

DTS300H1— Qualitative and Quantitative Reasoning
Centre for Diaspora & Transnational Studies
University of Toronto
Winter 2025

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Day and Time: Tuesdays 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Office Hours: Thursdays 2 p.m. – 3 p.m., or by appointment

Territorial Acknowledgment

We acknowledge the land we are on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. We are grateful to live and work in this territory.

Course Description

How do socio-cultural assumptions shape scientific research? What counts (or doesn't count) as evidence? And when does such evidence count? Under which circumstances can some questions be asked while others are impossible to formulate? What is the role of statistics in research? What do statistics reveal, and what do they obscure? How do scholars make empirical claims about the world? What is 'objectivity'? Is 'objectivity' truly objective? This course explores the histories and epistemologies that underline qualitative and quantitative reasoning with a particular emphasis on the ways that intellectual and scholarly disciplines construct, and police claims to truth. We will examine the kinds of reasoning that make truth claims possible in qualitative and quantitative research to conceptually understand how knowledge is produced.

Learning Outcomes

- Basic and critical understanding of the intellectual history of Western knowledge production
- Literacy in qualitative and quantitative research
- Understanding of the methodologies of qualitative and quantitative research
- Critical appreciation of how knowledge is produced and the varied genres used to convey knowledge in the social sciences and humanities
- Basic understanding of Other/Non-Western forms of knowledge

Expectations

Students are required to attend class, to do all required reading, and to participate actively in class discussions.

Course Materials

Articles and books chapters (online and hard copy versions) can be found at Robarts Library. Some articles and book chapters are posted on Quercus.

Methods of Evaluation and Due Dates

	Percentage	Due date
Participation / Attendance	15%	Ongoing
Essay # 1	25%	February 11 th
Essay # 2	25%	March 11 th
Take Home Final Exam	35%	April 4 th

Participation and Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes and to come to class well prepared with questions and comments about what they have read and ready to participate actively in class discussions. Participation will be evaluated according to the frequency and quality of interventions and the extent to which they contribute to class discussions. Note that effective participation also requires paying attention to, and engaging with, your peers' perspectives and reflections.

Reading

A careful and critical reading of all the assigned texts before class is crucial. I recommend that you underline important arguments, mark passages that confuse you, and look up difficult terms. Try to not read only for content and information, but also ask yourself the following questions:¹

- How is the text argued? How does it reach its conclusions?
- What kind of evidence is presented?
- What kind of audience does it seem to be written for? Who is it in dialogue with?
- Are there inconsistencies in the argument? Could the evidence be interpreted differently?

If you find the class readings difficult, don't hesitate to come to my office hours.

Essays

You will write two essays during the term (800 words maximum and no less than 700 words excluding bibliography and notes). I'll provide a prompt for each essay two weeks in advance. Essays will be based on class lectures and readings. Essays are a form of formal writing so you must proofread your work before submitting it. You are not allowed to cite sources from other classes in your essays.

Take-Home Final Exam

For this assignment, I'll provide you with the questions one week in advance. The exam will be based on class readings and lectures, and it will consist of short and long answer questions. Make sure to proofread your exam.

Penalties

A student may take a 72-hour (three-day) grace extension with no penalty **for the essays**. After that, a penalty of 5% per day will be applied to the grade received on the assignment (e.g., if the assignment is one day late and receives 80%, once the penalty is applied the assignment would

¹ Adapted from Deborah Knott's "Critical Reading towards Critical Writing."
www.utoronto.ca/writing/advise.html.

receive 75%). Assignments submitted one week past the original due date will not receive feedback, only a grade.

***Please note that this grace period does not include the Take-Home Final Exam.

Citation and References

Make sure to use a coherent citation system and to indicate all sources.

Useful Links for Citing Sources

- [Citing Your Sources](#)

Plagiarism

The act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another will not be tolerated. Please bear in mind that the following is plagiarism and will be treated as such: material taken without citation from the web; material taken from any book or other publication without citation; any ideas that can be traced to another source that you are not citing; the use of AI. These are all forms of cheating and will subject you to serious consequences.

AI

The use of ChatGPT or other generative AI tools is not permitted in this class. These tools tend to create [fake references](#), especially when it comes to recent publications or living authors, and they are playing a growing role in [spreading misinformation](#). They drive a trend towards [homogenization](#), and they have detrimental effects on the [environment and climate change](#).

Cellphones

Use of cellphones in class is also prohibited so make sure you put your cellphone away as soon as lecture begins. If you use your cellphone during class, I'll ask you to leave the room.

