We create realities...by dubbing with titles, by naming, and by the manner in which words invite us to create “realities” in the world to correspond with them. Constitutiveness gives an externality and an apparent ontological status to the concepts words embody; for example, the law, gross national product, antimatter, the Renaissance. ...
The constitutiveness of language...creates and transmits culture and locates our place in it....

—Jerome Bruner (1986: 64, 65)

The ‘interpretive turn’ in mid- to late 20th century social sciences brought with it renewed attention to the role of language in social and political life. That ‘linguistic turn’ built on the established idea that in (re)presenting lived experience, language is not, and should not be seen as, an exact ‘mirror of [human] nature’ (to invoke Richard Rorty’s title) or a transparent referent of those experiences, but needs to be understood instead as an interpretation of them. As researchers, we ‘translate’ others’ and our own experiences into language—what Charles Taylor (1971) called ‘text analogues’ (see also Ricoeur 1971)—for purposes of analysis. Consider, for example, interview transcripts, or field notes that render persons, events, interactions, and the material world of research settings and the artifacts in them as written texts. In making our analyses, we apply a set of hermeneutic principles (or interpretive ‘rules’) that are appropriate to each linguistic genre and which have been accepted within the analytic-epistemic communities of our research fields. These days, those genres need to be extended beyond language in a literal sense—meaning research-relevant documents, whether contemporary or archival, or research conversations, including interviews—to include repertoires of visual and nonverbal ‘languages.’

But ‘turning’ to language and taking it seriously meant, and means, more than just attending to linguistic elements, whether textual, spoken or visual discourses, in everyday and other worlds. Conceptualized in the 1930s as an extension of phenomenology’s critique of “subject/object dualism and the assumption of a psychological foundation of experience” (Deetz 2003: 422), the linguistic turn was intended to go beyond looking at texts and talk to seeing how texts and talk produce those worlds. That idea rests on certain philosophical-methodological points of view, which propose that language goes a far way to constituting everyday and other social realities, that it has the capacity “to stipulate and create realities of its own,” as Jerome Bruner put it (in the epigraph).

This course will explore several linguistic genres for which analytic methods or approaches
have been developed: metaphor analysis, category analysis, narrative and storytelling analysis, framing analysis, and visual analysis (also known as ‘visual methods’, ‘visual organization’, ‘visual politics’, etc.). Each day’s session is intended to introduce one of these ways of looking at the topic, theoretically and methodologically. The readings for each session include several empirical articles or papers that use that method. In engaging each of these genres, the key questions to be asked—and, one hopes, answered—are, What work is this form of language doing for the communication of meaning; how is it doing that work; and how are we to analyze it?

We will touch briefly on language and the politics of science (e.g., 1976 articles by Richard Harvey Brown and by Joseph Gusfield), but the course will not cover rhetoric, discourse analysis, quantitative content analysis, or some other topics that might well fit under this broad umbrella. (For discourse analysis proper, see the self-standing course offered in the ECPR Methods Summer School, where a full course on visual methods is also offered. Please note, too, that some of the confusion over what ‘discourse analysis’ means includes ‘the analysis of discourses’, and some of the topics we will take up here fall within that understanding.)

References

Logistics and other specifics
The course assumes some knowledge of interpretive methodological presuppositions, including the so-called ‘interpretive turn’. We are not likely to have sufficient time to go into this background in depth. If you have missed out on these ideas, you can find them in the key readings listed after the daily schedule (see “Prior Knowledge” section, p. 13). Those students who have already conducted field research and have their own ‘word data’ to analyze are likely to benefit the most, in a practical sense, from this course, although that is not a prerequisite. Those who have not yet generated their own research data will also gain knowledge of this range of ways of looking at linguistic materials.

The course will be conducted as a mix of lecture and discussion, and students will be expected to have read several of the listed readings for each day’s session (i.e., not necessarily all of them! See note on readings, below) and to actively participate in discussion. The course is not intended as a seminar for discussing individual readings in depth, but instead to introduce a variety of methods in a way that renders them immediately usable for analyzing data. Small group meetings (‘laboratories’) outside of class sessions (meeting time
to be determined by each group) will enable participants to ‘workshop’ these various analytic approaches with respect to their own field data, whether these derive from documentary, conversational/interviewing or (participatory-) observational sources, or to delve further into specific readings.

**A note on the readings and the sessions**

The field of politics and language has a vast literature, as does each of the five daily topics. I have selected a handful of readings for each day that I consider to be key, theoretically and/or conceptually, for that day’s topic, along with others that provide interesting empirical illustrations of that topic’s use. A supplemental bibliography follows the daily schedule, for those who wish to pursue one or more of these topics further.

I do not expect you to read all of what is listed for each day, but you should read 3-5 of them. My philosophy of teaching is to treat this syllabus as a resource for you, an opportunity to be exposed to a range of literatures some of which you will read now, others of which you may draw on later as you develop your research interests and analyses and perhaps teach a course in one or another of the topics. As each of the course topics could constitute a graduate seminar in its own right (indeed, I teach an ECPR Summer School course devoted to visual methods) and as the course is intended to introduce you to several approaches to thinking about political language in a way that renders them immediately usable for analyzing data, it will not be conducted as a seminar with in-depth discussions of individual readings, as noted above. You have the option of deciding to hold such discussion in the small groups that constitute the ‘labs’ for this course.

