

## Advanced Methods of Interpretation in Cultural Sociology

Title	Lecture (CSON4003)	Seminar (CSO4004)
<b>Course description</b>	The lecture gives the students an overview over theories, methods and techniques of interpretation important for qualitative social research and cultural sociology. The first half deals with the fundamentals of interpretation, whereas the second half is devoted to different areas of research and specific methodological instruments. The lecture concludes with a written test, which consists of a question-and-answer part as well as an interpretation exercise as practical part.	The bi-weekly seminar accompanies the lecture with additional readings and interpretation exercises. Students should bring empirical material for discussion and interpretation from their own research projects. If there is no student material for a session, we will discuss fundamental texts and case studies instead. At the end of the course, students have to submit an interpretation essay as final paper.
<b>Course objectives</b>	Upon successful completion of the course, students should have a broad knowledge in methodology and methods of interpretation used in cultural sociology and related fields. Students should be able to deliver sociological interpretations of images and texts, including interviews and media discourses.	Upon successful completion of the seminar, students should have a deeper understanding of interpretation methods in cultural sociology and related fields. Furthermore, students will have gathered first-hand practical experiences with the interpretation of images and texts, which is important with regard to future qualitative research projects (e.g., MA thesis).
	Regular attendance and a written test based on the lecture and the obligatory readings.	Registration and attendance of the lecture (CSON4003), participation in class and the submission of an interpretation protocol and a successful final paper.
<b>Assessment Methods</b>	1. Written test (90%): 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 50-59 = E, 0-49 = F 2. Participation in the lecture, for example through comments and questions (10%)	1. Participation in class (20%) 2. Interpretation protocol (20%) 3. Final paper (60%)
<b>ECTS points</b>	12	10

<b>I</b>	<b>What is Interpretation? (20.2)</b>	
Required Readings	<p>Geertz, Clifford (2006): "Thick Description: Towards an Interpretative Theory of Culture". In: <i>The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays</i>. New York: Basic Books, 3-30.</p> <p>Reed, Isaac (2011): "Knowledge". In: <i>Interpretation and Social Knowledge. On the Use of Theory in the Human Sciences</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 15-38.</p>	
Additional Readings	<p>Eco, Umberto: (1992): <i>Interpretation and Overinterpretation</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Taylor, Charles (1985): "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man". In: <i>Philosophical Papers 2. Philosophy and the Human Sciences</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 15-57.</p> <p>Weber, Max (1978): <i>Economy and Society. Outline of an Interpretative Sociology</i>. Berkeley: University of California Press, 3-26.</p>	
<b>II</b>	<b>On Methodology (27.2)</b>	<b>Seminar I (26.2)</b>
Required Readings	<p>Thornberg, Robert &amp; Kathy Charmaz (2014): "Grounded Theory and Theoretical Coding". In: Flick, Uwe (ed.), <i>The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis</i>. London; Thousand Oaks: Sage, 153-169.</p> <p>Timmermans, Stefan &amp; Iddo Tavory (2012): "Theory Construction in Qualitative Research from Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis". In: <i>Sociological Theory</i> 30(3), 167-186.</p>	Interpretation session with student material.
Additional Readings	<p>Abbott, Andrew (2004): <i>Methods of Discovery. Heuristics for the Social Sciences</i>. New York; London: Norton.</p> <p>Glaser, Barney G. &amp; Anselm L. Strauss (2006): <i>The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research</i>. New Brunswick; London: Aldine Transaction.</p> <p>Peirce, Charles Sanders (1998): "Pragmatism as the Logic of Abduction". In: <i>The Essential Peirce. Selected Philosophical Writings (1893 - 1913)</i>. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 226-241.</p> <p>Weber, Max (1949): "'Objectivity' in Social Sciences and Social Policy". In: <i>The Methodology of Social Sciences</i>. Glencoe: Free Press, 49-112.</p>	
<b>III</b>	<b>Understanding: Phenomenological Hermeneutics (4.3) / C. Szaló</b>	
Required Readings	<p>Ricoeur, Paul (2007): "The Task of Hermeneutics". In: <i>From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics II</i>. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 53-74.</p> <p>Soeffner, Hans-Georg (2004): "Social Scientific Hermeneutics". In: Steinke, Ines, Ernst von Kardoff &amp; Uwe Flick (eds.): <i>A Companion to Qualitative Research</i>. London: Sage, 95-100.</p>	



