Designing Methodologies for Media

Spring 2018 | Mondays 4-5:50pm | 6 E 16th St. #611
NMDS 5026 | CRN 5954

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The Official Course Description

This course explores the design of research methodologies for the systematic study of media, how and why media are made, distributed, used, and understood. Because media systems can be very complex, and studied from various perspectives, it is important for media researchers to be able to deploy a range of techniques, and especially to combine techniques, in ways that allow for meaningful, clear, and critical research. The course emphasizes the framing of questions, as well as the choice of best methods for research, and how the choice of methods influences the significance, meaning, and impact of the results. This includes ethical considerations of research, such as protecting subjects' privacy and anonymity. The class will give a survey of various types of empirical methods, including qualitative ones, such as ethnography, participant observation, focus groups, interviews, auto-ethnography, and rhetorical analysis; and quantitative ones, such as sampling, surveys, content analysis, and audience analysis. We look at different examples of how these methods can be effectively combined, and at various resources or studying media, especially on-line information and data. Assignments will consist of several small research projects involving different methods, and a larger research project employing an original methodology.

Modified Course Description

This course explores the design of research methodologies for the systematic study of media in all its manifestations: as texts, objects, commodities, imaginaries, systems, environments, and so forth. We'll also consider how media technologies can function as research tools, how media-making can serve as a research method, and how we can creatively employ media to share our research. Because media systems are complex and lend themselves to study from various perspectives, it's important for media researchers to be able to deploy a range of techniques, and especially to combine techniques, in ways that allow for meaningful, clear, critical, and creative research. We'll thus inventory a variety of approaches, including qualitative, quantitative, historical, critical, and design methods, as well as approaches drawn from other disciplines and practices. And we'll see that every stage of the research process – from framing questions to choosing methods for the execution and dissemination of our work – is "designed," and that research design shapes the meaning, reach, impact, politics, and ethics of our work. The course will include seminar discussions and workshops, guest speakers, and a field trip, enabling us to examine various methods in action. Students will complete several short assignments that lead up to the creation of a proposal for a larger research project, perhaps a thesis, in any of a variety of formats – from a traditional paper to a documentary film to an exhibition.

OUR TOOLS

This is our class website:

Here you'll find our most up-to-date schedule, pdfs or links for all the readings, archives of our work, etc. Most of our resources are available on the open web, but some materials are copyrighted; to access those, you'll be prompted to enter a username and a password: **student** + **seecritfilez**

I've also created little bibliographies for specific methods. I've provided links to all the required readings and those supplemental resources to which I have ready access; for the others, you'll need to use the library (which is itself an integral part of *doing research!*).

Methodology texts are often profoundly boring and crazy expensive. So, I won't ask you to buy any of them. Don't get me wrong: they can serve as helpful references, and I encourage you to refer repeatedly to the methods resources I've collected for you here, as well as those you'll find in the library. But I'd rather you fill your bookshelves with texts that inspire – that remind you of the *joy* of research and the possibilities afforded by an array of research approaches and methods. These books might help with that task:
- Alan Fletcher, *The Art of Looking Sideways* (Phaidon, 2001)
- Keri Smith, *How to Be an Explorer of the World: Portable Life Museum* (Perigree, 2008)

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

- Attendance + Participation...20%
- Project Sketch + Annotated Bibliography due February 4 @ 7pm...15%
- Project Development Workshop Participation: February 5 ....5%
- Progress Report due April 1 @ 7pm...15%
- Methods Workshop Participation: April 9 ....5%
- Final Presentation: May 7 or 14 ....10%
- Final Proposal due May 14...30%

ATTENDANCE + PARTICIPATION

Our class is a mix of seminar and workshop, and its success depends on your regular attendance and reliable participation. We need each other to show up on time, having completed the readings, and prepared to engage constructively and respectfully with one another.

[I apologize for the pedantry of the following. Yet recent semesters' experience has demonstrated that such codification of policy is necessary.]

