

CMC5002 Research Methods (Semester 2)

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104 items

Research Methods: Core Texts (5 items)

What is research?

What are the different sorts of research undertaken in communication, media and cultural studies?

What constitutes good research?

How to do media & cultural studies, by Jane C. Stokes, 2021

[Book](#) | Essential

Qualitative research methods for media studies, by Bonnie Brennen, 2025

[Book](#) | Essential

Bryman's social research methods, by Tom Clark; Liam Foster; Luke Sloan; Alan Bryman; Alan Bryman, 2021

[Book](#) | Essential

Media and communication research methods, by Anders Hansen; David Machin, 2022

[Book](#) | Essential

Research methods for cultural studies, by Michael Pickering, ©2008

[Book](#) | Essential

Session 1: What do we mean by research? (5 items)

Required reading (1 items)

Stokes, J. (2013). Getting started. In *How to Do Media and Cultural Studies* (2nd ed, pp. 8-27). Sage.

How to do media & cultural studies, by Jane C. Stokes, 2021

[Book](#)

Recommended reading (4 items)

Research questions, hypotheses and operational definitions - in *Research methods: a practical guide for the social sciences*, by Bob Matthews; Liz Ross, 2010

[Chapter](#) | Essential | This is our essential reading for the second session. It explains not just what a research question is, but also how to make it clear and comprehensible

The context of design - in *Research design in social research*, by D. A. De Vaus, 2001

[Chapter](#) | Optional | This reading explains how to choose the best research design to

answer a particular research question. Very helpful once your initial ideas are clear

From topics to questions - in *The craft of research*, by Wayne C. Booth; Gregory G. Colomb; Joseph M. Williams; Joseph Bizup; William T. FitzGerald, 2024

Chapter | **Recommended** | This reading is really helpful if you're finding it difficult to narrow down your interests — it walks you through the process of zooming in from a topic to a question

Research as exploration and development - in *Media Communication: An Introduction to Theory and Process*, by James Watson, 2016

Chapter | **Optional** | This reading focuses on *why* research questions can be worth asking: what are the kind of social and professional problems that need research answers

Session 2: Close Reading (3 items)

Required Reading (1 items)

'Chapter 2: Theories, Methods, Techniques' in *Techniques of Close Reading* by Barry Brummett (Los Angeles: Sage, 2010), 27–47.

Techniques of close reading, by Brummett, Barry, 2010

Book | **Essential** | 'Theories, Methods, Techniques', pp. 27–47.

Recommended reading (2 items)

Gender and the media, by Gill, Rosalind, 2007

Book | **Optional** | Excellent reference for work on gender presentation in popular culture and the media.

Deconstructing popular culture, by Bowman, Paul, 2008

Book | **Recommended** | 'Can I Help you? Deconstructing (,) Words and Music', pp 33–56.

Session 3: Discourse Analysis (23 items)

Required reading (1 items)

Brennen, B. (2025). Textual analysis. In *Qualitative research - methods for media studies* (pp. 220–260). Routledge.

Textual Analysis - in *Qualitative research methods for media studies*, 2025

Chapter | **Essential** | Brennen discusses what is a text, what we do textual analysis for, and how the practice of textual analysis evolved from a focus on the surface content of texts to a more complete understanding of their structure and function.

Recommended readings (15 items)

Bryman's social research methods, by Tom Clark; Liam Foster; Luke Sloan; Alan Bryman; Alan Bryman, 2021

Book

Analysing discourse: textual analysis for social research, by Norman Fairclough, 2003

Book

| **Optional** | A good resource for methods for the *critical* analysis of discourse, focusing on issues of power, hegemony and oppression. Not a very easy read, but enormously informative.

Discourse Analysis Means Doing Analysis: A Critique Of Six Analytic Shortcomings: - in Discourse Analysis Online, by Charles Antaki; Michael Billig; Derek Edwards; Jonathan Potter, 2003

Article

| **Optional** | Antaki and colleagues discuss what are the basic requirements for a piece of textual research to be considered a proper analysis. Excellent guidance for pitfalls to avoid when conducting textual research.

