

**Department of Media and Communications**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**abridged**

- MC4M1** Methods of Research in Media and Communications 1 (0.5 unit)
- MC4M2** Advanced Methods of Research in Media and Communications 1 (1 unit)
- MC4M3** Advanced Methods of Research in Media and Communications 2 (1 unit)
- MC4M4** Advanced Methods of Research in Media and Communications 3 (1 unit)
- MC4M5** Methods of Research in Media and Communications 2 (0.5 unit)
- MC4M6** Methods of Research in Media and Communications 3 (0.5 unit)

**Michaelmas and Lent Terms 2004/5**

**Teacher Responsible:**                    **Dr Shani Orgad**  
Room S106b, Tel: 020 7955 6493, Email: s.s.orgad@lse.ac.uk

**Lecturers/Workshop Teachers:**

Dr Nick Couldry:	Ethnography and participant observation.
Dr Gordon Gow:	Documentary research.
Ms Ellen Helsper:	Survey design/questionnaires.
Dr Youna Kim:	Interviewing; Advanced epistemology and reflexivity.
Ms Ana Langer:	Content analysis.
Mr Tim Markham:	Using computerised packages for qualitative data analysis.
Dr Shani Orgad:	Introduction; Research ethics.
Dr Terhi Rantanen:	Transnational comparative research.
Dr Maggie Scammell:	Visual analysis.
Prof Roger Silverstone:	Production case studies.
Ms Nancy Thumim:	Production case studies.
Ms Elizabeth Van Couvering:	Using surveys and SPSS in media research.

**MC4M1 or MC4M5 or MC4M6 is a compulsory course for students on the following programmes:**

- MSc Gender and the Media
- MSc Global Media and Communications
- MSc Media and Communications
- MSc Media and Communications Regulation and Policy
- MSc New Media, Information and Society

**MC4M2 or MC4M3 or MC4M4 is a compulsory course for students on the following programmes:**

- MSc Media and Communications [Research]
- MSc Media and Communications Regulation and Policy [Research]
- MSc New Media, Information and Society [Research]

**Note:** Students should note that this course outline refers in detail only to the parts of MC4M1-6 taught by the Department of Media and Communications, i.e. *Principles of Research in Media and Communications [MT lectures]*, *Principles of Social Research [LT workshops]* and *Advanced Principles of Social Research [LT workshops]*. Students should consult Methodology Institute course outlines/teachers for all details concerning the Quantitative Analysis components of the course, specifically MI451, MI452 and MI455.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

### COURSE AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### Aims:

- To familiarize students with research methods commonly used in the social sciences in general and in media and communications in particular.
- To provide students with an understanding of research design and the issues involved in collecting, analysing and interpreting data.
- To equip students to design and conduct their own research, specialising in at least two specific research methods relevant to their interests.
- To equip students to evaluate others' research within their field of study.
- To stimulate students to read widely and to integrate theory and data, thereby increasing their understanding of the role of social research in the field of media and communications.

#### Additional aims for MC4M2, MC4M3 and MC4M4 (full unit):

- To familiarize students with a range of data analysis techniques and their application, building on their prior level of statistical expertise
- To enhance students' familiarity with advanced research methods used in the social sciences in general and in media and communications in particular.
- To introduce students to reflexive and epistemological aspects of methodology.

#### Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, after attending the lectures and workshops and completing the relevant reading and assignments, students should be able to:

- Outline the major research methods used in research in media and communications and issues relevant to their use.
- Identify appropriate method(s) for researching specific problems.
- Design and conduct empirical studies using methods appropriate to the task.
- Interpret and critically evaluate research studies in media and communications.

#### Core texts for the course

We recommend that you buy one of the following texts:

Bauer, M.W. & Gaskell, G. (Eds) (2000) *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound: A practical handbook*. London: Sage. H62Q1.

Deacon, D., et al (1999) *Researching Communications: A practical guide to methods in media and cultural analysis*. London: Arnold. P90 R42.

Flick, U. (1998) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage. H62 F62.

Hansen, A., et al (1998) *Mass Communication Research Methods*. Macmillan. P91.3 M41.

Schroeder, K., Drotner, K., Kline, S., Murray, C. (2003). *Researching Audiences*. London: Arnold.

## COURSE CONTENT

### **1. MC4M1 METHODS OF RESEARCH IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS 1**

MC4M1 [0.5 unit] is made up of the following three components:

- i. ***Principles of Research in Media and Communications: Lectures***  
9 lectures x 1 hour in Michaelmas term, weeks 1-9, plus dissertation topic selection workshop in week 10). This course covers the following topics fundamental to research design in the field of media and communications: the general nature of research as social inquiry, documentary and archival research, interviewing, content analysis, visual analysis, research ethics, survey design/questionnaires, production case studies, transnational comparative research.
- ii. ***Principles of Social Research: Workshops:***  
Each workshop consists of two x 1 hour sessions, running across two consecutive weeks. Students are required to participate in a minimum of 2 out of 5 workshops (total of 4 x 1 hour sessions). See workshop schedule. In Week 10 of Michaelmas term, students will be required to sign up in advance for the two workshops they intend to attend in the Lent Term. Each workshop will normally be capped at 20 students. Each workshop will be repeated four times during the same week: Students need to sign up for one out of the four parallel groups shown in the schedule.
- iii. ***Quantitative Analysis***  
Students will take the following course offered by the Methodology Institute: **MI451 Quantitative Analysis 1: Description and inference**. Please note that this course is automatically included when you register for MC4M1.

