

## **JOUR J6910.001 EVIDENCE & INFERENCE**

TRTR 02:30P-04:00P, FALL 2008

JOURNALISM B 607B

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### Course Objectives

Evidence and Inference is one of the core components of the Master of Arts in journalism. It includes guest appearances by members of the Columbia community and others, including Melissa Harris, Tory Higgins, Kenneth Prewitt, Sudhir Venkatesh, Mary Marshall Clark, and Jessica Ancker.

### Equipment

Several of the assignments require digital cameras or recorders, so that you can upload your material on the site. You should all have signed an Equipment Use Agreement form during your introduction that gives you access to the school's extensive collection of equipment (on a first-come, first-serve basis). The equipment room is on the fifth floor, and you can take things out for 24 hours.

### **Session 1**

Tuesday - September 02, 2008

Topic:

Course Introduction

Class Plan:

No reading.

### **Session 2**

Thursday - September 04, 2008

Topic:

The Assignments

Class Plan:

Guests: Mary Marshall Clark (Columbia), Melissa Harris (Aperture Magazine), Sudhir Venkatesh (Columbia). No readings this week.

### **Session 3**

Tuesday - September 09, 2008

Topic:

Journalism and Epistemology

Required Readings:

# Francis Bacon, "The New Organon" : (selections from Francis Bacon. The New Organon. Lisa Jardine & Michael Silverthorne, Eds. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

# Plato, "Simile of the Cave" : (from Plato. The Republic. Desmond Lee, Translator. New York: Penguin Books, 2003)

# Michael R. Gordon & Judith Miller, "U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Parts" : (from The New York Times, September 8, 2002)

### **Session 4**

Thursday - September 11, 2008

Topic:

The Perils of Narrative (Evan Cornog)

Required Readings:

# W.G. Sebald, "Air War and Literature" : (pp. 1-104 from W. G. Sebald. On the Natural History of Destruction. New York, Random House. Available at the Columbia University Bookstore)

# Jerone Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality" : (from Critical Inquiry, Vol. 18, No. 1. (Autumn, 1991), pp. 1-21. Available here)

### **Session 5**

Tuesday - September 16, 2008

Topic:

The Perils of Framing (Nicholas Lemann)

Required Readings:

# Louis Uchitelle and David Leonhardt, "Men Not Working and Not Wanting Just Any Job" : (from The New York Times, July 31, 2006)

# George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People" : (speech given on September 20, 2001)

# George Lakoff, "War on Terror, Rest in Peace" : (from the Rockridge Institute website)

Assignments Due:

# 1. Photo

### **Session 6**

Thursday - September 18, 2008

Topic:

Visual Misperception (Melissa Harris)

Required Readings:

# Richard Whelan, "Robert Capa's Falling Soldier" : (from Aperture, Issue 166. Available here)

# David Levi-Strauss, "Photography and Belief" : (from Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics. New York: Aperture, 2003. Available here)

### **Session 7**

Tuesday - September 23, 2008

Topic:

People as Scientists (Tory Higgins)

Required Readings:

# Fritz Heider, "Sentiment," : (Chapter 7 in The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations, p. 174-217, Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1982. Available here)

# E. Tory Higgins, "The Aboutness Principle: a Pervasive Influence on Human Inference" : (from Social Cognition, Volume 16, pp. 173-198. Available here)

# Leon Festinger, "An Introduction to the Theory of Dissonance" : (Chapter 1 in A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, p. 1-31, Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1962. Available here)

# Katherine E. Finkelstein, "45 Arrested in a Protest Against Capitalism" : (from the New York Times, November 27, 1999)

### **Session 8**

Thursday - September 25, 2008

Topic:

People as Faulty Computers (Tory Higgins)

Required Readings:

# Walter Kirn, "When All The Lines Disappear" : (from Time Magazine, Monday, April 13, 2004)

# E. Tory Higgins, "Value From Regulatory Fit" : (from Current Directions in Psychological Science, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 209-213, 2005. Available here)