If you must be absent, please notify me in advance. One absence will not affect your grade. **Two absences will result in a "one step" reduction** in your final grade (i.e., from an A to an A-). Three absences will result in a "two-step" reduction. **Four absences will result in failure** of the course;

to avoid the 'F' on your transcript, I'll instead advise you to withdraw from the class. Please note that absences include those days you might miss at the beginning of the semester because of late registration, as well as your individual consultation during the week of April 2. Please note, too, that **a class absence does not entitle you to a private reenactment** of the class.

I am required by The New School to take attendance at the start of class. Students who arrive **more than 15 minutes** late will thus be marked absent. Your timely arrival is appreciated. Students who are consistently late disrupt their classmates and impede our class progress.

[I have adapted the following from my colleague Amir Husak:] While I am happy to work with you to tailor the class's content and assignments to your interests, and to develop strategies for project planning and time management, I also recognize that "it is every student's right to fail." There are myriad circumstances — personal, professional, cultural, etc. — that might prevent you from fulfilling the class requirements. While I appreciate that these circumstances are often difficult, the **class requirements remain the same for everyone.**

PROJECT SKETCH + ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: Due February 4 @ 7pm

- Please submit via Google Docs (in edit-able form, i.e., no pdfs), a **~600-word, double-spaced project "sketch"** in which you (1) describe your proposed research topic; (2) explain its public and/or personal significance, relevance, timeliness, etc.; and (3) identify your desired mode of publication or dissemination (e.g., do you plan to write an article, curate an exhibition, make a documentary film, etc.?) and audience(s)/public(s).
- Append an annotated bibliography listing at least *three* related projects – mostly scholarly work, but also popular publishing and research-based media production and creative projects – that have engaged with your topic. Provide a **~150-word annotation for each**, and make sure to address the *methods* each has employed, as well as the work's value for your own research.

The following, while not meant to be *prescriptive*, will help prepare you to complete this assignment. Yes, there's a good deal of redundancy in these resources, but that's *okay*; repetition can reinforce particular ideas, and slight variations between the texts can offer different ways of framing and approaching common concerns.
- Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, "From Topics to Questions" and "From Questions to a Problem," in *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2008): 35-67.
- Earlene E. Lipowski, "Developing Great Research Questions," *American Journal of Health System Pharmacy* (2008): 1667-1670 [there are some useful recommendations here, but you needn't adhere to a hypothesis-based research model].
- Shannon Mattern, "Identifying Your Interests and Establishing a Research Plan," "Finding Sources" and "Abstracts and Annotated Bibliographies"

Next Steps:

- For your final project – and for most kinds of proposals – you'll need to provide a **literature review and/or environmental scan**, which demonstrates that you're aware of the existing resources and the nature of ongoing debate in your field, as well as how your proposed work fits in. Over the following weeks, you'll need to build your annotated bibliography and develop it into a **literature review**. See my guide on "[The Literature Review / Mediagraphy](#)," and Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, "From Problems to Sources" and "Engaging Sources" in *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2008): 68-101.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP: February 5

In our February 5 class, you'll each have **five minutes** to synopsize your project, leaving significant time for feedback.

In the days leading up to class, we'll prepare a **collaborative slideshow on Google Slides**. Each student will be allocated five slides: (1) a title slide, where you'll put your name and (tentative) project title; (2) a slide with a brief project description; (3) a slide explaining your project's significance, timeliness, relevance, etc.; (4) a slide in which you identify your likely mode of publication or dissemination (i.e., the projected *format* of your work) and your target audiences/publics; and (5) one wildcard slide, where you can include additional information or media. You're welcome to incorporate images throughout your presentation.

PROGRESS REPORT: Due April 1 @ 7pm

- Please submit via Google Docs (in edit-able form, i.e., no pdfs), a **1500- to 1800-word, double-spaced progress report** that includes / addresses the following:
  - Updated project description and research questions.
  - A draft literature review (no more than **600 words**, including at least **10 sources** – half of which should be scholarly) or, at the very least, a thematically organized annotated bibliography reflecting extensive secondary source research.
  - A discussion of the mixture of methods that seems most appropriate for your project, and why. What does each offer, and how do they complement one another?
  - A discussion of the *scale(s)* at which you'll conduct your research: global, continental, national, regional, urban, neighborhood, household, individual, etc. If you're dealing with collections or flows of media content or data, what will be the scope of your analysis? How will you sample your population, environment, or collection? If you opt for a case study, how will you choose your case(s)? What are the political implications of your choices?
  - A list of the ethical questions or concerns might you encounter in executing your project; and a discussion of how you might incorporate reflexivity into your work.

