

Skill Enhancement Course 01

Reading, Writing and Reasoning for Sociology

Course Objective:

Reading and writing academic prose is not the same as the performance of these activities in ordinary language, yet these are the skills that are never taught, except perhaps in tutorial systems (where they exist). Unlike most language courses that lean towards literature or functional skills, this is a crash course in survival techniques for developing literacy in academic language. It consists of a graded series of reading and writing exercises using ‘real’ texts from the social sciences that will enable students to tackle text-related tasks with confidence. There is a conscious attempt to generate synergies by mirroring the reading and writing exercises.

Through this course, students should learn how to recognize good or bad writing and should be equipped with the elementary techniques for ‘repairing’ bad or damaged prose. The course will be preceded by a workshop for teachers. Short extracts for class exercises will be culled from classic and contemporary social science texts of varying levels of difficulty and of different genres and styles. The actual set of texts will be decided at the preparatory workshop. Examples could include:

Keynes, John Maynard (1936) *The general theory of employment, interest and money*, Palgrave Macmillan, United Kingdom

Parsons, Talcott (1951): *The social system*, Glencoe III, Free Press

Douglas, Mary (1986) *How institutions think*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, New York. Romila Thapar (2004) *Somanatha: The many voices of history*, Penguin Books, India

Sunil Khilnani (1997) *The idea of India*, Penguin Books.

Louis Dumont (1980) *Homo Hierarchicus*, University of Chicago Press.

Well-known guides to academic writing (such as Howard Becker’s *Writing for Social Scientists*) will also be used where appropriate.

Course Outline:

Introduction: The virtues of repetition [Week 1]
Techniques for reading academic texts [Weeks 2–7]

Grasping the whole: How to get an overview

Divide and conquer: Taking texts apart

Getting outside help: Recruiting extra resources

How to begin writing academic prose [Weeks 8–13]

Building a structure: What do you want to say?

Working with blocks: Sections, paras, sentences

Borrowing material: Paraphrasing, quoting, citing

Final sessions: peer reviewing [Week 14]

COURSE CONTENTS AND ITINERARY

1. Introduction: The virtues of repetition [Week 1]

Academic reading and writing is really all about re-reading and rewriting – about repeatedly re-working a text until some provisional goal is achieved.

Assignment, Day 1: Read a short (1-2 page) academic text of moderate difficulty and summarize it in one paragraph (3-4 sentences). (This is without prior guidance by the instructor).

Assignment, Day 2: Re-read the same text and re-write the summary after a brief discussion of CONTENT (does the summary contain most of the most important points made in the text?)

Assignment, Day 3: Re-read the same text and re-write the summary again after a brief discussion of FORM (is the summary well structured, clear and effective?)

2. Techniques for reading academic texts [Weeks 2–7]

Grasping the whole: How to get an overview

Titles as the shortest summary of a text

Good and bad titles

Section headings (where present)

Introductions and Conclusions

Identifying important passages and sentences

Divide and conquer: Taking texts apart

Beginning, middle and conclusion – stages of argument

2.2.2 The architecture of arguments: main, subsidiary, minor

Everything is not equally important: Distribution of emphasis

Getting outside help: Recruiting extra resources

Isolating words & terms: Dictionaries, Encyclopedias

Contextualising texts with quick background research

Productive ways of asking for help from teachers/tutors

Techniques for writing academic prose [Weeks 8–13]

Building a structure: What do you want to say?

Beginning, middle and conclusion – stages of argument

The architecture of arguments: main, subsidiary, minor

Everything is not equally important: Distribution of emphasis

Working with blocks: Sections, Paragraphs, Sentences

How many sections? Job descriptions for each section

3.2.2 Paragraphs as key building blocks of academic prose

Sentences and punctuation; length, balance, continuity

Borrowing material: Paraphrasing, Quoting, Citing

The difference between paraphrasing and plagiarism

Quotations: When? Why? How?

3.3.3 Citation styles

Productive ways of asking for help from teachers/tutors

Final sessions: peer reviewing [Week 14]

The ability to judge and evaluate is a crucial skill, particularly when applied to oneself. Students will practice evaluating each other's work throughout the semester, but the last week can be formalized and stepped up into a more elaborate exercise.

Assignment, Day 1: The whole class does an individualized, two-part composite reading and writing exercise designed by the instructor based on semester long experience of student abilities and interests.

Assignment, Day 2: The reading part of the individual assignment is randomly distributed for

students to evaluate and comment on their colleagues' work. The instructor moderates discussion of strengths and weaknesses, highlighting techniques for recognizing quality (or its lack).

4.3 Assignment, Day 3: The writing part of the assignment is similarly distributed and evaluated through interactive, moderated discussion.

Note:

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Well-known guides to academic writing (such as Howard Becker's *Writing for Social Scientists*) will also be used where appropriate.

Skill Enhancement Course 02

ETHNOGRAPHIC FILMMAKING

Objectives: This course focuses on doing sociology and social anthropology through forms other than the written; , in particular, the oral, aural, and the visual.. It introduces students to film techniques as a form and method of description and argument and enables a comparison between film and the written mode as ethnography. One concern that may be pursued is how the visually challenged encounter, experience and represent the field. The course will be conducted through group work enabling a learning process between the visually challenged and the non-visually challenged.