### **2. MC4M2 ADVANCED METHODS OF RESEARCH IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS 1**

MC4M2 [1 unit] is made up of the following four components:

- i. ***Principles of Research in Media and Communications: Lectures***  
9 lectures x 1 hour in Michaelmas term, weeks 1-9, plus dissertation topic selection workshop in week 10). This course covers the following topics fundamental to research design in the field of media and communications: the general nature of research as social inquiry, documentary and archival research, interviewing, content analysis, visual analysis, research ethics, survey design/questionnaires, production case studies, transnational comparative research.
- ii. ***Principles of Social Research: Workshops:***  
Each workshop consists of two x 1 hour sessions, running across two consecutive weeks. Students are required to participate in all 5 workshops (total of 10 x 1 hour sessions). See workshop schedule. Each workshop will normally be capped at 20 students. The workshops will each be repeated four times during the same week: Students need to sign up for one out of the four parallel groups shown in the schedule.
- iii. ***Advanced Principles of Social Research: Workshops***  
Each advanced workshop consists of two x 1 hour sessions, running across two consecutive weeks. Students are required to participate in all 5 advanced workshops. There will be one workshop group.
- iv. ***Quantitative Analysis***  
Students will take the following courses offered by the Methodology Institute: **MI451 Quantitative Analysis 1: Description and inference; and MI452 Quantitative Analysis 2: The generalised linear model**. Please note that these courses are automatically included when you register for MC4M2.

### **3. MC4M3 ADVANCED METHODS OF RESEARCH IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS 2**

MC4M3 [1 unit] is made up of the following four components:

- i. ***Principles of Research in Media and Communications: Lectures***  
9 lectures x 1 hour in Michaelmas term, weeks 1-9, plus dissertation topic selection workshop in week 10). This course covers the following topics fundamental to research design in the field of media and communications: the general nature of research as social inquiry, documentary and archival research, interviewing, content analysis, visual analysis, research ethics, survey design/questionnaires, production case studies, transnational comparative research.
- ii. ***Principles of Social Research: Workshops:***  
Each workshop consists of two x 1 hour sessions, running across two consecutive weeks. Students are required to participate in all 5 workshops (total of 10 x 1 hour sessions). See workshop schedule. Each workshop will normally be capped at 20 students. The workshops will each be repeated four times during the same week: Students need to sign up for one out of the four parallel groups shown in the schedule.
- iii. ***Advanced Principles of Social Research: Workshops***  
Each advanced workshop consists of two x 1 hour sessions, running across two consecutive weeks. Students are required to participate in all 5 advanced workshops. There will be one workshop group.
- iv. ***Quantitative Analysis***  
Students will take the following courses offered by the Methodology Institute: ***MI452 Quantitative Analysis 2: The generalised linear model; and MI455 Quantitative Analysis 3: Applied Multivariate Analysis.*** Please note that these courses are automatically included when you register for MC4M3.

#### **4. MC4M4 ADVANCED METHODS OF RESEARCH IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS 3**

**MC4M4 [1 unit] is made up of the following four components:**

- i. ***Principles of Research in Media and Communications: Lectures***  
9 lectures x 1 hour in Michaelmas term, weeks 1-9, plus dissertation topic selection workshop in week 10). This course covers the following topics fundamental to research design in the field of media and communications: the general nature of research as social inquiry, documentary and archival research, interviewing, content analysis, visual analysis, research ethics, survey design/questionnaires, production case studies, transnational comparative research.
- ii. ***Principles of Social Research: Workshops:***  
Each workshop consists of two x 1 hour sessions, running across two consecutive weeks. Students are required to participate in all 5 workshops (total of 10 x 1 hour sessions). See workshop schedule. Each workshop will normally be capped at 20 students. The workshops will each be repeated four times during the same week: Students need to sign up for one out of the four parallel groups shown in the schedule.
- iii. ***Advanced Principles of Social Research: Workshops***  
Each advanced workshop consists of two x 1 hour sessions, running across two consecutive weeks. Students are required to participate in all 5 advanced workshops. There will be one workshop group.
- iv. ***Quantitative Analysis***  
Students will take the following courses offered by the Methodology Institute: ***MI451 Quantitative Analysis 1: Description and inference; and MI455 Quantitative Analysis 3: Applied Multivariate Analysis.*** Please note that these courses are automatically included when you register for MC4M4.

#### **5. MC4M5 METHODS OF RESEARCH IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS 2**

**MC4M5 [0.5 unit] is made up of the following three components:**

- i. ***Principles of Research in Media and Communications: Lectures***

9 lectures x 1 hour in Michaelmas term, weeks 1-9, plus dissertation topic selection workshop in week 10). This course covers the following topics fundamental to research design in the field of media and communications: the general nature of research as social inquiry, documentary and archival research, interviewing, content analysis, visual analysis, research ethics, survey design/questionnaires, production case studies, transnational comparative research.

ii. ***Principles of Social Research: Workshops:***

Each workshop consists of two x 1 hour sessions, running across two consecutive weeks. Students are required to participate in a minimum of 2 out of 5 workshops (total of 4 x 1 hour sessions). See workshop schedule. In Week 10 of Michaelmas term, students will be required to sign up in advance for the two workshops they intend to attend in the Lent Term. Each workshop will normally be capped at 20 students. Each workshop will be repeated four times during the same week: Students need to sign up for one out of the four parallel groups shown in the schedule.

iii. ***Quantitative Analysis***

Students will take the following course offered by the Methodology Institute: **MI455 Quantitative Analysis 3: Applied Multivariate Analysis**. Please note that this course is automatically included when you register for MC4M5.

6. **MC4M6 METHODS OF RESEARCH IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS 3**

MC4M6 [0.5 unit] is made up of the following three components:

i. ***Principles of Research in Media and Communications: Lectures***

9 lectures x 1 hour in Michaelmas term, weeks 1-9, plus dissertation topic selection workshop in week 10). This course covers the following topics fundamental to research design in the field of media and communications: the general nature of research as social inquiry, documentary and archival research, interviewing, content analysis, visual analysis, research ethics, survey design/questionnaires, production case studies, transnational comparative research.

ii. ***Principles of Social Research: Workshops:***

Each workshop consists of two x 1 hour sessions, running across two consecutive weeks. Students are required to participate in a minimum of 2 out of 5 workshops (total of 4 x 1 hour sessions). See workshop schedule. In Week 10 of Michaelmas term, students will be required to sign up in advance for the two workshops they intend to attend in the Lent Term. Each workshop will normally be capped at 20 students. Each workshop will be repeated four times during the same week: Students need to sign up for one out of the four parallel groups shown in the schedule.

iii. ***Quantitative Analysis***

Students will take the following course offered by the Methodology Institute: **MI452 Quantitative Analysis 2: The generalised linear model**. Please note that this course is automatically included when you register for MC4M6.