The following should help prepare you to address questions regarding scale and sampling methods:
- Barrie Gunter, "The Issue of Sampling," "Sampling Media Content," and "Sampling Cases" in Jensen, ed., *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative and Methodologies* (Routledge, 2002): 215-7, 221-2, 238-40.
- See also our supplemental resources on Sampling and Scale.

This should help you think about how you might incorporate levels of reflexivity into your project:
- Annette Markham, "Reflexivity: Some Techniques for Interpretive Researchers," *Annette Markham* (February 28, 2017).

And, as a reminder, this will provide guidance for the literature review:
- For your final project – and for most kinds of proposals – you'll need to provide a **literature review and/or environmental scan**, which demonstrates that you're aware of the existing resources and the nature of ongoing debate in your field, as well as how your proposed work fits in. See my guide on "The Literature Review / Mediagraphy," and Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, "From Problems to Sources" and "Engaging Sources" in *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2008): 68-101.

METHODS WORKSHOP: April 9

In our April 9 class, we'll workshop your method plans. You'll each have **[X] minutes** to present, leaving plenty of time for discussion.

In the days leading up to class, we'll prepare a **collaborative slideshow on Google Slides**. Each student will be allocated six slides: (1) a title slide, where you'll put your name and (tentative) project title; (2) a slide with your revised project description and/or research questions; (3) a slide summarizing the main themes you're finding in the existing literature; (4) a slide listing the methods you'll likely employ; (5) a slide describing the scales at which you'll focus your research; and (6) a slide outlining the ethical issues with which you might have to contend, and/or how you plan to incorporate a degree of reflexivity into your project.

FINAL PRESENTATION: May 7 and 14

We'll dedicate our last two classes to final presentations. The time limit will depend on the number of students enrolled in the class. More information to come.

FINAL PROPOSAL: Due before class May 14

Now it's time to compile all the components you've developed over the course of the semester into a comprehensive proposal, which could eventually serve as a thesis or grant proposal. Please submit via Google Docs (in edit-able form, i.e., no pdfs), a **double-spaced document of no more than 4500 words**, which includes the following:
- a 100-word abstract;
- a project description;

- a rationale (this is where you integrate your literature review);
- a discussion of your methodology (drawing, of course, on your methods proposal in your Progress Report);
- a production plan (a timeline outlining what you need to accomplish, and when, to execute the work);
- a discussion of your relevant expertise and experience; and
- a bibliography / mediagraphy of relevant work.

These resources should aid in the preparation of your final proposal:
- Review the School of Media Studies' ***Thesis Handbook*** to see what components are required for a thesis proposal. Similar components will be required for other kinds of proposals: grant proposals, fellowship proposals, PhD applications, etc. See also Thomas R. Lindlof and Bryan C. Taylor, "The Research Proposal," in *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*, 2nd ed. (Sage, 2002): 85-90.
- For tips on writing abstracts, see my "Abstracts and Annotated Bibliographies" and Amy Benson Brown, "Crafting Abstracts to Define Your Article's Scope and Significance," *Academic Coaching & Writing* (February 3, 2014).
- If you plan to seek funding for your work at some point, you'll find multiple guides for grant-seeking and proposal-writing. See, for instance, S. Joseph Levine's "Guide for Writing a Funding Proposal" (updated April 5, 2015), Adam Pzreworski and Frank Salomon's "On the Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applications to Social Science Research Council Competitions" (1995), and the Foundation Center's "Introduction to Proposal Writing" short courses. And of course Sage has a whole bunch of expensive books about grant-writing; you can find them in the library or request them via interlibrary loan.