Analysing discourse: textual analysis for social research, by Norman Fairclough, 2012

Book

| **Optional** | A good resource for methods for the *critical* analysis of discourse, focusing on issues of power, hegemony and oppression. Not a very easy read, but enormously informative.

Symposium: Discourse and content analysis - in Qualitative Methods: Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Qualitative Methods, by Yoshiko M. Herrera; Bear F. Braumoeller, 2004

Article

| **Optional** | A good (if sometimes complex) discussion of the differences between discourse analysis and what is typically called content analysis. Scroll down to page 15

Discourse analysis: as theory and method, by Marianne Jørgensen; Louise Phillips, 2002

Book

| **Recommended** | 'The Field of Discourse Analysis', pp. 1-23. An excellent overview of several typical approaches to discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis: as theory and method, by Marianne Jørgensen; Louise J. Phillips, 2002

Book

| **Recommended** | 'The Field of Discourse Analysis', pp. 1-23. An excellent overview of several typical approaches to discourse analysis.

Issues and Best Practices in Content Analysis - in Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, by S. Lacy; B. R. Watson; D. Riffe; J. Lovejoy, 2015-12-01

Article

| **Optional** | Reviews best practices in designing, sampling, coding and assessing the reliability of content analysis procedures. Very useful guidance for designing a project.

Analysing semiotic choices: words and images - in How to do critical discourse analysis: a multimodal introduction, by David Machin; Andrea Mayr, 2012

Chapter

| **Optional** | Provides a clear and concise introduction to the kind of textual and visual features that are usually of interest for a critical project.

Textual analysis: a beginner's guide, by Alan McKee, 2003

Book

| **Optional** | A good introduction to what textual analysis is useful for, and how it is typically used in communication, media and culture studies

Projects - in Language, society and power: an introduction, by Annabelle Mooney, 2015

Chapter

| **Optional** | Mooney presents ideas and suggestions for developing your own textual analysis project focused on language and power

What is discourse analysis?, by Stephanie Taylor, 2013

Book | **Recommended** | A brief and accessible introduction to discourse analysis and how it differs from plain content analysis.

Discourse Analysis and Constructionist Approaches: Theoretical Background - in Handbook of qualitative research methods for psychology and the social sciences, by Jonathan Potter, 1996

Chapter | **Optional** | Provides a useful and thoughtful (though conceptually dense and not always easy to read) conceptual definition of discourse analysis, focusing especially on its constructionist theoretical assumptions. Has a very nice discussion of reliability and validity in discourse research

The illustrated guide to the content analysis research project, by Patricia Swann, 2021

Book | **Optional**

Analyzing media messages: using quantitative content analysis in research, by Daniel Riffe; Stephen Lacy; Brendan R. Watson; Frederick Fico, 2019

Book | **Optional**

If you are interested in specific kinds of text (7 items)

Discourse and politics, by Gloria Álvarez Benito; Gabriela Fernández-Díaz; Isabel María Íñigo-Mora, 2009

Book | **Optional** | A good (though not easy to read) resource for methods for the analysis of political discourse (speeches, parliamentary debates, legislation, etc.)

Multimodal film analysis: how films mean, by John A. Bateman; Karl-Heinrich Schmidt, 2012

Book | **Optional** | An excellent and systematic overview of analytic techniques for film.

Analyzing narrative: discourse and sociolinguistic perspectives, by Anna De Fina; Alexandra Georgakopoulou, 2012

Book | **Optional** | A solid introduction to the study of everyday narratives: why, how and for what purpose people tell stories in communicative interaction.

Methods of critical discourse studies, edited by Ruth Wodak; Michael Meyer, 2016

Book | **Optional** | A good range of suggestions for specific forms of critical analysis of texts

An introduction to film analysis: technique and meaning in narrative film, by Michael Ryan; Melissa Lenos, 2020

Book | **Optional** | An accessible introduction to the vocabulary and methods of film analysis.