## COURSE ASSESSMENT

### **1. MC4M1 Assessment**

- i. One written assignment, relating to the combination of Principles of Research in Media and Communications and Principles of Social Research, to be completed by Monday 25 April 2005 [80%].
- ii. One unseen examination in the ST [relating to MI451] [20%].

### **2. MC4M2 Assessment**

- i. Two written assignments, relating to the combination of Principles of Research in Media and Communications, Principles of Social Research and Advanced Principles of Social Research. The first assignment should be submitted on Monday 25 April 2005, the second assignment should be submitted on Friday 27 May 2005 [67%].
- ii. Two unseen examinations in the ST [relating to MI451 and MI452] [33%].

### **3. MC4M3 Assessment**

- i. Two written assignments, relating to the combination of Principles of Research in Media and Communications, Principles of Social Research and Advanced Principles of Social Research [67%]. The first assignment should be submitted on Monday 25 April 2005, the second assignment should be submitted on Friday 27 May 2005.
- ii. Two unseen examinations in the ST [relating to MI452 and MI455], plus coursework related to MI455 [33%].

### **4. MC4M4 Assessment**

- i. Two written assignments, relating to the combination of Principles of Research in Media and Communications, Principles of Social Research and Advanced Principles of Social Research [67%]. The first assignment should be submitted on Monday 25 April 2005, the second assignment should be submitted on Friday 27 May 2005.
- ii. Two unseen examinations in the ST [relating to MI451 and MI455], plus coursework related to MI455 [33%].

### **5. MC4M5 Assessment**

- i. One written assignment, relating to the combination of Principles of Research in Media and Communications and Principles of Social Research, to be completed by Monday 25 April 2005 [80%].
- ii. One unseen examination in the ST, plus coursework relating to MI455 [20%].

### **6. MC4M6 Assessment**

- i. One written assignment, relating to the combination of Principles of Research in Media and Communications and Principles of Social Research, to be completed by Monday 25 April 2005 [80%].
- ii. One unseen examination in the ST, relating to MI452 [20%].

**See also section on 'Course Assessment' towards end of document  
for further details on assessment and assignment titles.**

## MC4M1-6 LECTURE and WORKSHOPS SCHEDULE

### 1. PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS - LECTURES Michaelmas Term 2004

For all students taking MC4M1-6.

**Lectures** will be held on **Mondays, 1400-1500, Old Theatre.**

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Lecturer
MT1	04 Oct 2004	Introduction [with library representative]	Dr Shani Orgad
MT2	11 Oct 2004	Documentary Research	Dr Gordon Gow
MT3	18 Oct 2004	Interviewing	Dr Youna Kim
MT4	25 Oct 2004	Content Analysis	Ms Ana Langer
MT5	01 Nov 2004	Visual Analysis	Dr Maggie Scammell
MT6	08 Nov 2004	Research Ethics	Dr Shani Orgad
MT7	15 Nov 2004	Survey Design/Questionnaires	Ms Ellen Helsper
MT8	22 Nov 2004	Production Case Studies	Prof Roger Silverstone
MT9	29 Nov 2004	Transnational Comparative Research	Dr Terhi Rantanen
MT10	06 Dec 2004	Dissertation Topic Selection Workshop	All Lecturers

### 2. [i] PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL RESEARCH/[ii] ADVANCED PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL RESEARCH - WORKSHOPS Lent Term 2005

#### [i] Principles of Social Research

For all students taking MC4M1-6.

Students taking the half unit version of the course [MC4M1, MC4M5 or MC4M6] are required to participate in 2 of the 5 workshops offered, making a total of 4 hours attendance as each workshop runs over two weeks. Research Track students, taking the full unit version of the course [MC4M2, MC4M3 or MC4M4] are required to participate in all 5 workshops, i.e. a total of 10 hours.

Students will be allocated to one of the four following workshop groups at the beginning of the Lent Term:

- **Group 1 Tuesdays, 1000-1100**  
Weeks 1,2,5,6,7,8,9,10: Room D211; Weeks 3,4: Room S018.
- **Group 2 Tuesdays, 1300-1400**  
Weeks 1,2,5,6,7,8,9,10: Room D106; Weeks 3,4: Room S018.
- **Group 3 Wednesdays, 1600-1700**  
Weeks 1,2,5,6,7,8,9,10: Room D206; Weeks 3,4: Room S018.
- **Group 4 Wednesdays, 1700-1800**  
Weeks 1,2,5,6,7,8,9,10: Room D206; Weeks 3,4: Room S018.

#### [ii] Advanced Principles of Social Research

For Research Track students taking MC4M2-3-4. In addition to participating in the basic Principles of Social Research workshops [10 hours], these students are required to attend all five advanced workshops [10 hours], i.e. a total of 20 workshop hours.

There will be only one group for these workshops which will meet as follows:

- **Tuesdays, 1400-1500**  
Weeks 1,2,5,6,7,8,9,10: Room D206; Weeks 3,4: Room S075.