Copyright

“Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the *Canadian Copyright Act*. Students wishing to record lecture or other course material in any way are required to ask the instructor's explicit permission, and may not do so unless permission is granted. This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides, Quercus materials, etc. Such permission is only for that individual student's own study purposes and does not include permission to “publish” them in any way. **It is absolutely forbidden for a student to publish an instructor's notes** to a website or sell them in other form without formal permission.” [Faculty of Arts & Science Academic Handbook for Instructors](#) Section 4.5 Taping/Recording/Photographing Lectures etc.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights, and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

Students with accessibility needs

The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University's courses and programs. For more information on services and resources available to instructors and students, please see the [Accessibility Services website](#).

Religious observances

The University also provides reasonable accommodation of the needs of students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays. Students have a responsibility to alert members of the teaching staff in a timely fashion to upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences, and instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities at these times. For more information, and to link to the University's policy on accommodations for religious observances, please see the website of the [Office of the Vice-Provost, Students](#).

Course Schedule

I. Introduction

Week 1: January 7 – Qualitative and Quantitative Reasoning

Week 2: January 14 – Preconceptions and Commitments

- Lewin, Roger. (1987) 1997. "The Storytellers," "The Taung Child Rejection," and "The Taung Child Acceptance." In *Bones of Contention: Controversies in the Search for Human Origin*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 30-84.

II. The Classics

Week 3: January 21 – Paradigms

- Kuhn, Thomas S. 1996 (1962). "Anomaly and the Emergence of Scientific Discoveries," "Crisis and the Emergence of Scientific Theories," "The Response to Crisis," and "The Nature and Necessity of Scientific Revolutions." In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 52-110.

Week 4: January 28 – Epistemes and Power-Knowledge Systems (on Quercus)

- Foucault, Michel. "Preface [excerpt]." In *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Routledge Classic, xvi.
- Foucault, Michel et.al. 1980. "Truth and Power," In *Power/Knowledge: Select Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books, 109-133.

III. Producing Knowledge(s)

Week 5: February 4 – On Objectivity

- Daston, Lorraine. 1992. "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective." *Social Studies of Science* 22(4): 597-618.
- Porter, Theodore M. 1992. "Quantification and the Accounting Ideal in Science." *Social Studies of Science* 22(4):633-652.

Week 6: February 11 – Scientific Classifications

- Hacking, Ian. 2004. "Making-Up People." In *Historical Ontology*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 222-236 (on Quercus).

February 18 Readings Week, no class

Week 7: February 25 – Construction of Scientific Facts

- Latour, Bruno, and Steve Woolgar. 2013 (1986). "The Construction of a Fact: The Case of TRF(H)," and "The Creation of Order Out of Disorder." In *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 105-149; 230-258.

Week 8: March 4 – Statistical Analysis

- Muhammad, Khalil Gibran. 2021 (2010). "The Mismeasure of Crime" and "Saving the Nation: The Racial Data Revolution and the Negro Problem." In *The Condemnation of Blackness and the Making of Modern Urban America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1-34.
- Paley, Julia. 2001. "Making Democracy Count: Opinion Polls and Market Surveys in the Chilean Political Transition." *Cultural Anthropology* 16(2)135–164.

Week 9: March 11 – Scientific Pursuits outside the Lab

- Scott, James C. 1998. "Taming Nature: An Agriculture of Legibility and Simplicity." In *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 262-306.
- Jacobs, Nancy J. 2006. "The Intimate Politics of Ornithology in Colonial Africa." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48 (3): 564–603.

Week 10: March 18 – Politics of Knowledge Production

Listen to podcast and read article

- ["Made of Corn: How Genetically Modified Corn Changed Science, Academia, and Indigenous Rights in Mexico."](#) Part 2 of 2. New Books Network Podcast.
- Abu El-Haj, Nadia. 1998. "Translating Truths: Nationalism, the Practice of Archeology, and the Remaking of Past and Present in Contemporary Jerusalem." *American Ethnologist* 25(2): 166-188.

Recommended

- [“Modifying Maize: How Genetically Modified Corn Changed Science, Academia, and Indigenous Rights in Mexico.”](#) Part 1 of 2. New Books Network Podcast.

IV. Beyond the Quest for Knowledge

Week 11: March 25 – Otherness and Knowledge-Production

- Nadasdy, Paul. 2003. “‘It’s Not Really ‘Knowledge’ at All, It’s More a Way of Life,” “The Politics of TEK: Power and the Integration of Knowledge,” and “‘Just Like Whitemen’: Property and Land Claims in Kluane Country.” In *Hunter and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 60-146; 222-262.

Week 12: April 2 – On Ignorance

- Nottelmann, Nikolaj. 2016. “The Varieties of Ignorance.” In *The Epistemic Dimensions of Ignorance*. Edited by Rik Peels and Martijn Blaauw. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 33-56.
- Fricker, Miranda. 2016. “Epistemic Injustice and the Preservation of Ignorance.” In *The Epistemic Dimensions of Ignorance*. Edited by Rik Peels and Martijn Blaauw. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 160-177.