Please note: if you'd like to use this class to **begin *executing* your research** – that is, to move beyond *proposing* toward *implementing* some of the methods you've proposed – you're welcome to do so, and I'm happy to provide assistance. Talk to me. Yet it's still in your best interest to spend some time developing a thoughtful, thorough research proposal, for a number of reasons:
- because you'll need to know how write good proposals in order to get your foot in the door: to get funding or a fellowship, to get accepted into a competitive PhD program, etc.
- because it's very common to underestimate the value of planning; many students jump right into execution without posing meaningful research questions or establishing end goals;
- because the time you spend writing proposals isn't *deferring* "the real work"; proposal-writing *is* research. Proposal-writing incites and frames the initial stages of your research, it provides purpose and momentum to your work, and it gives you an opportunity to get feedback – to identify bugs or ethical quandaries – before you unleash your work on the world.

OTHER POLICIES

SHARING YOUR WORK VIA GOOGLE DOCS

See the "Policies + Procedures" section of our website for more details.

DEADLINES

Assignment deadlines are clearly noted on the syllabus. In all cases, you are made aware of these deadlines weeks in advance, and in some cases you even choose your own assignment deadlines. I am also more than happy to work with you, in advance of assignments deadlines, to develop your projects. Thus, there is little reason for you to miss deadlines. Work that is late for any reason will be **penalized one-half letter grade for each 24-hour period** and will not be accepted after a week. Extensions will be granted only rarely, and only after consulting with me at least two days in advance of the assignment deadline. Deadlines are rigid in the professional world, and I expect similar conscientiousness and courtesy in the classroom.

I take your work seriously, I read it closely, and I'm known for providing substantial, thorough, constructive feedback. I set aside big blocks of time for assignment review immediately after each deadline. Missing deadlines means you miss your "window of opportunity" for review, which is an essential part of your learning in this course (and any course, for that matter). **Late work = no comments.**

A student who has not submitted all assigned work by the end of the semester does not receive an "Incomplete" by default. "Incompletes" are assigned only in extreme circumstances, and require that the student consult with me well before the end of the semester and sign a contract obligating him or her to complete all outstanding work by a date that we agree upon. Again, late work will not receive feedback.

CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS

I make every effort to map out the entire semester before the semester begins, so we both know what we're in for. Yet we may need to make a few small alterations to our schedule: we might host a guest who's passing through town, I might decide to cut a couple of our readings or substitute new material that's published over the course of the semester, etc. I will never *add to* your workload. Any changes will be noted, with plenty of advance notice, on **our class website, which will always be the most the most accurate, up-to-date "control center" for our class**. This printed syllabus is really just an administrative document.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the University's academic honesty policy. Plagiarism or cheating of any form will result in immediate failure of the course. No joke. If you have any questions regarding proper citation of sources or other academic integrity matters, consult the University Learning Center.

JANUARY 22: Introductions + Orientation

This week we'll discuss your preliminary interests, the purposes and possibilities of method, the relationship between method and methodology, the problems with methodological orthodoxies, and the new context in which research must operate – and the new demands to which it should respond.

I'll be referencing these materials in today's class; you needn't read them, but you're welcome to!

Media Research's Past + Present
- Shannon Mattern, "Mapping the Field" lecture
- We can get a sense of what's happening in a field by looking at its conference programs, its "calls for proposals" (CFPs), the catalogs for major presses (e.g., Duke, MIT, Minnesota, Chicago).

Methodological Orthodoxy
- Michael Crotty, "Introduction: The Research Process," in *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process* (Sage, 1998): 1-17. (See UMS_Methods_Sept22, 2014)
- Jane Stokes, Excerpts from "Getting Started," *How to Do Media and Cultural Studies* (Sage, 2003): 17-33.
- Chart from Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences," in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed. (Sage, 2005): 195-6.