## MC4M1-6 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Lent Term Weeks	Principles of Social Research Workshops 1 - 5	Advanced Principles of Social Research Workshops 1A – 5A
1 and 2	<p><b><u>Workshop 1</u></b>  <b>Interviewing (Conduct and Analysis)</b>  <b><i>Dr Youna Kim</i></b>                      Introduces students to the principles of conducting individual, group, structured and semi-structured interviews, with hands-on exercises on protocol design and implementation. The Workshop also surveys qualitative methods for analysing interview texts, using examples based on material from media and communications field.</p>	<p><b><u>Workshop 1A</u></b>  <b>Advanced Epistemology and Reflexivity</b>  <b><i>Dr Youna Kim</i></b>                      Workshop reviewing the issues concerning the status of knowledge, evidence and research design in social science research (with specific case study of life narratives, with reference to Bourdieu's reflexive sociology).</p>
3 and 4	<p><b><u>Workshop 2</u></b>  <b>Using Surveys and SPSS in Media Research</b>  <b><i>Ms Elizabeth Van Couvering</i></b>                      Introduces students to SPSS as a tool of quantitative data analysis, using worked-examples based on text-based material from the media and communications field.</p>	<p><b><u>Workshop 2A</u></b>  <b>Using Computerised Packages for Qualitative Data Analysis</b>  <b><i>Mr Tim Markham</i></b>                      Workshop guiding students in the principles underlying the use of computerised packages for qualitative data analysis, including QSR NUD*ST.</p>
5 and 6	<p><b><u>Workshop 3</u></b>  <b>Content Analysis and Coding</b>  <b><i>Ms Ana Langer</i></b>                      Provides students with example-based guidance in content analysis and principles of coding, concentrating on text-based material from the media and communications field.</p>	<p><b><u>Workshop 3A</u></b>  <b>Visual Analysis</b>  <b><i>Dr Maggie Scammell</i></b>                      Introduces students to techniques for analysing visual media material including semiotics, using a shared example made available to students via Media@lse's Web-CT facilities on the LSE website.</p>
7 and 8	<p><b><u>Workshop 4</u></b>  <b>Production Case Studies</b>  <b><i>Ms Nancy Thumim</i></b>                      Provides students with example-based guidance for conducting research of production-related case studies. The workshop focuses on aspects of accessing media and communication organisations and studying their production processes. It includes discussion of practical, substantial and ethical challenges that this kind of research might pose.</p>	<p><b><u>Workshop 4A</u></b>  <b>Advanced Questionnaire and Survey Design</b>  <b><i>Ms Ellen Helsper</i></b>                      Workshop providing training in the design of questionnaires and surveys, relating question design to broader research objectives and issues of research design.</p>
9 and 10	<p><b><u>Workshop 5</u></b>  <b>Documentary Research Methods</b>  <b><i>Dr Gordon Gow</i></b>                      The purpose of this session is to help students develop skills in finding and interpreting print and electronic documents, and major information storage and retrieval systems - libraries (and archives), computer databases and the Internet. It includes a discussion of government information structures, government documents, and especially policy documents.</p>	<p><b><u>Workshop 5A</u></b>  <b>Ethnography and Participant Observation</b>  <b><i>Dr Nick Couldry</i></b>                      Workshop on methods of field-based qualitative interpretation, including recent methodological debates about the principles of ethnographic observation and the relevance of ethnographic observation to online sites.</p>

## MICHAELMAS TERM LECTURES [Weeks 1-10]

### **Lecture 1: 4 October 2004**

#### **Introduction to Research Methods in Media and Communications**

**[Shani Orgad]**

##### **Aim**

To introduce students to the basic rationale for studying social research methods in the field of media and communications, with a focus on the importance of research methods, key decisions in the research process, and issues of research ethics.

##### **Learning Outcomes**

After attending the session and having read the suggested literature students should be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of the course structure;
- identify commonly used research methods and their key features;
- relate social research methods to research problems in media and communications;
- recognise connections between specific research techniques and wider debates about the status of the social sciences;
- demonstrate understanding of key principles and practices in relation to research ethics
- outline some of the key issues in applying social research methods to questions of theoretical interest and practical importance.

##### **Overview of Lecture**

This session will outline:

- (a) the structure of the course, including the parallel training in the Methodology Institute;
- (b) the learning outcomes, learning resources and assessment procedures of the course;
- (c) a discussion of key issues in research methodology and epistemology, the range of methods commonly used in media and communications.

The key themes of the course – the rationale for using social research methods, the relation between theory, empirical research and social research methods, distinctions and complementarities between qualitative and quantitative methods, and issues of triangulation and ethical questions – are addressed in the introductory readings below.

These themes will be placed in the context of wider debates about the nature of the social world and research in media and communications.

The session will also include an introduction to the facilities available in the Library to support social research, especially document searches and literature reviews.

### **Lecture 2: 11 October 2004**

#### **Documentary Analysis**

**[Gordon Gow]**

##### **Aim**

To introduce students to the basics of documentary and archival research as it applies to policy research in the field of media and communications. The lecture will discuss the value of documentary evidence, the range of sources available, techniques for identifying and managing documents, and approaches for conducting qualitative analyses of documentary materials.

##### **Learning Outcomes**

Following the general lecture and after having consulted the recommended literature and attended the session, students should be able to:

- explain the term 'documentary research' and its essential characteristics as a research methodology;
- identify a range of documentary sources relevant to their own research interests;
- demonstrate the ability to locate relevant documentary evidence needed to support their own research interests;
- begin developing their own document management techniques;
- identify the limits of and problems associated with documentary sources;
- demonstrate an awareness of research design issues involving documentary sources.

### **Overview of Lecture**

The lecture will begin by situating documentary research within the wider context of qualitative research methods; it will then turn to consider the range of sources available for finding documents relevant to media and communications studies; the lecture will also address the often formidable challenge of locating and managing documentary evidence and consider the limits and other problems associated with this methodology.

### **Lecture 3: 18 October 2004**

#### **Interviewing [Youna Kim]**

#### **Aim**

To introduce students to key practical, theoretical and ethical issues in the process of interviewing.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

After attending the session and having read the suggested literature students should be able to:

- demonstrate 'critical' understanding of interviewing;
- gain more confidence in dealing with practical issues;
- recognise power dynamics and make a conscious effort to reduce, as much as possible, the symbolic violence that could be exerted through the asymmetric interviewer-interviewee relationship;
- apply the critical understanding to conducting interview in the field, to become a more reflexive, sensitive and responsible researcher.

### **Overview of Lecture**

The lecture will address a range of practical, theoretical and ethical issues arising from the process of interviewing.