Outline:

Introduction to Anthropological Filmmaking

Anthropology and Filmmaking: The Text and the Image

Different Modes of Filmmaking

Understanding the use of Camera in Anthropology

The Filmmaker and the Filmed: Relationship and understanding ‘ethics’

Editing and Construction of Meaning

Understanding multiple shots and camera movement

Tools for Film Editing

Filming Oral testimonies, Interviews and Interactions

Final Film Projects

C O U R S E C O N T E N T S A N D I T I N E R A R Y

1. I n t r o d u c t i o n t o A n t h r o p o l o g i c a l F i l m m a k i n g: [Week 1-2]

Rouch, Jean, ‘Conversation between Jean Rouch and Professor Enrico Fulchignoni,’ In trans. Steven Feld, *Cine-Ethnography*. University of Minnesota Press, 2003. Pp. 147-187

Hastrup, Kirsten. ‘Anthropological Visions: Some Notes on Visual and Textual Authority’ In *Film as Ethnography*. Peter Ian Crawford, and David Turton, eds. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993. Pp. 8–25.

Suggested Screening of Film Scenes/Sequences, *Trance and Dance in Bali* by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, 22 mins.

Nichols, Bill. 'What types of Documentary are there?' In *Introduction to Documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. Pp. 99-137.

Suggested Screening of Film Scenes/Sequences: *Etre et Avoir* by Nicholas Philibert's, 105 mins, 2002; *New Boys* by David MacDougall, 100 mins, 2003; *Dilli-Mumbai-Dilli* by Saba Dewan, 63 mins, 2006; *Bowling for Columbine* by Roger Moore, 120 mins, 2002.

Suggested topics for technical discussion - Understanding the Camera – still, moving, digital, analog; Shot Vs Scene; Image Vs Sound; Camera angles; How to store your data?; How to take care of equipment?

Practical Work for Week 1/2 -Familiarise yourself with your camera. Use your still camera to click photos of the same objects from different angles.

2. Understanding the use of Camera in Anthropology: [Week 3]

2.0.1 El Guindi, Fadwa. 'For God's Sake Margaret' In *Visual Anthropology: Essential Method and Theory*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 2004. Pp. 61-82

2.0.2. Suggested Screening of Film Scenes/Sequences: *Diyas*, Judith MacDougall, 56 mins, 1997/2000.

2.0.3 Suggested topics for technical discussion – Small and big cameras, tripod and hand held cameras, Understanding light; *Film maker's Dilemma* – where to place the camera?; Filmmaking – Working Single or in a Team?

2.0.4. *Practical Work for Week 3* –Camera mounting on tripod; handheld camera practices.

3. Filmmaker and the Filmed: Relationship and understanding 'ethics'.

[Weeks 4-5]

3.0.1 Spiegel, Pauline, 'The Case of the Well-Mannered Guest' in *The Independent Film and Video Monthly* April 1984. Pp. 15-17

3.0.2. MacDougall, 'Whose Story is it?' In *Visual Anthropology Review*, Volume 7, Issue 2, Pp. 2–10, September 1991

Suggested topics for discussion: Dimensions of relationship between the filmmaker and the filmed - Gender, Class, Ethnicity.

By this point, students should start thinking about topics and groups for their final film.

Practical Work for Week 4-5: Assignment on Observational Mode; Choose your partners and make filmmaking teams; Make one shot of something of your interest. Not more than 2 mins. Fixed frame, without movement. No speech/dialogues. Tripod is optional. Camera type is optional, as long as the resolution allows viewing on a classroom projector.

Viewing of assignments and discussions.

4. Editing and Construction of Meaning [Weeks 6-8]

4.1.1 Suggested topics for technical discussion: Multiple shots, understanding point-of-view; narrative building, filming a process, types of editing; Understanding space and material objects – vis-à-vis the character; Types of camera movement; Motivations behind Camera movement; Movement within the shot.

By this time, students should have decided upon their final film projects. They should start approaching respondents and rekeying locations.

Suggested Screening of Film Scenes/Sequences: *Battleship Potemkin* by Sergei Eisenstein, 69 mins. 1925; *Strangers on a Train* by Alfred Hitchcock, 101 min, 1951.

4.2.1 Suggested topics for technical discussion: Understanding editing software (Suggested software: Avid/Final Cut Pro/Windows Movie M a k e r) ;

Transferring and sequencing of data; Data Backup before editing; Viewing footage; Transcription and Paper Edits.

4.2.4. *Practical Work for Week 6-9:* Assignment on Process film; 3 mins; Film anactivity; Include camera movement; Break it down in stages - beginning, middle and end; Understand the cause and effect; Focus only on (i) the person (ii) the activity; editing the process film.

4.2.3. Viewing of assignments and discussions.

5. Filming Oral Testimonies, Interviews and Interactions [Weeks 9-10]

Suggested Screening of Film Scenes/Sequences: *Chronicle of a Summer* by Edgar Morin, Jean Rouch, 85 min, 1961.

Suggested topics for technical discussion: Sound and audio equipment.

Practical Work for Week 9-10: Film an oral testimony, with maximum 2 people; Length, no more than 5 minutes; Focus on Interaction; Location is optional

Viewing of assignments and discussions.

6. Final Film Projects [Weeks 11-14]

Film length limited to 5 - 8 mins.

Viewing of projects and discussion.

Note: This course will require a special budget for the purchase/hiring of equipment and for honorarium to technical resource persons.

Suggested Readings:

Heider, Karl G. *Ethnographic Film*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006

MacDougall, David. 'Ethnographic Film: Failure and Promise', *Annual Review of Anthropology* Vol. 7, pp. 405-425