Digital discourse: language in the new media, by Crispin Thurlow; Kristine R. Mroczek, 2011

Book | **Optional** | The best introduction to the language of the digital media.

Digital discourse: language in the new media, by Crispin Thurlow; Kristine R. Mroczek, 2011

Book | **Optional** | The best introduction to the language of the digital media.

Session 4: Interviews (9 items)

Required reading (1 items)

Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2007). *The Practice of Feminist In-Depth Interviewing*. *Feminist research practice* (pp.111–148). Sage.

Feminist approaches to in-depth interviewing - in *Feminist research practice: a primer*, by Sharlene Hesse-Biber, edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2014

[Chapter](#) | **Essential**

Recommended readings (8 items)

Interviewing: methods and process - in *Social research: issues, methods and process*, 2022

[Chapter](#) | **Essential** | 5th edition

Social research: issues, methods and process, by Tim May, 2011

[Book](#) | **Essential** | 'Interviewing: methods and process', pp. 131–160.

A handbook of media and communication research: qualitative and quantitative methodologies, edited by Klaus Bruhn Jensen, 2021

[Book](#) | **Recommended** | 'The qualitative research process', pp. 286–306.

Manufacturing individual opinions: Market research focus groups and the discursive psychology of evaluation - in *British Journal of Social Psychology*, by Claudia Puchta; Jonathan Potter, 2002

[Article](#) | **Optional** | A wide range of social psychological research is produced that both presupposes and finds evidence of enduring underlying attitudes, but on some occasions at least, the results of attitude research are a consequence of procedures that reinterpret participants' practices in a way that ensures the 'discovery' of underlying attitudes. The article explores this in one domain where there is a major practical concern with attitudes and opinions, namely market research focus groups.

Asking elaborate questions: Focus groups and the management of spontaneity - in *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, by Claudia Puchta; Jonathan Potter, 1999

[Article](#) | **Optional** | Puchta and Potter (who also authored a great practical book on the management of focus groups) discuss here the use of elaborate questions (questions which include a range of reformulations and rewordings) to ensure that focus groups remain focused while producing spontaneous and conversation-like data.

Focus group practice, by Claudia Puchta; Jonathan Potter, 2004

[Book](#) | **Recommended** | The best hands-on guide to designing a research project using focus groups, whether for academic or industry purposes.

How to do media & cultural studies, by Jane C. Stokes, 2003

[Book](#) | **Recommended** | 'The interview', pp. 114–120.

Online focus groups - in *The SAGE handbook of online research methods*, by Gaiser, T.J., edited by Nigel Fielding; Raymond M. Lee; Grant Blank, 2008

[Chapter](#)

Session 5 Questionnaires (14 items)

Required reading (1 items)

Rugg, G. & Petre, M. (2007). Questionnaires: when to use, when not to use, which questions to ask, what format to use. In *A gentle guide to research methods* (pp.141-151). Open University Press.

Questionnaires: when to use, when not to use, which questions to ask, what format to use - in *A gentle guide to research methods*, by Gordon Rugg; Marian Petre, 2007

Chapter | **Essential** | A brief and accessible introduction to the contexts in which questionnaires are (or are not) a suitable method for data collection. Very easy to read, though it is helpful to start by reviewing the section on Strategies and principles (pp. 10-15), which explains some of the authors' guiding metaphors.

Recommended readings (13 items)

Self-reports are better measurement instruments than implicit measures - in *Nature Reviews Psychology*, by Olivier Corneille; Bertram Gawronski, 2024-10-21

Article | **Recommended** | Discusses whether it's better to ask people questions more or less directly. or to take indirect measures instead

Self Completion Questionnaires - in *Bryman's social research methods*, by Alan Bryman, 2021

Chapter | **Recommended** | This is a useful practical guide to designing questionnaires; it's very accessible and quite short.

Designing Effective Web Surveys, by Mick P. Couper, 2008

Book | **Optional** | For the more advanced reader (i.e., if you want to use this method in your dissertation), some good guidance on the practical side of running self-completion online surveys.