It will first discuss some practical issues to deal with interviewing: how to gain access ('access bargain' and strategic negotiation); managing interviewer's 'self-presentation'; interviewee's 'asking back'; advantages and disadvantages of unstructured open-ended interview (vs. structured interview).

It then moves to address some of the problematic and implicit issues associated with 'power' in the interviewing situation: interviewer-interviewee power relations; 'non-violent communication' and trust; implications of gender, class, age and ethnicity.

Finally, the lecture will consider the unintended (or intended) consequences of interviewing and ethical responsibility: questions of engagement and detachment; love and knowledge; emotions.

### **Lecture 4: 25 October 2004**

#### **Content Analysis**

**[Ana Ines Langer]**

**Aim**

To introduce students to the basics of content analysis as used in research of media (or other textual) materials. The lecture will present the applications of the method, the steps involved for conducting research using content analysis, and the advantages and challenges implicated in its use.

**Learning outcomes**

After attending the session and having read the suggested literature students should be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of the potential uses of content analysis as a research methodology for the field of media and communications;
- identify the key research steps involved in using this methodology;
- begin to develop sampling techniques as applied to content analysis;
- demonstrate understanding of the key issues that need to be considered when designing a coding frame;
- understand the basics of the coding process, and the interpretation and reporting of the results;
- identify the limitations and problems associated with the use of the method.

**Overview of the lecture**

The lecture will begin by discussing the characteristics, rationale and strengths of the method; it will then consider sampling issues applied to content analysis; the process of designing a coding frame; the coding process and reliability tests; interpretation and reporting of the results; and challenges and advantages of the method. This will be done drawing on examples of published work in the field of media and communications.

**Lecture 5: 1 November 2004**

**Visual Analysis: Introduction to Film Form  
[Maggie Scammell]**

**Aim**

To introduce the fundamentals of film form as an approach to the analysis of visual media material.

**Learning outcomes**

After attending the session and having read recommended literature students should be able to:

- Understand the basic principles of 'film grammar';
- Identify and understand the ways in which mise-en-scene, camera work and editing are used to develop narrative structures;
- Understand the differences in the film form approach compared to alternative/complementary methods of analysis (e.g. semiotics/content analysis).

## **Overview of the lecture**

This lecture will outline, with examples, how basic filmic techniques are used to develop narratives and create meaning for audiences. It will demonstrate how film-makers position audiences in relation to the action on the screen, in an attempt to create an audience point-of-view with respect to the characters and the overall narrative structure. The lecture will discuss the value of this approach compared to other methods of content analysis.

### **Lecture 6: 8 November 2004**

#### **Research Ethics**

**[Shani Orgad]**

#### **Aim**

To stress the significance of ethics in social research and introduce students to the fundamental principles of an ethical research.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Following the general lecture and after having consulted the recommended literature and attended the session, students should be able to:

- explain the significance of ethics in social research
- identify key ethical challenges and dilemmas in social research
- identify key principles of ethical research
- apply main principles of ethical research to media and communication related research
- develop an informed personal judgment regarding the moral character of a research activity

#### **Overview of Lecture**

The lecture will start by identifying the researcher's obligations to the public, the research community and the research participants. It will then review key principles of ethical research, namely participants' right to privacy, informed consent, ownership and intellectual property rights. The lecture will also discuss the use of deception as a research strategy and its ethical implications. It will then turn to consider the issue of research ethics in a more integrative way, by offering an overall framework for the development of a personal judgement of the moral character of a research activity. The lecture will conclude by discussing the meaning and importance of reflexivity, as well as new challenges facing social researchers, particularly in the field of media and communication, today. Throughout the lecture the discussion and the examples provided will focus on the field of media and communication. For example, ethical issues in research of media organisations; ethical aspects of research on media consumers; ethics in online research.

### **Lecture 7: 15 November 2004**

#### **Introduction to Survey and Questionnaire Design in Media and Communications Research**

**[Ellen Helsper]**

#### **Aim**

This lecture gives an overview of the use of surveys and questionnaires in the field of media and communications. Using examples specific to the field, the focus will be on question construction and techniques of sampling. The students will also gain a broader understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of these methods in media and communications research.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

After attending the session and having read the suggested literature students should be able to:

- assess when survey or questionnaire methods are applicable research strategies;
- understand different sampling techniques and their (dis)advantages;
- translate a hypothesis based on theory into questionnaire items;
- be able to construct a flowing questionnaire;
- identify and construct different types of survey questions;
- show an understanding of response problems and their different causes and solutions;
- have a reasonable understanding of problems in survey and questionnaire design specific to the field of media and communications.

### **Overview of Lecture**

This session will:

- (a) explain the reasoning behind using surveys and questionnaires in research;
- (b) show the basic steps in survey design;
- (c) discuss sampling techniques and errors;
- (d) demonstrate the basic structure of questionnaires;
- (e) discuss phrasing and construction of questionnaire items;
- (f) briefly address database construction.

All these topics will be directly related to field of media and communications and examples of current research will be used to illustrate problems and advantages of survey and questionnaire use.

The readings illustrate the issues discussed in the lecture and address specific examples of media and communications research in which surveys or questionnaires were used. Further readings relate to specific survey methods used in media and communications studies.

The session will refer students who are interested in further development of survey and questionnaire skills to the appropriate courses in the methodology institute.

### **Lecture 8: 22 November 2004**

#### **Ethnography, Participant Observation and Media Production [Roger Silverstone]**

#### **Aim**

To provide students with an empirically based and reflexive account of the use of participant observation and ethnographically oriented research in the study of media production.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

After attending the lecture and consulting recommended readings students should be able to:

- understand the basic principles of, and justifications for, ethnographic research in media and communications;
- understand the key components of ethnographic research and participant observation as a research practice;
- recognise the specific usefulness of such approaches in empirical research on media production;
- be able critically to reflect on such an approach's advantages and disadvantages;
- gain an understanding of the relevance of ethnographic approaches to the study of new and global media.