You are responsible for obtaining your own copies of the readings, although Bamberg University’s library may help secure some of these. Please let me know by 10 February if there are readings you cannot find; we will try to get you copies of those directly (i.e., not via the course webpage, due to copyright reasons). I highly recommend not planning on getting and doing the readings the day before each class session: these are not textbook chapters, may not be readily available, and in some cases require some working through, although I try to select readings that are ‘readable’.

In the daily schedule, each session includes one or two ‘thought’ questions. These focus on what I am aiming to engage as I prepare for the class. A good way to prepare for each session is to work out your own answer to them, based on the readings and your prior knowledge.

**Course ‘labs’**

Course participants will be divided into small groups—the size of these will depend on the number of people who register—and these will meet each day after class, Monday through Thursday. Meeting times are to be decided by each group. Each group will also decide what its specific tasks will be. I can suggest two options: closer reading and discussion of 1-3 of the day’s readings; or ‘workshopping’ group members’ own data, or even draft manuscripts, using each day’s method. I am open to other possibilities. We will discuss this on Monday when we meet.

**Pre-course ‘homework’**

1. Please introduce yourself to all course members before the course begins (preferably by Wednesday, 12 February). We will use old-fashioned email for this.
2. If you have specific questions on one of the topics or the readings, please email these to me no later than **Sunday evening, 9 February**. I hope then to have enough time to revise my class plans in order to address these, before leaving for Bamberg.

**ECTS Credits**

This course carries an extensive reading list. The workload for the calculation of ECTS credits (pass/fail grade) is based on the assumption that students attend classes and carry out the necessary reading and/or other work prior to, during, and after class sessions. Specifically:

- **2 credits**: Prepare the readings for the course ahead of time, as stipulated above; attend all class meetings; participate in discussions of the readings and any other daily assignments, including 'lab' workgroups.
- **3 credits**: Active participation in class.
- **4 credits**: Taking an active role in the ‘laboratory’ assignments.

Because of the character of the course material, there are no exams, take-home papers or class projects in this course, nor is there the possibility of earning extra credit for work done after the conclusion of the course.

**Social event**

In keeping with Methods School custom, we will organize a class ‘social event’ at lunch on Monday. Based on previous years’ experience, I propose that we meet in the mensa near the classroom building. This is centrally located, based on where we will be, and will accommodate a range of diets (vegetarian, vegan, omnivorous, ...) at a reasonable cost. We will try to reserve a table for all of us, at about 12:45.

**Instructor’s bio**

I am a political/policy/organizational ethnographer and interpretive methodologist. My research and teaching are shaped by an overall interest in the generation and communication of knowing and meaning in organizational and policy settings. Current research engages state-created categories for immigrant groups, citizen-making, and race-ethnic identity; research regulation (ethics board) policies; practice studies; science/technology museums and the idea of science; and built space/place analysis. My most recent book, *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes* (Routledge 2012), written with Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, is the first volume in our co-edited Routledge Series on Interpretive Methods. A second edition of our co-edited *Interpretation and Method* was published by ME Sharpe/Routledge in 2014. [http://wur.academia.edu/DvoraYanow](http://wur.academia.edu/DvoraYanow)

**Course assistant’s bio**

I am a PhD student of General Linguistics, and right now I am writing my dissertation which is a sociolinguistic study of language shift and maintenance in Māzandarānī (a Northwestern Iranian language). Since this minority language is currently facing the threat of extinction, this study provides a snapshot of the current sociolinguistic status of Māzandarānī with an analysis of the social factors contributing to the language shift/maintenance. Having my master’s degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, I am very much interested in effective teaching/learning, second language teacher education, and the significance of sociolinguistics in foreign language education, especially among ethnic minorities and immigrant groups. At the moment I am working on Metacognitive Learning Strategies for English language learners (ELLs) and students with learning disabilities.
The ideas about language that inform this course are expressed in the following key readings. You should be familiar with the ideas they take up, although we will not necessarily engage these specific readings or their ideas in detail or in depth:

And an engagement with his essay, plus response:


Fierke, Karen M. 2002. Links across the abyss: Language and logic in international relations. *International Studies Quarterly* 46: 331-54. [an excellent exposition of Wittgenstein and explanation of constructivism in IR; most useful reading for other fields, as well]


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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Thought questions: Are metaphors just decorations [doilies] littering speech and writing? What are the implications of that view for analysis?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
Extended case example (I)

332–40. [read for the theoretical discussion]
Carver, Terrell and Pikalo, Jernej, eds. 2008. Political language and metaphor. London: Routledge, esp. chs. by Pikalo (metaphors in political theorists’ language), Yanow (how metaphors work), Cienki (on conceptual metaphor theory), Sormani/Benninghoff (on ‘scientific expertise’).
Cienki, Alan and Yanow, Dvora, eds. 2013. Linguistic approaches to analysing policies and the political. Special Issue, Journal of International Relations and Development 16/2: introduction and concluding comment, plus at least one article (by Blanchard, Davidson or Strauss).