Future of Research
- On social scientific research: Danah Boyd, "We Are to Blame for the State of Social Science Research," *items: Insights from the Social Sciences* (July 5, 2016).
- Geof Bowker, "Emerging Configurations of Knowledge Expression," in Tarleton Gillespie, Pablo J. Boczkowski and Kirsten A. Foot, eds., *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication Materiality and Society* (MIT Press, 2014): 99-118.
- Shannon Mattern, "Forms of Scholarship: Multimodal"

JANUARY 29: Method's Mission + Modus Operandi

Throughout the semester we'll be hosting and visiting scholar-practitioners whose methods can inspire and guide our own. To make sure at least one of these guests speaks to the class's collective interests, I'm inviting *you* to plan one event – on either **April 16 or 23**. Today we'll solicit **nominations for local scholar-practitioners whose *methodological* practice you find particularly rich and inspiring, and whose work would likely be instructive for many students in our class**. If you'd like to nominate someone, please be prepared to make a two-minute pitch in today's class. We'll vote and rank our top three candidates, then I (and any interested students) will get to work on the event-planning.

We'll also talk today about **research questions**, to prepare you to complete your Project Sketches.

- Shannon Mattern, "Methodolatry and the Art of Measure," *Places Journal* (November 2013).
- Brian Handwerk, "Scientists Replicated 100 Psychology Studies, and Fewer Than Half Got the Same Results," *Smithsonian Magazine* (August 27, 2015).
- For a bit of historical and cultural context to the preceding texts: Martyn Hammersley, "Methodology, Who Needs It?" in *Methodology: Who Needs It?* (Sage, 2011): 17-34 [stop at "Given this…," in the middle of p. 34].
- John Law, "After Method: An Introduction" and "Reordering" in *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (Routledge, 2004): 1-12, 151-4.
- Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Decolonizing Research Methodology Must Include Undoing Its Dirty History," *The Conversation* (September 26, 2017).

- Review The New School's guidelines on "Human Subjects Research," and particularly the "Information for Students."
- Browse quickly through my Student Resources, too. These could prove useful as you progress through the course.
- And for future reference, skim through our toolkit resources re: "General Methodology + Epistemology"

DUE FEBRUARY 4 @ 7pm: Project Sketches

FEBRUARY 5: Project Development Workshop

Today we'll workshop your proposals. You'll each have **five minutes** to synopsize your project through our collaboratively-prepared slideshow, leaving significant time for feedback.

At the end of class, we'll talk about how to build and translate your annotated bibliographies into **literature reviews** – and how that synthetic work can help you more critically assess your theoretical and methodological options. We'll talk a bit about **sampling and ethics and reflexivity**, too, to prepare you for your April 1 Progress Reports.

FEBRUARY 12: "Textbook" Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Over the next two weeks we're going to survey a wide variety of methods (and we'll even skim an entire methods textbook – aaack!). It'll probably feel like drinking from a firehose. I hope you're thirsty. (Just kidding.) Please trust that there *is* a method to the maelstrom. We start off with this expansive overview so you can appreciate the breadth of methodological options available to you and begin imagining, right from the start, which might be appropriate for your own project. Much of the material you encounter in these two weeks most likely won't "stick" until we see these tools and techniques in action, in real research projects. That's why, for the remainder of the semester, we'll examine constellations of methods *in practice*, as they're applied in various researchers' work, and as we assess how they *could* be applied in your own work. You can always return to these survey texts for reference, after you've got a better sense of which techniques might be right for you.

Interviews ▲ Oral Histories ▲ Focus Groups ▲ Surveys ▲ Ethnography (and its variants: auto-ethnography, sensory ethnography) ▲ Participant Observation ▲ Unobtrusive Measures ▲ Sampling ▲ Content Analysis ▲ Audience Analysis ▲ Experimentation ▲ Ethics

In today's class, we'll "reverse-engineer" a prominent contemporary qualitative media study.