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Additional Readings	<p>Palmer, Richard E. (1973): "Phenomenology as Foundation for a Post-Modern Philosophy of Literary Interpretation." <i>Cultural Hermeneutics</i> 1 (1):207–223.</p> <p>Dilthey, Wilhelm (1990): "The Human Studies". In: Jeffrey C. Alexander &amp; Steven Seidman (eds.): <i>Culture and Society. Contemporary Debates</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 31-38.</p> <p>Gadamer, Hans-Georg (2006): <i>Truth and Method</i>. New York: Continuum.</p>	
Case Studies	<p>Weber, Max (2001): <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i>. London, New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Geertz, Clifford (2006): "Deep Play. Notes on the Balinese Cockfight". In: <i>The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays</i>. New York: Basic Books, 412-453.</p>	
<b>IV</b>	<b>Critical Hermeneutics (12.3) / C. Szaló</b>	<b>Seminar II (11.3)</b>
Required Readings	<p>Ricoeur, Paul (2007): "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology" In: <i>From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics II</i>. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 270-307.</p> <p>Reed, Isaac (2011): "Utopia". In: <i>Interpretation and Social Knowledge. On the Use of Theory in the Human Sciences</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 67-88.</p>	Interpretation session with student material.
Additional Readings	<p>Habermas, Jürgen (1989): <i>The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society</i>. Cambridge: MIT Press.</p> <p>Ricoeur, Paul (1970): <i>Freud and Philosophy. An Essay on Interpretation</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 20-36.</p> <p>Ricoeur, Paul (1973): "The Model of the Text. Meaningful Action Considered as a Text". In: <i>New Literary History</i> 5(1), 91-117.</p>	
<b>V</b>	<b>Interpretive Communities (19.3) / C. Szaló</b>	
Required Readings	<p>Fish, Stanley E. (1976). "Interpreting the 'Variorum.'" <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 2 (3):465–85.</p> <p>Reed, Isaac (2011): "Interpretation". In: <i>Interpretation and Social Knowledge. On the Use of Theory in the Human Sciences</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 89-122.</p>	
Additional Readings	<p>Fish, Stanley E. (1980): <i>Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities</i>. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 338-355.</p>	



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<b>VI</b>	<b>Structuralism and Poststructuralism (25.3)</b>	<b>Seminar III (24.3)</b>
Required Readings	Saussure, Ferdinand de (2011): <i>Course in General Linguistics</i> . New York: Columbia University Press, 111-122.  Hawkes, Terence (2003): <i>Structuralism and Semiotics</i> . London; New York: Routledge. 1-43.	Interpretation session with student material.
Additional Readings	Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1974): "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology". In: <i>Structural Anthropology</i> . New York: Basic Books, 31-51.  Frank, Manfred (1989): <i>What is Neostructuralism?</i> Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.  Derrida, Jacques (2002): "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences". In: <i>Writing and Difference</i> . London; New York: Routledge, 351-370.	
Case Studies	Barthes, Roland (1990): <i>The Fashion System</i> . Berkeley: University of California.  Barthes, Roland (1991): <i>Mythologies</i> . New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.  Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1971): <i>The Elementary Structures of Kinship</i> . Boston: Beacon Press.  Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1961): <i>Tristes Tropiques</i> . New York: Kriterion, 160-180.  Smith, Philip (1991): "Codes and Conflict. Toward a Theory of War as a Ritual". In: <i>Theory and Society</i> 20(1), 103-138.	
<b>VII</b>	<b>Reading Week (2.4)</b>	
Required Reading	Reed, Isaac (2011): <i>Interpretation and Social Knowledge. On the Use of Theory in the Human Sciences</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 89-162.	
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Structural Hermeneutics I (9.4)</b>	<b>Seminar IV (8.4)</b>
Required Readings	Alexander, Jeffrey C. & Philip Smith (2010): "The Strong Program. Origins, Achievements, Prospects". In: John R. Hall, Laura Grindstaff & Ming-Cheng Lo (eds.): <i>Handbook of Cultural Sociology</i> . London; New York: Routledge, 13-24.  Alexander, Jeffrey C. & Philip Smith (2003): „The Discourse of American Civil Society“. In: Alexander, Jeffrey C. (ed.), <i>The Meanings of Social Life. A Cultural Sociology</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 121-154.	Interpretation session with student material.