Empirical cases


For fun


For further reading


LUNCH!

UNIVERSITY MENSA

Tuesday

Thought questions: What makes something ‘belong’ to one category rather than another? Can you think of an item that fits into 2 [or more] categories within the same taxonomy? What are the implications of that for political action [e.g., policy-making]?
| Wednesday | **Thought question:** How are narratives, seen as stories, different from metaphors and categories when these are seen as stories? |
**story-telling**


**Empirical cases**


Shenhav, Shaul R. 2004. Once upon a time there was a nation: Narrative conceptualization analysis, the concept of ‘nation’ in the discourse of Israeli Likud party leaders. *Discourse & Society* 15/1: 81-104.


**For further reading**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thursday Framing analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thought questions: Metaphors, categories, and stories are also framing devices. How do these several concepts relate? Do they? What are their similarities/differences? [If you are familiar with the social movement literature, how is the notion of frames as used there different from the notion of framing established in the policy literature used here?] And, to begin to summarize, do the previous 3 modes of analyzing political language and this one fit together? If so, how?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On analytic combinations of genres in empirical studies (2 of these are repeated from previous sessions)


For further reading: see p. 19.

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**Thought questions:** Can you generate a taxonomy of non-logocentric modes of communication that are, or might be, central to understanding and analyzing political action? How would you analyze these? Do they need their own methods?


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**On numbers [think in re. their visual presentation]**


Look at at least one of the following


Empirical cases (note the variety of genres of visual data)

[http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/2027.42/50995/1/221.pdf](http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/2027.42/50995/1/221.pdf) [accessed 19 January 2020]. [on cartoons]


*Goodsell, Charles T. 1988. The social meaning of civic space*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas [excellent theoretical overview in ch. 1; cases are city hall chambers].


For further reading

And in conclusion, for fun
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE
Some key readings laying out the conceptual/theoretical/philosophical background of the interpretive turn:


FOR FURTHER READING ON COURSE TOPICS, DAILY AND BEYOND

The basics—general
On writing as a way of worldmaking [the ‘rhetoric’ of science]
[the phrase is from Goodman, Nelson. 1978. Ways of world-making. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.]
Geertz, Clifford. 1988. Works and lives: The anthropologist as author. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. [looking at the writing tactics used in older, central works, e.g., Lévi-Strauss, Malinowski]

Related: On exhibits as worldmaking

Writing and reading as method, specifically

The basics—political science [including IR, public policy, …] and sociology

**Empirical examples**


**Linguistic ethnography**

A (relatively) new method (or a new way of describing interpretive policy analysis and related methods), developed in the UK, which articulates a perspective that encompasses the approach used in this course. See, e.g.:


**Metaphor**


Panther, Klaus-Uwe and Thornburg, Linda L. 2007. Metonymy. In Dirk Geeraerts and Hubert


**Categories**


**Narrative/stories**


Hertz, Rosanna. 2006. Stories as evidence. *Qualitative Sociology* 29: 539-43. [a comment as part of symposium on Charles Tilly’s *Why? = stories in context of writing science*]
Lejano, Raul and Leong, Ching. 2012. A hermeneutic approach to explaining and


https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol19/iss38/3 [accessed 17 January 2020].


theoretical background situating narrative analyses]


**Framing**

Bacchi, Carol. 2010. Foucault, policy and rule: Challenging the problem-solving paradigm. FREIA (Feminist Research Center in Aalborg) paper (June).


Bacchi, Carol. 2009. The issue of intentionality in frame theory: The need for reflexive framing.


**Visual methods**


http://thedisorderofthings.com/2016/01/24/arab-political-thought-after-2011-lines-of-inquiry-for-a-research-agenda/#more-12051 [accessed 19 January 2020; section 3, on spatial and other visual analyses needed]


**Cartoons**


Symposium. 2007. The state of the editorial cartoon. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40/2: 223-318, including:


Moss, Dori. 2007. The animated persuader. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40/2: 241-44. [draws on Kenneth Burke]

**Paintings, drawings, photographs, ...**


**Nonverbal communication, gestures, multi-modal communication**


**Language in the 2016 US national elections: Gender issues**

*Her opponent: A re-staging of excerpts of the 2016 presidential debates with gender-reversed casting.* [accessed 16 January 2020]


Rehearsal footage, January 2017: [accessed 16 January 2020]
**Built space**


**Maps**


**Other visual methods**


**OTHER TOPICS**
**Conversation analysis [ethnomethodological]**
Rhetoric

Semiotic analysis

In addition, Prof. Frederic Charles Schaffer’s syllabi for his politics and language courses at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst are a superb resource, especially the Supplemental Bibliography at end of the graduate course syllabus, available here: https://connect.apsanet.org/interpretationandmethod/course-syllabi/ [accessed 20 January 2020]. Note: He is teaching a course on concepts during this Winter School.