The cornerstones of survey research - in *International handbook of survey methodology*, by Edith Desire

e de Leeuw; Joop J. Hox; Don A. Dillman, 2008

Chapter | **Recommended** | Addresses all the basics about solving the common problems that all surveys face: how to produce reliable quantitative data by examining only a small fraction of a population. The whole book introduced by this chapter goes into further detail about specific issues and can be enormously helpful.

Do age and gender differences exist in selfie-related behaviours? - in *Computers in Human Behavior*, by Amandeep Dhir; Ståle Pallesen; Torbjørn Torsheim; Cecilie Schou Andreassen, 2016-10

Article | **Optional**

Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires: Theory and Practice in Social Research, by William Foddy, 1993

Book | **Optional** | For the more advanced reader (i.e., if you want to use this method in your dissertation), an excellent technical overview of issues of wording in questionnaire construction.

Social Surveys: Design to Analysis - in Social research: issues, methods and process, by Tim May; Beth Perry; Carole Sutton, 2022

Chapter | **Recommended** | Takes you through the entire process of constructing a survey and addresses the key problems likely to emerge at each stage. Less detailed than other suggestions here, but a good place to start.

New categories are not enough: Rethinking the measurement of sex and gender in social surveys - in Gender & Society, by Laurel Westbrook; Aliya Saperstein, 2015-08

Article | **Optional** | How should we ask about sex and gender in surveys? In fact, should we ask about sex and gender at all? The authors of this paper discuss the problems caused by oversimplified and stereotyped questionnaire designs

Social Surveys: Design to Analysis - in Social research: issues, methods and process, by Tim May; Carole Sutton, 2011

Chapter | **Recommended** | Takes you through the entire process of constructing a survey and addresses the key problems likely to emerge at each stage. Less detailed than other suggestions here, but a good place to start.

Surveys and Questionnaires (Chapter 11) - in Real world research: a resource for users of social research methods in applied settings, 2016

Chapter | **Optional** | A solid and comprehensive overview of questionnaires (as a method of data collection) and surveys (as a research design).

What is survey research? - in Survey research, by Roger Sapsford, 2007

Chapter | **Optional** | For the interested reader, an excellent overview of the logic of the three essential 'technologies' of survey research – measurement, sampling and comparison. Very good conceptual background for understanding the theoretical and practical considerations in running surveys.

The Case for "Other": Measuring Gender and Sexual Identity in Survey Research - in Sociology Compass, by Christina Pao; Katie Donnelly Moran; D□Lane Compton; Gayle Kaufman; Julie A. Dowling, 2025-01

Article | **Optional** | This article outlines best practices for asking about gender and sexual identity in questionnaires

Questions for Surveys. - in Public Opinion Quarterly, by Nora Cate Schaeffer; Jennifer Dykema, 2011

Article | **Recommended** | A systematic description of various aspects of question characteristics, including topics, types, structures, wording and response categories.

Session 6: Task Week

Session 7: Ethnographic methods (13 items)

Required reading (1 items)

Brennen, B. (2025). Ethnography and Participant Observation. In Qualitative research methods for media studies (pp. 181–219). Routledge.

Ethnography and Participant Observation - in Qualitative research methods for media

studies, 2025

Chapter | Essential

Recommended readings (12 items)

Ethnographic fieldwork: a beginner's guide, by Jan Blommaert; Dong Jie, c2010

Book | Essential | 'Ethnography', pp. 4-15.

Multilingualism, discourse, and ethnography, by Sheena Gardner; Marilyn Martin-Jones, 2012

Book | Recommended | Heller, M., 'Rethinking Sociolinguistic Identity: From Community and Identity to Process and Practice', pp. 24-33.

Multilingualism, discourse and ethnography, by Gardner, Sheena; Martin-Jones, Marilyn, 2012

Book | Recommended | Heller, M., 'Rethinking Sociolinguistic Identity: From Community and Identity to Process and Practice', pp. 24-33.