- It's highly unlikely that you'll be using quantitative methods in your research (because we're not a quantitatively-oriented program, and because most of our students aren't fluent in statistics). Still, it's important that you're aware of these research approaches, particularly given the rise of data-driven methodologies. See Barrie Gunter, "The Quantitative Research Process" in Jensen, ed., *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative and Methodologies* (Routledge, 2002): read 209-12; skim section headings + keywords through the end.
- Excerpt from Klaus Bruhn Jensen, "The Qualitative Research Process" in Jensen, ed., *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative and Methodologies* (Routledge, 2002): 235-46 [note: you're reading only 11 pages!].
- Regardless of your methodological orientation, though, you must consider the ethical implications of your work. See Colin Robson, "Ethical Considerations" in *Real World Research*, 2nd ed. (Blackwell, 2002): 65-76.
- *Skim through* the Interviewing, Focus Groups, Oral History, and Ethnography chapters in Bonnie S. Brennen, *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies* (Routledge, 2013) to get a sense of what a standard qualitative methodology textbook looks like. Portions of the book could serve as reference material after you've chosen specific methods for your own project.
    - There are countless textbook / handbook alternatives. Sage Publications' methods textbook trade could likely sustain the economy of a small country. See, for instance, Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 6th ed. (Sage, 2016), or John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Sage, 2014) – or, if you've got a spare $165, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th ed. (Sage, 2017).
- *Skim* the table of contents of Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln's *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2017).
- *Skim through* the resources on Max Liboiron's "Action-Based Research Methods" site.
- *Skim over* the toolkits – about various methods and ethics – on our class website. You can reference these materials – and *apply them* – once you've chosen appropriate methods for your own project.

FEBRUARY 26: There's More Than One Way to [Pick Your Metaphor]

Critical Approaches (e.g., Rhetorical, Semiotic, Compositional + Discourse Analysis) ▲ Historical Research ▲ Visual and Sonic Methods ▲ Material Analysis ▲ Actor-Network Analysis ▲ Art + Design Methods ▲ Prototyping ▲Cartographic Methods ▲ Curatorial Methods ▲ Lots More Where These Came From

In today's class, we'll split into groups and propose mixes of qualitative methods for a hypothetical research project.

- **Critical Approaches:** Sara McKinnon, "Text-Based Approaches to Qualitative Research: An Overview of Methods, Process, and Ethics," in Angharad N. Valdivia, ed., *The International Encyclopedia of Media Studies* (Wiley, 2014): 19pp. Think about how you might apply or adapt these techniques in the analysis of audiovisual media (for more, see Gillian Rose's *Visual Methodologies*).
- **Historical / Archival Methods:** Mark Hampton, "Historical Approaches to Media Studies," in Angharad N. Valdivia, ed., *The International Encyclopedia of Media Studies* (Wiley, 2014): 18pp.
- **Design Practice-Led Research:** Stephen A. R. Scrivener, "The Roles of Art and Design Process and Object in Research" in Nithikul Nimkulrat and Tim O'Riley, *Reflections and Connections: On the Relationship Between Creative Production and Academic Research* (University of Art and Design Helsinki, 2009): 69-80. See also the design research of Sara Hendren and the speculative practice of Dunne + Raby.

Browse through some of the following (…*and note that this is not an exhaustive list!*):
- **Sonic Methods:** Check out the London-based "Listening Across Disciplines" Project
- **Curation/Exhibition Design as Research:** Skim Susanne Lehmann-Brauns, Christian Sichau, and Helmuth Trischler, eds., *The Exhibition as Product and Generator of Scholarship* [preprint] (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, 2010).
- **Material Object / Network Analysis**: Ann Beitz, "…meet the Tetracono': An Interview with David Reinfurt," *The Gradient* (September 17, 2017). See also Brian Merchant's genealogy of the iPhone in *The One Device* and on BookTV, and Matt Hockenberry's work on supply chains.
- **Protoyping Methods**: Gabriella Arrigoni, "Epistemologies of Prototyping," *Digital Creativity* 27:2 (2016); Jentery Sayers, "Kits for Cultural History," *Hyperrhiz* 13 (2015).
- **Fiction as Method**: Jon K. Shaw and Theo Reeves-Evison, eds., *Fiction as Method* (Sternberg, 2017); Christian Svanes Kolding, "Design Is a Method of Action: Design Fiction…" [video].
- **Cartographic Methods:** Check out my "Maps as Media" studio, and think about what we can learn about a subject by *mapping* it. Forensic Architecture uses mapping + media-making as forensic/human rights methods. Walking can be a method, too.
- **Media-Landscape / Fieldwork Methods:** Karen Lutsky and Sean Burkholder, "Curious Methods," *Places Journal* (May 2017). See also the work of smudge studio, co-founded by Media Studies faculty Elizabeth Ellsworth and alum Jamie Kruse.
- *Skim* the Table of Contents and any intriguing chapters in Sebastian Kubitschko and Anne Kuan, eds,. *Innovative Methods in Media and Communication Research* (Palgrave, 2016).

