

2020 APSA Short Course

**The Methods Studio: Interpretivism and Epistemic Politics**

Organizer:

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Wednesday, September 9

1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Parc 55, Balboa Room

San Francisco, CA

**The Methods Studio** Short Course has two parts: a workshop and a “crit,” described below. The focus of this year’s workshop (Part I) is “Interpretivism and Epistemic Politics.” Following that, the “crit” (Part II) will entail focused discussion of interpretive methods in works in progress that will be selected in advance via application.

**Part I [1.30-3.45] Workshop: “Interpretive Discourse Analysis”**

In order to introduce a way of studying epistemic politics, Dr. Marcos Scauso (Assistant Professor of Political Science, Quinnipiac University) will begin by discussing a methodological difference within interpretivism. At the center of this debate, some post-structuralist scholars point out that approaches should further renounce foundational assumptions, even beyond ideas of “intersubjectivity” and/or “social reality,” to study how discourses include diverse epistemic assumptions of their own. From this methodological move, interpretation aims to include more dynamic understandings of meaning, but it can also create at least two problematic tendencies. On one side, interpretation can unfold onto a generalization of deconstruction due to the emphasis of the domination that emerges from foundationalisms and universalizations. In turn, this can be problematic if we seek to respect some forms of action, praxis, construction, and transformation. On the other hand, the construction of an approach to analyze epistemic politics can lead towards the introduction of the researcher into an equalitarian dialogue with the discourses, intellectuals, and political projects that are interpreted. If the study of epistemic politics generalizes this relationship of equality, however, how is it possible to make assertions about interpretations?

Dr. Scauso found much of his work trapped in this dilemma while deploying a particular understanding of genealogy and archival research to analyze colonial, anti-colonial, and decolonial discourses in the Andes. Hence, the workshop will discuss this difference among some interpretivists, analyzing the implications that the dilemma entailed in the study of Andean discourses and proposing a way of using this experience fruitfully in the interpretivist study of epistemic politics.

References and planned course readings

(Registered participants will receive PDF copies in advance of the short course.)

Marcos S. Scauso. "Interpretivism: Definitions, Trends, and Emerging Paths." Oxford Research Encyclopedia, International Studies. 2020.

Wynter, Sylvia. 1995. "The Pope Must Have Been Drunk, The King of Castile a Madman: Culture as Actuality, and the Caribbean Rethinking Modernity." In *Reordering of Culture: Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada in the Hood*, by Alvina Ruprecht, 17–42. Ottawa: Carleton University Press.

### **3.45-4.00      Break**

#### **Part II [4.00-5.30] "Crit": Exploring research projects**

Up to three selected researchers will present their projects, focusing on questions about the research methods they are using and/or the ways they have written their methods sections. Each researcher will be assigned a respondent who will read the work in advance, and will lead off discussion during the crit to draw in comments and questions of others in attendance such that the discussion serves to educate all. The crit enables more prolonged engagement with each research project and emphasizes supportive critique with an eye toward publication and reviewers' reactions.

To present your research for the crit, please fill out the application form and submit it to the Interpretive Methods Short Course organizer [[Rina.Williams@uc.edu](mailto:Rina.Williams@uc.edu)] by **June 1**. Selected applicants will be notified by mid-June. Open to all subfields, all interpretive methods, all levels/ranks.