Additional Readings	<p>Emirbayer, Mustafa (2004): "The Alexander School of Cultural Sociology". In: <i>Thesis Eleven</i> 79(1), 5-15.</p> <p>Alexander, Jeffrey C. &amp; Philip Smith (2003): "The Strong Program in Cultural Sociology. Elements of a Structural Hermeneutics". In: <i>The Meanings of Social Life. A Cultural Sociology</i>, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 11-26.</p>	
Case Studies	<p>Alexander, Jeffrey C. (1988): "Culture and Political Crisis. 'Watergate' and Durkheimian Sociology". In: Alexander, Jeffrey C. (ed.), <i>Durkheimian Sociology. Cultural Studies</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 187-224.</p> <p>Alexander, Jeffrey C. (2010): <i>The Performance of Politics. Obama's Victory and the Democratic Struggle for Power</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Smith, Philip (2008): <i>Punishment and Culture</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.</p>	
<b>IX</b>		
<b>Structural Hermeneutics II (16.4)</b>		
Required Readings	<p>Mannheim, Karl (1968): "On the Interpretation of 'Weltanschauung'" [excerpt]. In: <i>Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge</i>. London: Routledge, 43-63.</p> <p>Bohnsack, Rainer (2014): "Documentary Method". In: Flick, Uwe (ed.), <i>The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis</i>. London; Thousand Oaks: Sage, 217-233.</p> <p>Wernet, Andreas (2014): "Objective Hermeneutics". In: Flick, Uwe (ed.), <i>The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis</i>. London; Thousand Oaks: Sage, 234-246.</p>	
Additional Readings	<p>Mannheim, Karl (1968): "On the Interpretation of 'Weltanschauung'". In: <i>Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge</i>. London: Routledge, 33-83.</p> <p>Oevermann, Ulrich, Allert Tilman, Elisabeth Konau &amp; Jürgen Krambeck (1987): "Structures of Meaning and Objective Hermeneutics". In: Meja, Volker &amp; Dieter Misgeld (eds.): <i>Modern German Sociology. European Perspectives</i>. New York: Columbia University Press, 436-447.</p> <p>Titscher, Stefan, Michael Meyer, Ruth Wodak &amp; Eva Vetter (2003): <i>Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis</i>. London; Thousand Oaks: Sage, 198-212.</p>	
Case Studies	<p>Mannheim, Karl (1986): <i>Conservatism. A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Mann, Stefan (2007): "Understanding Farm Succession by the Objective Hermeneutics Method". In: <i>Sociologia Ruralis</i> 47(4), 369-383.</p> <p>Mijić, Ana (2020): "Together divided—divided together: Intersections of symbolic boundaries in the context of ex-Yugoslavian immigrant communities in Vienna". In: <i>Ethnicities</i> 20(6), 1071-1092.</p>	
<b>X</b>		
<b>Interpretation of Artifacts and Practices (23.4)</b>		<b>Seminar V (22.4)</b>