- See also our toolkit resources on "Critical Approaches,' "Design Methods," "Historical Research," "Material Artifact Analysis," "Visual and Sonic Methods," etc.

MARCH 5: Methods in Action

For the next few weeks, we'll examine how various researchers – humanists, social scientists, artists, media-makers, curators, etc. – choose and execute a variety of methods in their own practices. We'll study their work, reverse-engineer their methods, and talk with them about their methodologies and practices so that their experiences can inform our own.

Hargittai and Sandvig explain that "digital media" have transformed research by providing new means of research instrumentation *and* by serving as research subjects. The researchers at Data & Society and Ingrid Burrington, whom we'll meet on March 12 and 26, all study digital media, and they *use* digital media in their investigations. Yet their "theoretical definitions" of the Internet vary: they conceive of it variously as a social environment, a political platform, a content-delivery system, a system of protocols, an infrastructure, a geography, and so forth. Let's consider how they operationalize the Internet in their work and design methods to study it.

Planning Ahead: Today we'll discuss how we can best use our time with these researchers in the coming weeks: how can we distribute our labor to ensure that we're familiar with the breadth of their work, and that we're prepared to ask insightful, probing questions? **How might we plan our fieldtrip as if it were "fieldwork," and our visit with Burrington as if it were a semi-structured interview?**

- Eszter Hargittai and Christian Sandvig, "How to Think About Digital Research," in Hargittai and Sandvig, eds., *Digital Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online* (MIT Press, 2015): 1-28.
- Annette Markham, "Ethnography in the Digital Internet Era: From Fields to Flows, Descriptions to Interventions," in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th ed. (2017): 18pp.
- Check out Burrington's book, *Networks of New York* (Melville House, 2016) and the various articles she has written for *The Atlantic*; these projects required fieldwork and interviews and Freedom of Information Act requests. Her "Light Industry: Toxic Waste and Pastoral Capitalism," *e-flux* 74 (June 2016), on the ecology of Silicon Valley, involved fieldwork and archival research. Her 2017 Futureproof exhibition, about risk assessment and technological obsolescence, employed curation as a research method and mode of dissemination; and her Networks Land teaching materials, created in collaboration with Surya Mattu, crystallized secondary-source research into a set of pedagogical tools that were developed through user testing. She's an artist, too: she makes maps and books and pictures as means of investigating technologized landscapes. Here's her website. You'll see that she's had quite a few grants and fellowships, which means she's good at writing proposals ☺
- We'll read more about Data & Society next week – but for now, browse through their website to see the variety of work they do. You might be particularly interested in their Media Manipulation Initiative, which uses empirical research to examine "how different groups use the participatory culture of the Internet to turn the strengths of a free society into vulnerabilities, ultimately threatening expressive freedoms and civil rights."

MARCH 12: Methods for a New Machine Age

Today we're visiting the nearby **Data & Society Research Institute** so you can experience a multi-disciplinary, outside-the-academy environment for media- and technology-related research; explore alternative means of doing and disseminating research; and perhaps consider how you might someday fit into such an enterprise. **We'll meet at 36 W 20th Street, 11th floor, at 4pm**. Please arrive early; the elevator's S…L…O…W.

