your methodology and demonstrating your analysis to answer your RQs.</u>

The Analysis is a critical place for your distinctive scholarly perspective on the things you have coded. The Lit Review is you summarizing and engaging other perspectives, but the Analysis is YOUR perspective: your contribution to an ongoing scholarly conversation. In our vocabulary, while the earlier papers focus on "They Say," this paper focuses on "I Say." It will show how you have encountered, confronted, and engaged your RO as directly as possible. What do YOU have to say about this RO? What strikes YOU as interesting, important, relevant? And how do YOU see it all holding together into something more than the sum of its parts? Only once you have a clear idea of what you are saying and contributing do you have anything to add to the conversation, which is why we focus on the analysis last before we put it all back together with the necessary scholarly backdrop in the final paper.

Ideally, in the next step, you will be able to take the Lit Review and merge it with the Context/Description paper and the Analysis paper to comprise the foundation for your first full draft of your final paper. You will of course have to go back and polish, integrate, revise, but the Lit Review, Context/Description, and Analysis should constitute the basic building blocks of your final paper.

Final Note: You may have learned different analytical processes (or different names for the same analytical processes) in your CommStudies Core Courses or Electives, so I want to be as explicit as possible about our approach here. For me, excellent CommStudies analysis is built from five separate but overlapping processes performed behind the scenes before you can show the analysis:

1. **Perceive**: approach the RO with openness, recursively immerse yourself in your RO and describe what you see and feel in great detail
2. **Code**: note and/or generate patterns among the details you see and feel
3. **Interpret**: determine what you think the patterns mean at multiple scales
4. **Argue**: put it all together into a coherent analytical/interpretive argument
5. **Interpellate**: Craft the argument to address a certain audience/context

You certainly will build all 5 processes into your final paper. For this Analysis paper, strive at least to show evidence derived from performing processes 1-3, ideally 1-4 or 1-5. Please notice that these are analytical processes that you perform on your own behind the scenes to generate your analysis, not a sequence for presenting the analysis to readers. How you organize your analysis on the page should be determined by what you have concluded from the processes to build small points into big points that will eventually support a complex argument. Whatever you do, do not present the Analysis Paper sequentially in terms of these 5 processes.

Bednar
Critical/Cultural Methods

Peer Critiques: Responding Constructively to Drafts

In this class, we will do two types of critiques: one will be an asynchronous, paired peer-review critique, and the other will be what I call a "live critique." For the peer-to-peer critique, you each produce about a page of writing that conveys your overall evaluation as well as your response to specific elements of the draft you are critiquing. For the live critiques, you will need to make sure you have something specific to share with the group about each paper, because we will work together in collaboration to respond to, analyze, and discuss each author's work within an open and dynamic dialogue that generates more diverse feedback than a peer-to-peer critique or a teacher-to-student critique.

To make these critiques as constructive as possible, I have prepared the following list of guidelines to help you generate useful feedback for the writers in your pairing or your WorkGroup. Please note that we will not follow these guidelines like a script; the questions are meant to prompt you to ask specific questions so that you have specific things to say to each writer. The goal is for each of you to prepare to have something concrete and constructive to share with each writer you engage. What does not work is vague, general feedback—either bland praise or global dismissiveness. Do the good kind of B.S.: Be Specific.

Finally, while the main focus here is on your role as a peer critic providing constructive criticism, you also need to prepare to *receive* peer criticism constructively as well. **The golden rule of peer critiques is**: *"Give the kind of critique you would like to receive, and receive critique the way you would like to have your critiques of others received."* Go into your role as a critic ready to give productive, creative, helpful, and concrete critiques, and go into your role as author ready to be open to hearing feedback and ready to ask questions that clarify the feedback, not set up to defend yourself from criticism. If we all stay specific and have an attitude of constant improvement consistent with a growth mindset, it all will be productive for everyone.

SUMMARIZING: How do you interpret the piece as a whole? What do you think is the main idea or message of the piece? How and why did you reach that conclusion?

POINTING TO THE CENTER: Is there a central image, passage, or detailed description that seems to give special life or power to the essay that would not be there otherwise? Which words, phrases, or other features of the writing do you find most striking or memorable? Why? What do you think of the way the author handles these important aspects?