Bryman's social research methods, by Tom Clark; Liam Foster; Luke Sloan; Alan Bryman; Alan Bryman, 2021

Book

What is ethnography? (Chapter 1) - in Ethnography: principles in practice, by Martyn Hammersley; Paul Atkinson, 2019

Chapter | Recommended

Ethnography: principles in practice, by Hammersley, Martyn; Atkinson, Paul, 2007

Book | Recommended | 'What is Ethnography', pp. 1-22.

Ethnography: principles in practice, by Martyn Hammersley; Paul Atkinson; MyiLibrary, 2007

Book | Recommended | 'What is Ethnography', pp. 1-22.

Online interviewing: It's not as simple as point and click - in The Qualitative Report, by Robin Cooper, 2009

Article | Optional

Methods: Conducting research on the internet – a new era - in The Psychologist, by Claire Hewson, 2014

Article | Optional

Ethical Stances in (Internet) Research - in Undoing ethics: rethinking practice in online research, by Natasha Whiteman, 2012

Chapter | Recommended

My profile: The ethics of virtual ethnography - in Emotion, Space and Society, by Catherine Driscoll; Melissa Gregg, 2010-5

Article | Recommended

"My Way": Piloting an Online Focus Group - in International Journal of Qualitative Methods, by Jennifer Oringderff, 2008

Article | Optional

Session 8: Research Design (1 items)

Required reading (1 items)

Chapter 3 'Research Designs' in Research' in Clark et al Bryman's social research methods (Oxford: UP, 2021), pp. 38-67.

Bryman's social research methods, by Tom Clark; Liam Foster; Luke Sloan; Alan Bryman, 2021

Book

Session 9: Literature Review (9 items)

Required reading (1 items)

Matthews, B., & Ross, L. (2010) Reviewing the literature. In Research methods: a practical guide for the social sciences (pp.92-109). Pearson Longman.

Reviewing the literature - in Research methods: a practical guide for the social sciences, by Bob Matthews; Liz Ross, 2010

Chapter | Essential | This is our essential reading for the third session. It explains why every research project starts by reviewing what's already known about the topic, and how to find, evaluate and summarise these previous works

Recommended readings (8 items)

Doing a literature review : releasing the research imagination, by Chris Hart, 2025

Book | Recommended | A comprehensive guide to the literature review process, with chapters dealing with each step. Highly recommended.

Doing a literature review: releasing the research imagination, by Chris Hart, 2018

Book | Recommended | 2nd edition.

When to believe what you read: the sources of credibility - in Reading and understanding research, by Lawrence F. Locke; Waneen Wyrick Spirduso; Stephen J. Silverman, c2010

Chapter | Recommended | An excellent guide to how to decide whether you can trust a source enough to include it in your review

Succeeding with your literature review: a handbook for students, by Paul Oliver, 2012

Book | Recommended

The literature review: a step-by-step guide for students, by Diana Ridley, 2012

Book | Optional

How to find information: a guide for researchers, by Sally Rumsey, 2008

Book | Optional

How to find information: a guide for researchers, by Sally Rumsey, 2008

[Book](#) | Optional

Your undergraduate dissertation: the essential guide for success, by Nicholas S. R. Walliman, 2014

[Book](#) | Optional

Session 10: Designing research proposals (8 items)

Required readings (1 items)

Denscombe, M. (2012). The logic and structure of research proposals. In Research Proposals: a Practical Guide (pp.5-15). Open University Press.