#### **Overview of the lecture**

The lecture will ask the following questions of ethnographic and participant observation methodologies in media and communication research:

- What are they and how do they vary?
- Why are they useful and what are their limitations?

- How are they framed and conducted?

The discussion will be informed by references to a range of ethnographic and participant observational research across news, drama and documentary that has been conducted in the field over the last 50 years.

**Lecture 9: 29 November 2004**  
**Transnational Comparative Research**  
**[Dr Terhi Rantanen]**

**Aim**

To introduce students to the growing importance of doing comparative research that does not only cross national boundaries but recognises the differences inside national boundaries.

**Learning Outcomes**

After attending the session and having read the suggested literature students should be able to:

- understand the importance of transnational comparative research;
- problematise the concept of the nation-state as the only starting point for comparative international research;
- recognise connections between specific research techniques and wider debates about theories on globalisation;
- familiarise themselves with commonly used research methods in comparative research and their key features.

**Overview of Lecture**

This session will outline:

- (a) the ways which globalisation theories challenge earlier theorization in international communication;
- (b) how theoretical changes affect our methodological choices;
- (c) case studies using macro and micro approaches in transnational comparative research;
- (d) strengths and weaknesses of different methodological choices.

**Lecture 10: 6 December 2004**  
**Dissertation Topic Selection Workshop**  
**Ms Zoe Sujon, Dissertation Coordinator, and others**

This session, chaired by the Dissertation Coordinator, introduces to students potential dissertation supervisors and their areas of research.

## LENT TERM WORKSHOPS [Weeks 1-10]

### MC4M1-6 WORKSHOPS:

#### **Workshop 1: LT, Weeks 1 and 2**

##### **Interviewing [Youna Kim]**

#### **Aim**

To introduce students to the design and conduct of qualitative interviews in media and communication research.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Following the general lecture on interviewing, and after having read the recommended literature and attended the session, students should be able to:

- decide when and how to use qualitative interviewing;
- construct a basic interview guide;
- conduct individual interviews.

#### **Overview of Workshop**

This workshop is designed to introduce students to the principles of interviewing and the issues that need to be considered when constructing and conducting interviews. Students will be given the opportunity to develop brief interview guides and participate in the interview process. Students who have completed this workshop will understand the principles of conducting interviews, the advantages and challenges of employing this method in a media and communication related research.

#### **Exercise:**

**Following week 1 session:** Develop a brief interview guide for a research related to media and communication. Conduct one interview with a relevant interviewee according to the topic guide (interviews should not exceed 30 minutes).

**In week 2 session:** each student will give a 20 minute presentation, evaluating the interview s/he conducted, reflecting on the problems and difficulties s/he encountered as well as on the interview's strong points. In their presentations students will be asked to consider what they would have done differently, were they to conduct this interview again.

#### **Workshop 2: LT, Weeks 3 and 4**

##### **Using SPSS in Media Research [Elizabeth Van Couvering]**

#### **Aim**

To introduce students to the use of simple statistical tools in media and communication research.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

After having read the recommended literature and attended the session, students should be able to:

- decide when and how to use survey results or other quantitative datasets;
- locate major publicly available datasets in the field of media and communications;
- develop basic descriptive statistics and crosstabs and be familiar with basic significance testing;

- read, understand, and critique articles in the field which use basic quantitative data and statistical techniques.

### **Overview of Workshop**

This workshop is designed to familiarise students with the simple use of statistical tools such as SPSS and the types of datasets available for researchers in media and communications, and to give the ability to read and critique simple statistics. It does not replace quantitative analysis courses available from the methodology institute!

### **Exercise**

Download the **Pew Internet Tracking 2000 Data Set** from <http://www.pewinternet.org/datasets/index.asp>. Don't forget to download the codebook as well. Crosstabulate respondent sex and frequency of Internet access (remember to add column and row percentages to your output). What is the nature and significance of the association between gender and Internet access?

Before the second session, read the Howard et. al article which uses a similar Pew dataset, as well as giving a user typology based on answers to two questions. During the second session we will review and critique the article, so please come with questions.

### **Workshop 3: LT, Weeks 5 and 6** **Content Analysis and Coding** **[Ana Ines Langer]**

#### **Aim**

This workshop will provide students with a practical opportunity to familiarise themselves with the rationale and method of content analysis, focusing on the design, conduct and analysis of a content analysis applied to media texts.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this workshop and the prescribed readings, students should be able to:

- understand the rationale and key terms for conducting a content analysis of media (or other) texts;
- outline the main decisions to be taken, and the issues which arise, during the conduct of a simple content analysis;
- demonstrate the ability to design a simple coding frame and conduct the coding process;
- be aware of the issues involved in assessing the coded data for reliability and analysing the data ready for conducting descriptive and other analysis as appropriate to the research question;
- articulate some of the advantages and disadvantages of this method of textual analysis.

### **Overview of Workshops**

In the first session, students will be provided with illustrative materials for a pilot content analysis; these materials will be newspaper articles on a particular theme. During the session, students will work in small groups and will complete the initial steps of content analysis – sampling issues and operationalising a research question through the construction of a coding frame. In the second session –and after students have worked on the sample of texts at home- we will revise the methodological issues raised by the coding process and consider the process of analysing and reporting on the evidence emerging from the content analysis. The second session will finish with a discussion of the advantages and challenges of employing this method in media and communications related research.

## Exercise

Develop a sampling strategy that enables the selection of around 15 articles from the newspaper material provided in the workshop. According to the research question chosen, develop a coding frame and apply it to this sub-sample. Reflect on the problems and difficulties you encountered in the development of the coding frame and during the process of coding. Consider in particular how good your coding frame is for answering the research question and in regard to intercoder reliability. With this in mind, reflect on how it could be improved.