POINTING TO THE EDGES: What are some of the important things left too implicit? What do you think the writer is going to say but doesn't? What does this tell you about the kinds of assumptions the writer appears to be making about their audience? Are there important details left out that are necessary for context? What ideas and questions seem to hover around the edges of the essay? Do you think these implicit messages would be more effective if they were made explicit or would you like to see the writer keep them subtle? Why or why not?

EVALUATING THE ESSAY AS AN ASSIGNMENT: Does the essay satisfy the central requirements of this particular assignment?

ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE: Do the writer's points seem to follow one another clearly? Are there significant gaps in the exploration of ideas that create transition problems? Is the essay coherent and unified? Are the author's voice and point of view consistent?

GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS: Are there any basic sentence errors? Are there a significant number of typos, misspellings, or other basic mechanical problems?   If so, what do they do to your experience of the essay?

OFFERING SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISION: If you were to identify one or two specific things you think could be changed to significantly improve the essay as a whole, what are they?

Bednar
Critical/Cultural Methods

Preparing Your Final Self-Reflection Paper

Approaching the end of Methods provides the ideal moment for you to intentionally reflect on how your research project and your experiences in Methods serve as bridge between your previous CommStudies courses and Capstone.

This short 1-2 page Final Self-reflection essay assignment will hopefully be useful to you as a way of reflecting on your experience in the major, but the main purpose is to help the Department evaluate whether and how the main sequence of the CommStudies major works to prepare students to do independent research in Capstone. Therefore, it serves as one of our departmental Paideia "Making Connections" assignments, so it will help the Department evaluate whether and how the CommStudies major works to help students make connections in the spirit of Paideia.

You can structure your Self-Reflection however you want, but it must have a clear overall thesis and the evidence for your thesis must come from the clear and specific narration of examples from your direct personal experience within the major and this particular course.

An excellent Methods Final Self-Reflection essay will:

1. Identify, narrate, and discuss some specific things you have learned about doing analysis and designing and carrying out critical cultural CommStudies research projects in Methods that you foresee being useful to you as preparation for Capstone.

2. Identify, narrate, and discuss the specific ways your work in Methods relates to your previous work in the two required core theory classes (Rhetorical Theory and Critical Media Theory) and any CommStudies electives you have taken, with specific references to things you have learned about analyzing research objects, understanding and applying theoretical frameworks and methods of analysis, and critically engaging the work of other scholars.

3. Be well-written, like everything else your produce in the course, with strong grammar and mechanics as well as a strong sense of voice, purpose, and audience.

Final Papers and Posters

There are two outputs related to your final research project in Methods: a Final Paper and a Poster. The Final Paper will be a 15-18 page persuasive, analytical scholarly research paper that explicitly critically engages at least 15 scholarly sources, performs explicit analysis of your communicative RO (research object), builds and sustains an effective persuasive argument, situates your work within one or both of the two Core Areas of the Communication Studies major at Southwestern (rhetorical studies and/or critical media studies), and situates your project within Communication Studies as a discipline. This is a paper you will submit to the instructor only, during finals week.

The course also features a public presentation of your work as well. All Methods students produce a physical poster to present in person at the *Festival of Communication* event we hold the last week of the semester in the Olin lobby, where people come up to you and discuss your project with you, where the poster serves as the representation of your project.

Your poster will be visually engaging and work with two different audience scales at once: 1) it will be readable from a distance to allow people skimming through the projects to get a sense of your project without having to read it carefully, and 2) it will contain enough detail for anyone who reads it more carefully to be able to identify and contextualize your RO (research object), see a list of some of the key sources you have engaged, and see a condensation of the key points of your argument.

To make it work for both scales at once, you will produce content that you will then fasten to a gator board. That content will contain numerous images illustrating your project (and ideally captioned) and the following written content: your name, your title (make it a good one!), a 200-word abstract, 5 keywords, and citations for at least 2 key sources from your lit review. Produce the separate documents in whatever app you are most proficient in--Word, Google Docs, PowerPoint, Slides, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Canva, etc.

