

CUSO Doctoral Programme in History

Applying discourse analysis in history: lessons from political science

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Friday 25th February 2022

Uni Mail, Room M4389

9:30-12:00 and 13:00-15:00



Outline

This workshop aims to **introduce discourse analysis as a social science method and to discuss its potential uses (and usefulness) for historiographic research**. The underlying argument is that by borrowing from a social science method, history as a discipline could open up new perspectives on data.

The morning session will be devoted to a general introduction to (social science) discourse analysis through some background readings and practical examples. We will look at the core assumptions of discourse analysis (such as the performativity of discourse), different levels of discourse (from the linguistic level of semantics to the structural level of macro-discourses such as policy discourses) or socio-political discourses (on gender norms or national identity for instance). We will then think about **what discourse analytic methods can bring to historical research**: how it might change the way historians look at data, or how it could raise new or

different research questions. We will also discuss how to construct a data body for discourse analytic purposes, including when data are actively generated by the research (such as in oral history research, or in the secondary analysis of recorded testimonies).

This morning session will draw on the general literature on (social science) discourse analysis, on the one hand (for example Bacchi 2012, Chilton&Schäffner 1997, Plummer 1997), and on the other hand on authors and research examples that have engaged with historical objects of research from a discourse-analytic perspective (for example Hook 2005, Lucas 2004, Szeligowska 2016, Reisigl 2017). Various strands of discourse analysis will be referred to, but in particular the Foucauldian tradition with its emphasis on the importance of paying appropriate attention to points of *rupture* and discontinuity in history (cf. for instance Foucault 2014), as well « morphological » approaches (Szeligowska 2016 or Freedden 2013).

The after-lunch period will be devoted to a more in-depth discussion of **practical examples**. Workshop participants are very welcome to bring along their own examples (and let us know ahead if they would be willing to give a short presentation). Else we will discuss other practical examples.

Schedule

09:30- 11:00 - General and theoretical introduction to social science discourse analysis through some background readings and practical examples: Foucault, the performativity of discourse, different levels of discourse, and socio-political discourses. The brief analysis of readings.

11:00 - 11:15: Coffee-break

11:15 - 12:00: **What discourse analytic methods can bring to historical research** and how to construct a data body for discourse analytic purposes.

12: 00- 13:00: Lunch break at UniMail at the cafeteria (offered by CUSO)

13:00-15:00: **Practical examples**

14:00-14:15- Coffee break

Audience

The workshop is open to anyone interested in discourse analysis. It is more specifically intended for historians with a particular interest in discourse analysis though, and at social scientists with an interest in historical research.

Preparatory work

About ten days ahead they will also receive a small list of preparatory readings that they are strongly advised to read (below is a list of indicative readings that will be referred to).

Once registered via the CUSO website (see under “registration” below), participants should **please send an email** to lea.sgier@unige.ch and nataliya.borys@etu.unige.ch, providing a bit of **background information** about themselves (their research interests, their reasons for wanting to join the workshop, specific questions or concerns that they might have etc.).

Language

The workshop will be held in English. Participants are welcome to express themselves in French (or German) too.

Registration

Interested participants should please register at <https://histoire.cuso.ch/contemporaine/activites> to get their train tickets to Geneva to be reimbursed and benefit from paid meal at UniMail or send a mail to lea.sgier@unige.ch or nataliya.borys@etu.unige.ch by **18 February 2022**. The workshop can be followed via Zoom, however we encourage you to follow it on site at UNIGE for a more lively interaction and networking.

Please note that (as per 3.2.) the Covid certificate is required for access to the classroom and to the cafeteria, and the mask is mandatory at all times in the whole University building. [please check UniGE's website for updates, as rules may have changed by the workshop date¹]

PhD students outside Geneva (within the CUSO program) can have their train tickets to be reimbursed to Geneva. Meals and coffee breaks at the UNIMAIL are kindly offered by CUSO. For more details please refer to Nataliya Borys.

Presenters

Lea Sgier is a senior lecturer in qualitative methodology at the Political Science Department of the University of Geneva, with a particular interest in interpretive methodologies such as discourse analysis. She is also an instructor on various summer schools and graduate programmes in and beyond Europe (UK, HK, Canada, France). Her main research interests are in gender and politics, and old age and dementia policy. From 2010-17 she was a professor of qualitative methodology at Central European University (CEU) in Budapest where namely taught a PhD course on Discourse Analysis.

Nataliya Borys is a PhD student in contemporary history and the organizer of methodological workshops at the University of Geneva. Her research interests cover the Soviet Union history, gender history and historiography.

Selective bibliography

Bacchi, Carol (2012). Why Study Problematizations? Making Politics Visible." *Open Journal of Political Science* 2.01: 1-8

Chilton, Paul and Schäffner, Christina (1997). "Discourse and Politics", in Van Dijk, Teun A. (eds). *Discourse as Social Interaction*. London: Sage, pp. 206-230.

¹ Official rules RE the Covid certificate might change by the workshop date. In case of doubt, check the website of UniGE for updates : <https://www.unige.ch/coronavirus/etudiant-es/rentree-academique-2021>

- Foucault, Michel (2014[1968]). "An Archeology of Discourse", in Angermuller, Johannes, Maingueneau, Dominique and Wodak, Ruth (eds). *The Discourse Studies Reader. Main Currents in Theory and Analysis*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 98-110.
- Hook, Derek (2005) Genealogy, discourse, 'effective history': Foucault and the work of critique, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2:1, 3-31, DOI: 10.1191/1478088705qp025o
- Lucas, Barbara (2004). "Reducing Discursive Complexity : the Case of Alcohol Policies in Europe (1850-2000)", in Muller, Richard and Klingemann, Harald (eds). *From Science to Action? 100 Years Later – Alcohol Policies Revisited*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Milliken, Jennifer (1999). "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods". *European Journal of International Relations* 5:225-254
- Plummer, Ken (1995). *Telling Sexual Stories. Power, Change and Social Worlds*. London: Sage (ch. 2, 3).
- Reisigl, Martin Reisigl (2017). The Discourse-Historical Approach, in Flowerdew, John and Richardson, John E.: *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*. New York : Routledge, ch.4, pp. 44-59.
- Szeligowska, Dorota (2016). *Polish Patriotism after 1989: Concepts, Debates, Identities*. Oxford, Bern: Peter Lang, 2016.