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Required Readings	Gell, Alfred (1998): <i>Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 12-50.  Latour, Bruno (1991): "The Berlin Key or How to Do Words with Things". In: Graves-Brown, Paul (ed.), <i>Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture</i> . London: Routledge, 10-21.	Interpretation session with student material.
Additional Readings	Keane, Webb (2005): "Signs Are not the Garb of Meaning. On the Social Analysis of Material Things". In: Miller, Daniel (ed.), <i>Materiality</i> . Durham; London: Duke University Press, 182-205.  Bourdieu, Pierre (1990): <i>The Logic of Practice</i> . Stanford: Stanford University Press.  Reckwitz, Andreas (2002): "Toward a Theory of Social Practices. A Development in Culturalist Theorizing". In: <i>European Journal of Social Theory</i> 5(2), 243-265.  Reckwitz, Andreas (2002): "The Status of the 'Material' in Theories of Culture: From 'Social Structure' to 'Artefacts'". In: <i>Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour</i> 32(2), 195-217.	
Additional Material	Žižek, Slavoj (2004): "Knee-Deep", <i>London Review of Books</i> , September 2.  Peach, Eric Crasso (2012): "Žižek on Toilets and the Christchurch Rebuild", <i>Project Freerange</i>	
<b>XI</b>	<b>Interpretation of Pictures (30.4)</b>	
Required Readings	Panofsky, Erwin (1955): <i>Meaning in the Visual Arts. Papers in and on Art History</i> . Garden City: Doubleday, 26-54.  Foucault, Michel (1973): "Las Meninas". In: <i>The Order of Things. Archaeology of the Human Sciences</i> . New York: Vintage Books, 3-18.  Binder, Werner & Bernadette N. Jaworsky (2018): "Refugees as Icons: Culture and Iconic Representation". In: <i>Sociology Compass</i> 12(3).	
Additional Readings	Bartmanski, Dominik (2012): "The Word/Image Dualism Revisited. Towards an Iconic Conception of Visual Culture". In: <i>Journal of Sociology</i> .  Bohnsack, Ralf (2010): "The Interpretation of Pictures and the Documentary Method". In: Bohnsack, Ralf et al. (eds.): <i>Qualitative Analysis and Documentary Method in International Educational Research</i> . Opladen: Budrich, 267-309.  Emmison, Michael & Philip Smith (2000): <i>Researching the Visual. Images, Objects, Context and Interactions in Social and Cultural Inquiry</i> . London: Sage.  Przyborski, Aglaja & Thomas Slunecko (2012): "Learning to Think Iconically in the Human and Social Sciences: Iconic Standards of Understanding as a Pivotal Challenge for Method Development". In: <i>Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science</i> 46(1), 39-56.	
Debate on "Las Meninas"	Searle, John R. (1980): ""Las Meninas" and the Paradoxes of Pictorial Representation". In: <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 6(3), 477-488.  Snyder, Joel (1985): ""Las Meninas" and the Mirror of the Prince". In: <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 11(4), 539-572.	

	Schmitter, Amy M. (1996): "Picturing Power: Representation and Las Meninas". In: <i>The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</i> 54(3), 255-268.	
<b>XI</b>	<b>Texts, Narratives, Interviews (7.5)</b>	<b>Seminar VI (to be scheduled)</b>
Required Reading	<p>Nohl, Arnd-Michael (2010): "Narrative Interview and Documentary Interpretation". In: Bohnsack et al. (eds.): <i>Qualitative Analysis and Documentary Method in International Educational Research</i>. Opladen: Budrich, 195-217.</p> <p>Pugh, Allison J. (2013): "What Good are Interviews for Thinking about Culture? Demystifying Interpretative Analysis". In: <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i> 1(1), 42-68.</p> <p>Smith, Philip (2005): <i>Why War? The Cultural Logic of Iraq, the Gulf War, and Suez</i>. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 18-27.</p>	Interpretation session at the Moravian Gallery.
Additional Readings	<p>Campbell, Joseph (2004): <i>The Hero of a Thousand Faces</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press.</p> <p>Frye, Northrop (2000): <i>Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays</i>. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press.</p> <p>Propp, Vladimir (1984): <i>Theory and History of Folklore</i>. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.</p> <p>Smith, Philip (2005): <i>Why War? The Cultural Logic of Iraq, the Gulf War, and Suez</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.</p> <p>Swidler, Ann (2005): <i>Talk of Love. How Culture Matters</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.</p> <p>White, Hayden V. (1973): <i>Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe</i>. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.</p> <p>Wuthnow, Robert (1988): "Religious Discourse as Public Rhetoric". In: <i>Communication Research</i> 15(3), 318-338.</p>	
Debate on Interviews	<p>Vaisey, Stephen (2014): "Is Interviewing Compatible with the Dual-process Model of Culture?" In: <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i> 2(1), 150-158.</p> <p>Pugh, Allison J. (2014): "The Divining Rod of Talk. Emotions, Contradictions and the Limits of Research". In: <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i> 2(1), 159-163.</p>	
<b>XIII</b>	<b>Discourse Analysis (14.5)</b>	
Required Readings	<p>Laclau, Ernesto (1993): "Discourse". In: Robert E. Goodin (ed.): <i>A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy</i>, Oxford: Blackwell, 431-437.</p> <p>Foucault, Michel (1971): "Orders of Discourse". In: <i>Social Science Information</i> 10(2), 7-30.</p> <p>Fairclough, Norman (1989): "Discourse as Social Practice". In: <i>Language and Power</i>. Harlow; New York: Longman, 17-42.</p>	