### **Session 9**

Tuesday - September 30, 2008

Topic:

What Really Motivates People? (Tory Higgins)

Required Readings:

# E. Tory Higgins and Thane S. Pittman, "Motives of the Human Animal: Comprehending, Managing, and Sharing Inner States" : (from Annual Review of Psychology, Vol. 59, 2008. Available here)

# Gardiner Harris and Anahad O'Connor, "On Autism's Cause, It's Parents vs. Research" : (from the New York Times, June 25, 2005)

# Carolyn Kleiner, "Getting in gets harder" : (from the US News and World Report, May 22, 2005)

### **Session 10**

Thursday - October 02, 2008

Topic:

The Search for Truth (Kenneth Prewitt)

Required Readings:

# Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation" : (a lecture given in German in 1918 at Munich University. Available here)

# Maggie Jones, "Shutting Themselves In" : (from The New York Times Magazine, January 15, 2006)

# William K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief" : (originally published in Contemporary Review in 1877. Reprinted in Lectures and Essays (1879). Presently in print in The Ethics of Belief and Other Essays (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1999)

### **Session 11**

Tuesday - October 07, 2008

Topic:

Hypotheses (Kenneth Prewitt)

Required Readings:

# Karl Popper, "Science as Falsification" : (originally published in *Conjectures and Refutations*, 1963)

# Stephen Van Evera, "Hypothesis, Laws, and Theories" : (chapter 1 from *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997. Available here)

# Larry Rohter, "In the Amazon: Conservation or Colonialism?" : (from *The New York Times*, July 27, 2007.)

Recommended Readings:

# *A System of Logic* by John Stuart Mill :

# *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* by David Hume :

### **Session 12**

Thursday - October 09, 2008

Topic:

Study Design (Kenneth Prewitt)

Required Readings:

# Steve Suo, "Unnecessary Epidemic" : (from *The Oregonian*, Sunday, October 3, 2004. Available here)

# Angela Valdez, "Meth Madness" : (from *Willamette Week*, March 22, 2006. Available here)

# Robert K. Merton, "The Sociology of Science" : (Chapter 13 and Chapter 14 from *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Available here)

# Stephen Jay Gould, "The Median Is Not the Message. :

### **Session 13**

Tuesday - October 14, 2008

Topic:

Causation and Correlation (Kenneth Prewitt)

Required Readings:

# Emile Durkheim, "Suicide" : (read Book Two-on the various types of suicide and their social causes-pp. 152-216 in the the Glencoe, Ill: Free Press 1951-edition. It is on reserve in the Butler Library (room 208). Call number HV6545.D812 1951)

# Shankar Vedantam, "Male Scientist Writes of Life as Female Scientist" : (from *The Washington Post*, July 13, 2006)

# Marcella Bombardieri, "Neuroscientist, Once a Woman, Says He Saw Gender Bias Firsthand" : (from *The Boston Globe*, July 13, 2006)

# Gadenne, "Causation (Theories & Models): Policy Aspects" : (from the *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 3, pp. 1561-7. Available here)

# Philip Tetlock, "Counterfactual Reasoning: Public Policy Aspects" : (from the International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Vol. 4, pp. 12864-9. Available here)

# David Rohde and David E. Sanger, "Losing the Advantage: How a 'Good War' in Afghanistan Went Bad" : (from The New York Times, Aug 12, 2007)

Assignments Due:

# 2. Ethnography

### **Session 14**

Thursday - October 16, 2008

Topic:

Expertise and Objectivity (Nicholas Lemann)

Required Readings:

# Lorraine Daston, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective" : (from Social Studies of Science, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 597-618, 1992. Available here)

# David Hollinger, "What Does it Mean to be 'Balanced' in Academia?" : (from the History News Network)

# Jacques Steinberg, "Fight in Philadelphia Over Schools Takeover" : (from The New York Times, Nov 15, 2001)

# Jacques Steinberg and Diana B. Henriques, "Complex Calculations on Academics" : (from The New York Times, July 16, 2002)