### **Workshop 4: LT, Weeks 7 and 8** **Production case studies** **[Nancy Thumim]**

#### **Aim**

To introduce students to the design and conduct of production case studies in media and communication research.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Following the general lecture on production case studies (*Lecture 8, Michaelmas Term, Ethnography, participant observation and media production*) and after having read the recommended literature, attended the sessions and carried out the exercise students should be able to:

- decide when to employ production case studies, and be able critically to reflect on such an approach's advantages and disadvantages;
- decide which particular methodologies to employ within a given case study design in order best to address specific research questions (e.g. interview/observation/documentary analysis);
- outline common practical, substantial and ethical challenges likely to be encountered in carrying out production case studies, and ways of managing these.

#### **Overview of the workshop**

This workshop is designed to introduce students to the use of case study research design in studies of production. The issues, which need to be considered when designing production case studies, and the challenges, which are likely to be encountered in conducting such studies, will be explored through examples drawn from ongoing research in this area.

#### **Exercise**

**Following week 7 session:** In groups of two or three think of a research question in the field of media and communications that you think would best be investigated by carrying out a production case study. Develop a brief research design for a hypothetical production case study using a specific example of a media production (e.g. a particular television drama, news programme, website). In designing the case study consider the following issues: Why is studying the production the most suitable way to address your research question? Why do you want to use a case study, what do you expect to learn? Which methodologies will you employ and why (e.g. ethnography, interview)? Which practical, substantial and ethical issues might you face?

**In week 8 session:** Come ready to present the research design and to critically evaluate the disadvantages as well as the advantages of using this approach to address your chosen research question.

### **Workshop 5: LT, Weeks 9 and 10** **Documentary Research Methods** **[Gordon Gow]**

## **Aim**

To introduce students to the design and conduct of documentary research in media and communications.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Forthcoming.

## **Overview of the workshop**

This workshop is designed to introduce students to the use of documentary research, materials and sources available, and to give students experience in finding and working with a range of documentary evidence, such as corporate communications, government documents, transcripts of regulatory and public hearings, and other (possibly lesser known but often valuable) primary sources of public information.

## **Exercises**

Students will be asked to undertake a series of short exercises requiring them to identify, locate, study and analyze a number of primary source documents located online and in the LSE library.

There will be some degree of flexibility in the selection of documents so that students may choose from a range that is relevant to their research interests.

Specific information about the workshop for this session will be provided during the Michaelmas Term.

## **MC4M2-3-4 ADVANCED WORKSHOPS**

### **Workshop 1A: LT, Weeks 1 and 2 Epistemology and Reflexivity [Youna Kim]**

## **Aim**

The aim of this session is to extend students' awareness of current epistemological debates in the social sciences, in particular debates about reflexivity in social research.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Students who have done the suggested reading and completed this session will:

- be aware of the wider debates about the status of social research knowledge and the reflexivity of the researcher, and the range of positions taken up in those debates;
- be able to relate those debates to specific epistemological questions in media and cultural research;
- through workshop discussion be able to connect those debates with their experience on this course and in the development of their own research interests.

## **Overview of Workshop**

The workshop will, first, review briefly the range of positions on the epistemology of social science (that is, on the question of how we can know the objects on which social sciences research is based), giving recent examples of particular relevance to media and communications research; and, second (as an extension of these epistemological debates), explain the importance of reflexivity about the

researcher's own social position as a producer of knowledge (drawing particularly on Bourdieu's 'reflexive sociology'). For the practical part of the session, students will be provided with examples of social and cultural commentary from media and academic sources, and asked to analyse what objects of knowledge they assume and whether those assumptions should be challenged. These examples will then be used as the basis for a broader discussion in which students are asked to reflect on the epistemological implications of their own position as a researcher of media and cultural practice.

### **Exercise [distributed Week 1 LT]**

In relation to one particular actual or proposed piece of research\*, consider the following questions and be ready to make a brief **presentation** (5 minutes) in the workshop on your reflections:

1. What object(s) of analysis does the research assume?
2. What assumptions are involved in researching those particular objects of analysis, and how might those assumptions be contested, for example from different epistemological perspectives?
3. What are the consequences in your view for the research of the particular way in which the researcher is positioned in relation to the objects/ human subjects of this research?

\*This should be **either** (a) your actual proposed topic for your dissertation **or** (b) a published piece of research in an area related to your research interests.

### **Workshop 2A: LT, Weeks 3 and 4** **Using Computerised Packages for Qualitative Data Analysis** **[Tim Markham]**

#### **Aim**

To outline some of the objectives, methods and procedures for analysing qualitative material.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

After having read the suggested literature and attended the sessions students should be able to:

- decide when to use the different forms and tools for qualitative analysis;
- construct a coding framework and develop a thematic analysis;
- create a project within QSR NUD\*IST and set up a coding structure.

#### **Overview of Workshop**

These two sessions provide an introduction to the analysis of qualitative material. They will explore the process of interpreting interview data in particular. What is the role of the researcher? How does one go about analysing, comparing and integrating qualitative data? How does this relate to theory? What is the best software to use? The workshop introduces students to basic procedures and approaches commonly used in the analysis of interviews will focus on guiding students in the principles and practice underlying the use of computerised packages for qualitative data analysis, including QSR NUD\*ST. In workshop exercises, students will examine extracts from interview transcripts and apply various analysis techniques.

### **Workshop 3A: LT, Weeks 5 and 6** **Visual Media Analysis (Film Form)** **[Margaret Scammell]**

#### **Aim**

To familiarise students with basic elements of 'film grammar'.

### **Learning outcomes**

At the end of the workshop and prescribed readings students should be able to:

- understand the basic elements of visual language and the terminologies used in formal analysis of film;
- outline the ways in which mise-en-scene, camera work and editing are used to develop typical narrative structures in tele-visual media;
- identify, compare and contrast the formal techniques used to construct narrative themes in a selection of commercial and political television advertisements.

### **Overview of Workshop**

The workshop is arranged in three sections. The first examines the micro details of what sometimes called 'film grammar', specifically mise-en-scene, styles of editing and use of the camera. The second section looks at the use of these techniques to create narrative structures and develop characters. In the practical exercise students will analyse advertisements to identify and compare how formal film techniques may be used to develop narratives and create persuasive appeals.