Research proposals: a practical guide, by Martyn Denscombe, 2012

[Book](#) | **Essential** | Our essential reading for the fourth session. It reviews the criteria that mark a research proposal that is well-organised, clear and unambiguous. Read at least pp. 5-15 in advance of the session, though the whole book is relevant and useful

How to manage your research project (2 items)

How to do research: a practical guide to designing and managing research projects, by Nick Moore, 2006

[Book](#) | Recommended

Making sense: a student's guide to research and writing, by Margot Northey, 2019

[Book](#) | Optional

How to write up your research (5 items)

Academic writing: a practical guide for students, by Stephen Bailey, 2003

[Book](#) | Optional

Writing at university: a guide for students, by Phyllis Creme; Mary R. Lea, 2008

[Book](#) | Optional

First steps in academic writing, by Ann Hogue, 2008

[Book](#) | Optional

English in today's research world: a writing guide, by John M. Swales; John M. Swales; Christine B. Feak, c2000

[Book](#) | Recommended

Academic writing for graduate students: essential skills and tasks, by John M. Swales; Christine B. Feak, c2012

[Book](#) | Recommended

Decolonising research (3 items)

Unthinking Eurocentrism: multiculturalism and the media, by Ella Shohat; Robert Stam, ©1994

Book | Recommended

Decolonizing methodologies: research and indigenous peoples, by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2021

Book | Essential

Potential history: unlearning imperialism, by Ariella Azoulay, 2019

Book | Recommended

Overviews of research methods (11 items)

These are more-or-less encyclopedic sources that seek to cover most of the basic issues and methodological possibilities in communication, media and culture research. Less focused than the sources listed for each session, but a good place to start.

The media student's book, by Gill Branston; Roy Stafford, 2010

Book | **Optional** | A very introductory work, suitable for getting started but needing other sources as complements. You will probably find useful Chapter 15, which explores qualitative and quantitative research methods; how to approach small scale 'audience' work; and how to use Internet-based sources.

The media student's book, by Branston, Gill; Stafford, Roy, 2010

Book | **Optional** | A very introductory work, suitable for getting started but needing other sources as complements. You will probably find useful Chapter 15, which explores qualitative and quantitative research methods; how to approach small scale 'audience' work; and how to use Internet-based sources.

Qualitative research methods for media studies, by Bonnie Brennen, 2025

Book | **Optional** | A good introduction to most of the methods explored in the module. Has chapters that directly correspond to several of our sessions.

Bryman's social research methods, by Tom Clark; Liam Foster; Luke Sloan; Alan Bryman; Alan Bryman, 2021

Book | **Essential** | A reliable and extensive overview of key points in research design and methodology. Has chapters addressing the content of most sessions.

Social research methods, by Alan Bryman, 2016

Book | **Essential** | A reliable and extensive overview of key points in research design and methodology. Has chapters addressing the content of most sessions. It also has some very useful practical resources (from self-study flashcards to hands-on toolkits) at <http://global.oup.com/uk/orc/sociology/brymansrm5e/>

Doing a successful research project: using qualitative or quantitative methods, by Martin Davies; Nathan Hughes, 2014

Book | **Optional** | Very hands-on, practical and accessible, covers all the basics of the first two sessions and a good deal of what we'll study as human participant research. Less useful for textual analysis.

Researching communications: a practical guide to methods in media and cultural analysis, by David Deacon; Graham Murdock; Michael Pickering; Peter Golding, 2021

Book | Recommended

Researching social life, by G. Nigel Gilbert, 2016

Book | Optional | Follows the 'life cycle' of a typical research project, from initial conception through to eventual publication. Chapters are written by subject specialists, which makes them somewhat more daunting than other sources in this section, but also richer and more informative. Chapters 22–24 are excellent sources for those thinking about textual analysis.

Mass communication research methods, by Hansen, Anders, 1998

Book | Optional | Goes at greater depth into theory than other sources in this section. A great resource to understand how specific methods (such as focus groups or narrative textual analysis) work for specific research questions and settings (such as understanding audience practices or media ideologies).

A handbook of media and communication research: qualitative and quantitative methodologies, edited by Klaus Bruhn Jensen, 2021

Book | Optional | More focused on theory than practicalities, a very good source to understand the conceptual issues about doing research in communication, media and culture studies. Complements the hands-on books quite nicely.

Introduction to social research: quantitative & qualitative approaches, by Punch, Keith, 2014

Book | Recommended