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Additional Readings	<p>Fairclough, Norman (2000): <i>New Labour, New Language</i>. London; New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Foucault, Michel (1973): <i>The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences</i>. New York: Vintage Books.</p> <p>Lakoff, George (2006): <i>Moral Politics. How Liberals and Conservatives Think</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.</p> <p>Wagner-Pacifici, Robin Erica (1986): <i>The Moro Morality Play. Terrorism as Social Drama</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.</p> <p>Alexander, Jeffrey C. (2010): <i>The Performance of Politics. Obama's Victory and the Democratic Struggle for Power</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Smith, Philip &amp; Nicolas Howe (2015): <i>Climate Change as Social Drama</i>. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.</p>	
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Seminar Work</b>	
<p>5 out of 10 questions regarding theories and methods discussed in the lecture or the required readings</p> <p>1 out of 3 interpretative exercises</p>	<p>Interpretation protocol of 10+ pages</p> <p>Final paper of 18-20 pages</p> <p>Deadline: August 31, 2024</p>	



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## Additional Literature

- Alexander, Jeffrey C. & Steven Seidman (1990, ed.): *Culture and Society. Contemporary Debates*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. (2003): *The Meanings of Social Life. A Cultural Sociology*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C., Bernhard Giesen & Jason L. Mast (2006, eds.): *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C., Dominik Bartmanski & Bernhard Giesen (2012, eds.): *Iconic Power. Materiality and Meaning in Social Life*. New York; Houndmills: Palgrave.
- Andersen, Niels Åkerstrøm (2003): *Discursive Analytical Strategies. Understanding Foucault, Koselleck, Laclau, Luhmann*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Back, Les, Andy Bennett, Laura Desfor Edles, Margaret Gibson, David Inglis, Ronald Jacobs & Ian Woodward (2012): *Cultural Sociology. An Introduction*. Malden; Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- Binder, Werner (2018): "The semiotics of social life". In: *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 6(2), 401-416.
- Bohnsack, Ralf, Nicolle Pfaff & Wivian Weller (2010, eds.): *Qualitative Analysis and Documentary Method in International Educational Research*. Opladen: Budrich.
- Edles, Laura Desfor (2002): *Cultural Sociology in Practice*. Malden; Oxford: Blackwell.
- Fairclough, Norman (2003): *Analyzing Discourse. Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Fairclough, Norman & Isabela Fairclough (2012): *Political Discourse Analysis. A Method for Advanced Students*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Flick, Uwe (2009): *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London; Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Flick, Uwe (2014, ed.): *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*. London; Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Giddens, Anthony (1993): *New Rules of Sociological Method. A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Michel, Johann (2019): *Homo Interpretans*. London; New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Raud, Rein (2016): *Meaning in Action. Outline of an Integral Theory of Culture*. Cambridge; Malden: Polity.
- Ricoeur, Paul (1976): *Interpretation Theory. Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press.
- Riessman, Catherine Kohler (2008): *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. London: Sage.
- Smith, Philip (1998, ed.): *The New American Cultural Sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Philip & Alexander Riley (2009): *Cultural Theory. An Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Steinke, Ines, Ernst von Kardoff & Uwe Flick (2004, eds.): *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