### **Session 15**

Tuesday - October 21, 2008

Topic:

Participant Observation (Sudhir Venkatesh)

Required Readings:

# Interview with Adrian Nicole LeBlanc : (from The New New Journalism, edited by Robert S. Boynton, New York, Vintage Books, 2005)

# Adrian Nicole LeBlanc, "Random Family" : Read Part One and skim Part Two of Adrian Nicole LeBlanc's Random family : love, drugs, trouble, and coming of age in the Bronx. New York: Scribner, 2003. The book is on reserve at the Journalism library, Barnard College Library, and the Social Work library.

### **Session 16**

Thursday - October 23, 2008

Discussion Sessions/Assignments

### **Session 17**

Tuesday - October 28, 2008

Topic:

Ethnographic Interviewing (Sudhir Venkatesh)

Required Readings:

# Mitchell Duneier, "A Statement on Method" : (from his Sidewalk. New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999. Available here)

# Chicago Interview Notes, Sudhir Venkatesh : (class handout)

### **Session 18**

Thursday - October 30, 2008

Topic:

Categories (Sudhir Venkatesh)

Required Readings:

# Sudhir Venkatesh, "Off the Books" : (excerpts from Off the books : the underground economy of the urban poor. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Available here)

# Adam Sternbergh, "Up With Grups" : (from New York Magazine, March 30, 2006)

Assignments Due:

# 3. Oral History

### **Session 19**

Tuesday - November 04, 2008

Topic:

The Evidence of Oral History Stories (Mary Marshall Clark)

Required Readings:

# Ronald Grele, "Oral History Interviewing: The Good Interview" : (manuscript from the Columbia Oral History Office. Available here)

# Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different" : (chapter from his The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and other stories : form and meaning in oral history. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1991. Available here)

# Alessandro Portelli, "Oral History as Genre" : (chapter from his The Battle of Valle Giulia. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997. Available here)

### **Session 20**

Thursday - November 06, 2008

Topic:

Interpreting Historical Memory: From Anecdote to Analysis (Mary Marshall Clark)

Class Plan:

The class will discuss the readings on interpreting historical and public memory. For those few who may have completed their interviews, we will draw upon examples to discuss in class.

Assignments:

We will spend the last 15 minutes of the class in groups of four, each consisting of two interviewing teams to discuss interviews completed, strategies for presenting findings in the last class session.

Required Readings:

# Alessandro Portelli, "Memory and Event" : (chapter from his The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and other stories : form and meaning in oral history. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1991. Available here)

# Alistair Thomas, "Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia" : (from The Oral History Reader, edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. London; New York: Routledge, 2006. Available here)

### **Session 21**

Tuesday - November 11, 2008

Topic:

Interpretation & Presentation (Mary Marshall Clark)

Class Plan:

Each group of four will have 5 minutes to present on the two interviews that were produced. Professor Clark, and a colleague Amy Starecheski, will offer feedback on each group's work by listening and reflecting on all 22 interviews produced. The goal of this session is to explore common ground across disciplinary approaches to interviewing and historical documentation; as well as feedback on individual interviewing techniques.

### **Session 22**

Thursday - November 13, 2008

Topic:

Study Types and Descriptive Statistics (Jessica Ancker)

Additional material:

U.S. Census household income data handout ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)).

Required Readings:

# Alex Berenson, "Eli Lilly Said To Play Down Risk of Top Pill" : (from The New York Times, Dec. 17, 2006)

# Thomas H. McGlashan et al. Randomized, double-blind trial of olanzapine" : (full title, "Randomized, double-blind trial of olanzapine versus placebo in patients prodromally syndromic for psychosis". From American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 163, No. 5. pp. 790-799, 2006. Available [here](#))

# Milt Freudenheim, "Merck and Vioxx: The company; A blow to efforts to close in on rivals" : (from the New York Times, Oct. 1, 2004)

### **Session 23**

Tuesday - November 18, 2008

Topic:

Confidence Intervals and Margin of Error (Jessica Ancker)

Additional Material:

Hurricane Rita gif (from [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)) as example of confidence interval/margin of error.