In the pandemic, we did the Poster Sessions virtually, so I have some examples of those projects to share with you that serve as models for the content and basic form of the in-person Posters, but the in-person Posters can be much more elaborate and obviously "handmade" than the ones we did virtually. Notice their structure, how important titles are as advertisements for a project, and which ones do the best job of creatively handing the constraints of the assignment, and then think even bigger, because you will be standing next to it discussing it with visitors, and the bigger the better.

Pronouns and Possessives:

its = possessive pronoun
> e.g. the essay's point of view => its point of view

it's = contraction of it + is
> e.g. It is a fine day. => It's a fine day.

their = possessive pronoun
> e.g. Hondo and Jo Jo's dog roams the neighborhood. => Their dog roams the neighborhood.

there = adverb indicating place
> e.g. Their dog usually leaves its mark on that yard over there.

they're = contraction of they + are
> e.g. Hondo and Jo Jo are looking for the dog that belongs to them. = > They're looking for their dog.

Punctuation/Sentence Structure Problems:

fragment (frag)
A fragment is an incomplete sentence that lacks a subject, a verb, or both.
> e.g. Washing the car. (no subject, incomplete verb, and incomplete thought)

comma splice (cs)
A comma cannot, on its own, join two independent clauses.
> e.g. Jo Jo likes barbecue, Hondo prefers tofu. => Jo Jo likes barbecue; Hondo prefers tofu.
> => Jo Jo likes barbecue, but Hondo prefers tofu.
> => Jo Jo likes barbecue. Hondo prefers tofu.

fused sentence (fs)
A fused sentence lacks the punctuation necessary to separate two independent clauses.
> e.g. Jo Jo likes barbecue Hondo prefers tofu.   => (see comma splice corrections above)

semicolon errors
A semicolon can only be used in an extensive series or to separate two independent clauses.
> e.g. Hondo stumbled; washing the car. => Hondo stumbled; he was washing the car.
> => While he was washing the car, Hondo stumbled.
> => Hondo stumbled while he was washing the car.

run-on
A run-on sentence proliferates verbs and subjects and objects without attention to grammatical structure.

awkward (AWK)
An awkward sentence stumbles over itself as it tries to communicate its point, rendering the writing confused/confusing. Often the fix is to "write to the point" more directly.

using the word "however"
The word "however" is not an interchangeable synonym for the word "but" or "although." It cannot be used to indicate contradiction unless you use punctuation to interrupt the flow of the sentence. If a sentence begins with the word, it must be followed by a comma; if a sentence ends with the word, it must be preceded with a comma.   If it is used in the middle of a sentence, it must be set apart either with a set of commas before and after it or with a semicolon and a comma (see also **fs**, **cs**, and **run-ons**).
> e.g. Jo Jo says they do not know how their dog gets out; however, I know that they do.
> e.g. Jo Jo says they do not know how their dog gets out. However, I know that they do.
> e.g. Jo Jo says they do not know how their dog gets out. I know, however, that they do.

Apostrophes:

A singular noun that does not end in "s" takes " 's " to indicate possession.
> e.g. the person's dog   (the dog belongs to one person)

A plural noun that already ends in "s" takes an " ' " only to indicate possession.
> e.g. the boys' dog   (the dog belongs to more than one boy)
> e.g. the ladies' house   (the house belongs to more than one lady)

A plural noun that does not end in "s" takes " 's " to indicate possession.
> e.g. the children's dog   (the dog belongs to all the children)
> e.g. the women's house   (the house belong to the women)

A singular noun that ends in "s" takes either " ' " or " 's " to indicate possession.
> e.g. Charles' spaniel <u>or</u> Charles's spaniel   (the spaniel belongs to Charles)

Punctuating quotes and citations:

I expect you to critically engage other writers as you develop your own arguments. Document all citations (including direct quotations, paraphrases, and "general indebtedness") using MLA, Harvard, Chicago, or some other standard in-text citation format within the essay and then list all of your cited sources in a Works Cited section at the end of the paper. Notice that the standard format for documenting a quote ends the quote, includes the citation, and only then provides the sentence's end punctuation, as in the following example: As Patrick Phillips argues, "There is a fine line between determining and overdetermining the meaning of a film text" (Phillips, 157).

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