Short Course @ APSA 2017

**Interpretive Methodology in a Post-Fact World:**

**The Methods Studio—Workshop, followed by “Crit”**

FINAL PROGRAM [w/ readings as of 24 August 2017]

Wednesday, August 30, 1.30-5.30 p.m., San Francisco; **Union Square 3 & 4**, Hilton Union Square

Sponsored by the **Interpretive Methodologies & Methods Conference-related Group @ APSA**

**Organizers:**

Dvora Yanow, Wageningen University (NL) Dvora.Yanow@wur.nl
Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, University of Utah psshea@poli-sci.utah.edu

**Part I [1.30-3.30] Workshop: Interpretive Methodology in a Post-Fact World**

Post-fact America. Climate change denial. Holocaust denial. Relativism. Post-modernism. Are interpretive ways of seeing and thinking in danger? Are interpretive methods likely to be misconstrued more than they already are and branded as contributing to the “truthiness” of events, etc. in a post-fact world? Interpretive methodologies have long insisted on the centrality of multiple ways of experiencing social realities and, at the same time, have emphasized the historically contingent, intersubjectively constructed character of facts. Those first learning about interpretive research are already often uneasy and nervous about research and researchers using social constructionist and related hermeneutic-phenomenological-critical approaches to studying social and political realities. Are these approaches now even more likely to come under attack, in an era in which what counts as evidence is itself being dismissed? Evidence, logic, and consistency of argument are not faring well—even when the facts have been produced in keeping with positivist scientific presuppositions. And anyways, isn’t talking about “facts” positivist? These and other questions will be the focus of this workshop.

Workshop leaders

Renee Cramer (Law and Society), Drake University

Ido Oren (IR), University of Florida

Frederic Schaffer (Comparative), University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Dvora Yanow (Public Policy, Organizational Studies), Wageningen University (NL), chair

Suggested readings

Amsterdamska, Olga. 1990. Surely you are joking, Monsieur Latour. Review of *Science in Action*. *Science Technology Human Values* 15/4: 495-504.

Arendt, Hannah. 1967. Truth and politics. *The New Yorker* (February 25), 49 ff.  Reprinted in Hannah Arendt (1968), *Between past and future.*New York City: Penguin Classics, 223-60; and David Wood and Jose Medina, eds. (2005), *Truth: Engagements across philosophical traditions.* Wiley-Blackwell, 295-315.

Deresiewicz, William. 2017. In defense of facts. *The Atlantic* (January). <[www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/01/in-defense-of-facts/508748/#article-comments?utm\_source=twb](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/01/in-defense-of-facts/508748/#article-comments?utm_source=twb)>.

Fish, Stanley. 2017. Don’t blame Nietzsche for Donald Trump. *Foreign Policy* (August 9). <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/08/09/dontblamenietzschefordonaldtrump/>

Gessen, Masha. 2017. Trump: The choice we face. *New York Review of Books* (November 27). <[www.nybooks.com/daily/2016/11/27/trump-realism-vs-moral-politics-choice-we-face/](http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2016/11/27/trump-realism-vs-moral-politics-choice-we-face/)>.

Gusfield, Joseph R. 2003. A journey with symbolic interaction. *Symbolic Interaction* 26 (1): 119-39.

Latour, Bruno. 2004. Why has critique run out of steam? From matters of fact to matters of concern. *Critical Inquiry* 30/2: 225-48.

La Caze, Margeurite. 2017. It’s easier to lie if you believe it yourself: Derrida, Arendt, and the modern lie. *Law, Culture, Humanities* 13/2: 193-210.

**3.30-3.50 Break**

**Part II [3.50-5.30] “Crit”: Exploring research projects** [open topic]

This part of the Methods Studio adapts what is known in architectural teaching and practice as a “crit.” Three researchers, selected in advance through application, will present their projects, focusing on questions about the research methods they are using and/or the ways they have written their methods sections. A group of experienced researchers from a range of subfields and interpretive methods backgrounds will lead off the responses to the questions, but the intention is to draw also on the comments and questions of others in attendance, such that the discussion serves to educate all. Like the Methods Café, the Crit entails teaching and learning through discussion and example, rather than through lecture; unlike the Café, the Crit enables more focused engagement with the issues raised by each presented research project, emphasizing supportive critique with an eye toward publication and reviewers’ reactions.

**Crit leaders**

Samantha Majic, CUNY [interviewing, participant observation; sex work, policy, American politics]

Sarah Marusek, University of Hawai’i Hilo [visual methods, legal geography, legal semiotics; Law and Society]

Timothy Pachirat, University of Massachusetts, Amherst [ethnography; Comparative] [TBC]

Denise Walsh, University of Virginia [frame analysis; gender, democracy, Comparative]

Plus workshop staff, organizers, and others attending.

**Presenters**

Taylor McDonald, Ph.D. student, University of Florida

Canadian parliamentary rhetoric and foreign policy decisions surrounding the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq: politicians in foreign policy debates constructing national identity and how it functions, versus what Canadians *believe* defines their national identity; discourse analysis of debate transcripts, genealogical survey of the history of “rhetorical commonplaces” (PT Jackson)

Osha Smith-Gittelman, Ph.D. student, CUNY Graduate Center

What publicly disseminated claims by nonstate armed groups (e.g., cartels, gangs, and militias) reveal about the role of violence in regulating illicit activity in Mexico; visual documents, video postings, interviews; questions concern knowledge claims based on textual and visual materials of unverifiable authorship, and drawing inferences about practices from such materials

Farah Godrej, Associate Professor, University of California, Riverside

Uses of South Asian yogic/meditative traditions within the context of mass incarceration in the US; in-depth semi-structured interviews, content analysis, and “observant participation”; questions concerning dual positionality as scholar *and* practitioner, researcher *and* volunteer; ethical questions concerning access to and research within incarceration contexts

**~6.00 p.m. Drinks @ Bar 587 lounge**

**587 Post St., San Francisco, CA 94102** 415-817-1712

<http://www.bar587.com/welcome-pacific/>

[Hilton is @ O’Farrell X Taylor; walk 2 blocks up Taylor (past Geary), turn R on Post > # 587 on rt.]