### **Workshop 4A: LT, Weeks 7 and 8** **Advanced Questionnaire and Survey Design** **[Ellen Helsper]**

#### **Aim**

To outline the process of survey design and implementation.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

After having read recommended literature and attended the session, students should be able to:

- design an interview schedule;
- be aware of the problems of sampling and non-sampling errors.

#### **Overview of Workshop**

These sessions will provide training in the design of questionnaires and surveys, relating question design to broader research objectives and issues of research design. Specifically, the two sessions will review the role (indication) of the survey in social research, modes of survey administration, sampling and non-sampling errors, question wording and response alternatives and the measurement of socio-demographic characteristics. The aim of the two sessions is to familiarise students with the processes involved in questionnaire-based research through the conduct of a practical exercise to illustrate questionnaire design, administration and analysis.

### **Workshop 5A: LT, Weeks 9 and 10** **Ethnography and Participant Observation** **[Nick Couldry]**

#### **Aim**

To introduce students to various options for ethnographic research (giving particular attention to participant observation).

#### **Learning Outcomes**

After having read recommended literature and attended the session, students should be able to:

- understand the processes of ethnography;
- consider the complexities of collecting observational data;
- explore the question of 'difference' in the research relationship.

### **Overview of Workshop**

This workshop will explore the value and challenges of doing ethnographic research with the observational data collected by the students (prior to the workshop). Students will develop an understanding of what is involved in participant observation studies in terms of data collection and analysis. We will also consider the challenges of negotiating perceived differences between the researcher and the researched and how these differences may impact on the data.

## Exercise

### 1. A short exercise on evidence and observation, relevant also to work on interview exercise

At the first session students will be asked to form teams of **two/three** people. Choose **one** site where media consumption and/or production goes on, that you can each observe at some point during the week before the second session: whether a public site (e.g. a bar, or an office), a private or semi-private site (e.g. a shared television room), or a virtual site (e.g. an online discussion group).

Agree some priority questions which you all want to answer about how people behave at that site, and what observations would help answer those questions; choose in advance whether as observers you will also participate in the site or not.

Arrange to observe the site **independently** and **at different times**. You should each take brief notes of your observations (2-3 pages) and meet before the second part of the workshop to compare notes of your observations.

Be ready to present briefly on your findings at the workshop.

### 2. [for group discussion in session in week 10 LT] (total 30 minutes) Following short presentations by teams on the similarities and differences between their various observations of a particular site, and their implications for future research of that site [1 above], consider as a group what implications the observation data produced within your group have for the following aspects of the observation method:

- (a) choice of observation site;
- (b) gaining access to observational data;
- (c) techniques for recording data;
- (d) the use of observation in shaping further research questions.

### 3 [for group discussion in session in week 10 LT] (total 20 minutes) Can the following be effectively researched through participant observation and/or ethnography and, if they can, how and with what limitations:

- (a) the production and distribution of photographic news images;
- (b) the media tactics of a political party in a particular election;
- (c) a broadcaster's self-regulation procedures on compliance with human rights legislation;
- (d) online discussions by fans of the *X-Files*?

(Choose **at most two** of these topics on which to concentrate your discussion.)

**Note:** this workshop requires that all participants have done Exercise 1 in advance of the session.

## COURSE ASSESSMENT

### **MC4M1/5/6 Methods of Research in Media and Communications 1/2/3 (0.5 unit)**

**Assessment for the combination of *Principles of Research in Media and Communications* and *Principles of Social Research*:**

One written assignment to be completed by Monday 25 April 2005, to be selected from a choice of three. The word limit is 3000 words [80%].

**Choose one of the following three options:**

**EITHER:**

- (i) **Interviewing.** Identify a research question in the field of media and communications. Design an interview guide. Identify an appropriate sample of respondents. Recruit three respondents and conduct an interview with each. Transcribe at least one interview. Conduct a brief analysis of the main themes of the interviews. Report on the findings, relating these to the research question. Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the method, procedure and findings.

**OR**

- (ii) **Analysis of quantitative data.** Identify a research question in the field of media and communications. Locate a secondary data set (e.g. from Pew Internet or any other accessible source). Conduct a minimum of four separate analyses on the data set, using SPSS, using both descriptive and hypothesis-testing techniques. Present the findings clearly, using SPSS tables, charts or statistical calculations appropriate. Interpret the findings, relating these to the research question. Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the method, procedure and findings.

**OR**

- (iii) **Content analysis.** Identify a research question in the field of media and communications. Design a coding frame. Sample and collect material for coding (maximum n=30 items) from the media as appropriate. Conduct a content analysis, applying the coding frame to the sampled materials. Train a second coder to code some or all of the materials independently and calculate the reliability of your coding. Report on the findings, relating these to the research question. Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the method, procedure and findings.

In completing their assignment, students will be expected to draw on and reflect the research techniques taught in workshops, as well as broader issues of methodology and ethics addressed in the accompanying lecture series.

### **MC4M2/3/4 Advanced Methods of Research in Media and Communications 1/2/3 [1 unit]**

**Assessment for the combination of *Principles of Research in Media and Communications*, *Principles of Social Research* and *Advanced Principles of Social Research*:**

Two written assignments, one to be completed by Monday 25 April 2005, and the other (more advanced) by Friday 27 May 2005, to be selected from a choice of three. The word limit for each assignment is 3000 words [67%].

Please select two assignments from the list given above under MC4M1. **Format of assignment basically as above (i.e. either qualitative or quantitative), but students taking MC4M2/3/4 are required to show in their second, more advanced assignment knowledge of the LT advanced workshops.** This can be done in a variety of ways: in the quantitative assignment by using data from a survey/ questionnaire which the student has designed, explaining the principles of that design; in the qualitative assignment by commenting on how data could be analysed using a computerised package such as NUD\*ST or by using data from own ethnography/ participant observation or by doing thematic or discourse analysis (in addition to basic content analysis). In any advanced assignment, research track students are expected to reflect on the epistemological issues raised by that assignment and its design. [67%]