Required Readings:

# Jack Rosenthal, "Precisely False vs. Approximately Right: A reader's guide to polls" : (from The New York Times, August 27, 2006)

# Andrew Kohut, "Getting it wrong" : (from The New York Times. January 10, 2008)

### **Session 24**

Thursday - November 20, 2008

Topic: Archival Work (Jean Ashton)

This class will be held at the New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West.

There are no readings assigned for this class.



**Session 25**

Tuesday - November 25, 2008

Topic:

Literature Reviews and Conflicting Sources (Nicholas Lemann and Evan Cornog)

Class Plan:

The readings are from "Mississippi in 1875. Report of the Select committee to inquire into the Mississippi election of 1875."

The document is available online through the Columbia Library System. Go to the Library website, go to CLIO (the catalog), and do a title search for "Mississippi in 1875." This will pull up an online version, which resides at the University of Michigan, of a very long government report. The readings are both in Volume 2--pages 1021-1045 (Testimony of J.W. Lee) and pages 1050-1086 (Testimony of Reuben Davis).

Alternatively, use the word documents below. They are created from old archival material, so the format is not particularly user-friendly.

Cristina Ergunay, the Journalism School Librarian, will join us for this session.

Files:

# Testimony of J.W. Lee

# Testimony of Reuben Davis

**Session 26**

Tuesday - December 02, 2008

Topic:

Milwaukee Case Study (Nicholas Lemann and Evan Cornog)

Class Plan:

(readings to come)

Assignments Due:

Archive/scholarly assignment due.

Assignments Due:

# 4. Archive/scholarly

**Session 27**

Thursday - December 04, 2008

Topic:

On Maps and Images (Jean Ashton)

Class Plan:

There are no readings assigned for this class.

### **Session 28**

Tuesday - December 09, 2008

Topic:

Basic Statistical Testing (Jessica Ancker)

Required Readings:

# Jessica S. Ancker, "Types of Medical and Epidemiological Research Studies" : (from Jessica S. Ancker, "Statistics for Writers", unpublished manuscript. Available here)

# Sir Austin Bradford Hill, "The Environment and Disease: Association or Causation" : (from the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine, pp. 295-300, 1965. Available here)

# Jessica S. Ancker, "What a Sample Can Tell Us About the World" : (from Jessica S. Ancker, "Statistics for Writers", unpublished manuscript. Available here)

### **Session 29**

Thursday - December 11, 2008

Topic:

Risk, Chance, and Probability (Jessica Ancker)

Class Plan:

Please read Gary Stoller's USA Today article, then look at the abstract of the Mangano article it was based on (also see if you can locate the data Stoller talks about, on page 42 of Mangano). Also, take a look through the systematic review about vitamin C. Focus especially on the methods used to draw the conclusions.

Assignments Due:

Stats assignment due.

Required Readings:

# RM Douglas et al, "Vitamin C for Preventing and Treating the Common Cold (review)" : (from Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, No. 3, 2007. Available here)

# Gary Stoller, "Baby teeth offer radioactive clues" : (from USA Today, January 2, 2006)

# Joseoh J. Mangano et al, "An unexpected rise in strontium-90 in US deciduous teeth in the 1990s" : (from Science of the Total Environment, Vol. 317, pp. 37-51, 2003.

Available here)

### **Session 30**

Tuesday - December 16, 2008

Topic:

Regression and Correlation (Jessice Ancker)

Class Plan:

(to come)

### **Session 31**

Thursday - December 18, 2008

Topic:

Final Session (Nicholas Lemann, Evan Cornog)

There are no readings assigned for this class.