- Take some more time to browse through the Data & Society website. Check out the People section: what are their disciplinary backgrounds and research interests? Use the little spyglass icon in the upper-right corner to search for "methods," and see the variety of techniques they employ. Browse through their Databites videos and podcasts.
- Search *The New York Times* and other news sites for "Data & Society" to see how the Institute's work has been used in the popular press in recent months.
- Data & Society, "Data & Society to Launch Disinformation Action Lab Supported by Knight Foundation" (November 16, 2017).
- Data & Society, "Best Practices for Conducting Risky Research and Protecting Yourself from Online Harassment" (October 18, 2016).
- Henry Farrell, "How Facebook Stymies Social Science," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (December 19, 2017).
- We looked before at The New School's Human Subjects Research guidelines, but let's look again to see if are any specific rules for Internet research: look under "HRPP Policies and Procedures" → "Internet Research with Human Subjects"
- See "Digital Methods" Toolkit resources.

MARCH 19: No Class: Spring Break

MARCH 26: Visit from Ingrid Burrington

- Review Burrington's work from March 5.
- Michael Rubenstein, "Does New York Know?: A Review of Ingrid Burrington's Networks of New York: An Illustrated Field Guide to Urban Internet Infrastructure," *Politics / Letters* (November 25, 2016).
- Read Burrington's abstract for "Internet Groundtruth," which she presented at csv,conf,v1, Berlin, July 2014.
- Review our February 26 readings related to historical/archival, cartographic, curatorial, and design research methods; and skim through some of our toolkits on these same topics, as well as those addressing fieldwork and interviews.
- Annette Markham reminds us of the value of mixing methods, as Burrington does: see Markham, "Bricolage: A Keyword in Remix Studies," *Annette Markham* (January 4, 2017).

At the end of class, we'll address any **remaining questions regarding your Progress Reports**.

DUE SUNDAY, APRIL 1 @ 7pm: Progress Reports

APRIL 2: Individual Consultations

We won't meet as a group this week. Instead, I'll schedule 30-minute meetings with each of you, so we can discuss your progress reports and work together to refine your individual methodology and resource list.

APRIL 9: Workshop Re: Method Plans

In today's class, we'll workshop your method plans. You'll each have **[X] minutes** to present, leaving plenty of time for discussion. Again, we'll prepare a group slideshow in advance.

APRIL 16: Second Guest Visit

At the beginning of the semester we'll have solicited nominations for class visitors. That visitor will ideally visit us today (or next week, in which case we'll simply flip the schedule).

- Today's readings TBD.

APRIL 23: Plug-In Lesson

Today's agenda will take shape over the course of the semester, as we see what methods are proving particularly popular, what challenges we're sharing, and what gaps we identify in our knowledge.

Perhaps we'll use today to debrief after our guest visitors and field trip. Perhaps we'll look more deeply at a couple different methods or ethical concerns. Perhaps we'll try out some of the speculative activities (e.g., designing our own measures and statistics, or developing methods for non-human investigation) Christian Sandvig uses in his "Unorthodox Methods" class. We'll figure it out.

APRIL 30: On Writing

Even if you plan to engage in non-traditional, non-textual forms of research, it's still important for you to be able to write clearly and compellingly about your work. So, today, we'll discuss writing strategies and break into small groups for a writing workshop. **Please bring to class three copies of your final proposal draft**; you might not have a full draft to share, but you should have some sections fleshed out so as to elicit some helpful feedback from your classmates.

- Shannon Mattern, "Forms of Scholarship: Writing" [on voice, style, structure, process, citation].
- Howard S. Becker, "Freshman English for Graduate Students" and "Persona and Authority" in *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2007): 1-42 [on insecurities + overcoming them, revising, responding to criticism, avoiding overwriting, etc.].
- Helen Sword, "Points of Reference" in *Stylish Academic Writing* (Harvard University Press, 2012): 135-46 [on quoting and citing things].
- See the additional resources in our Writing Toolkit and reference any that seem relevant.

Today we'll also *re*-review **proposal- and grant-writing conventions**; you'll find useful resources listed under "Final Proposal" in the "Your Contributions" section of this syllabus.

MAY 7: Presentations

Details to come.

MAY 14: Presentations

Projects are due *before* class begins today.