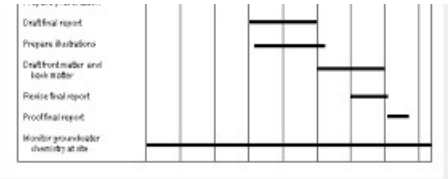
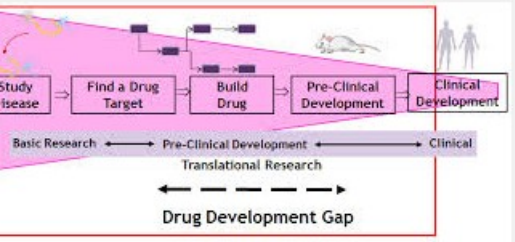
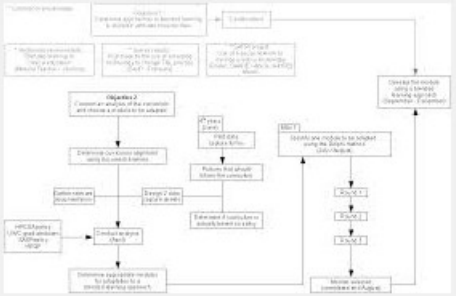
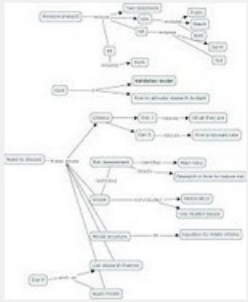
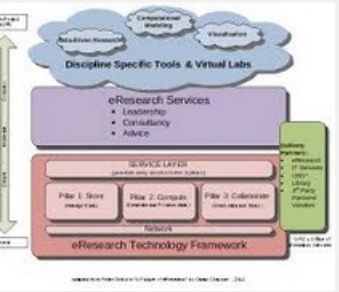
Week 9: Research design

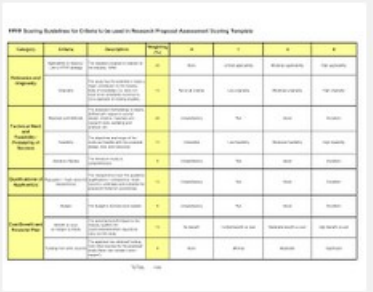


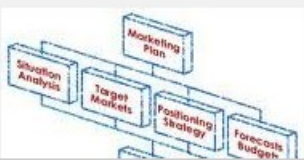










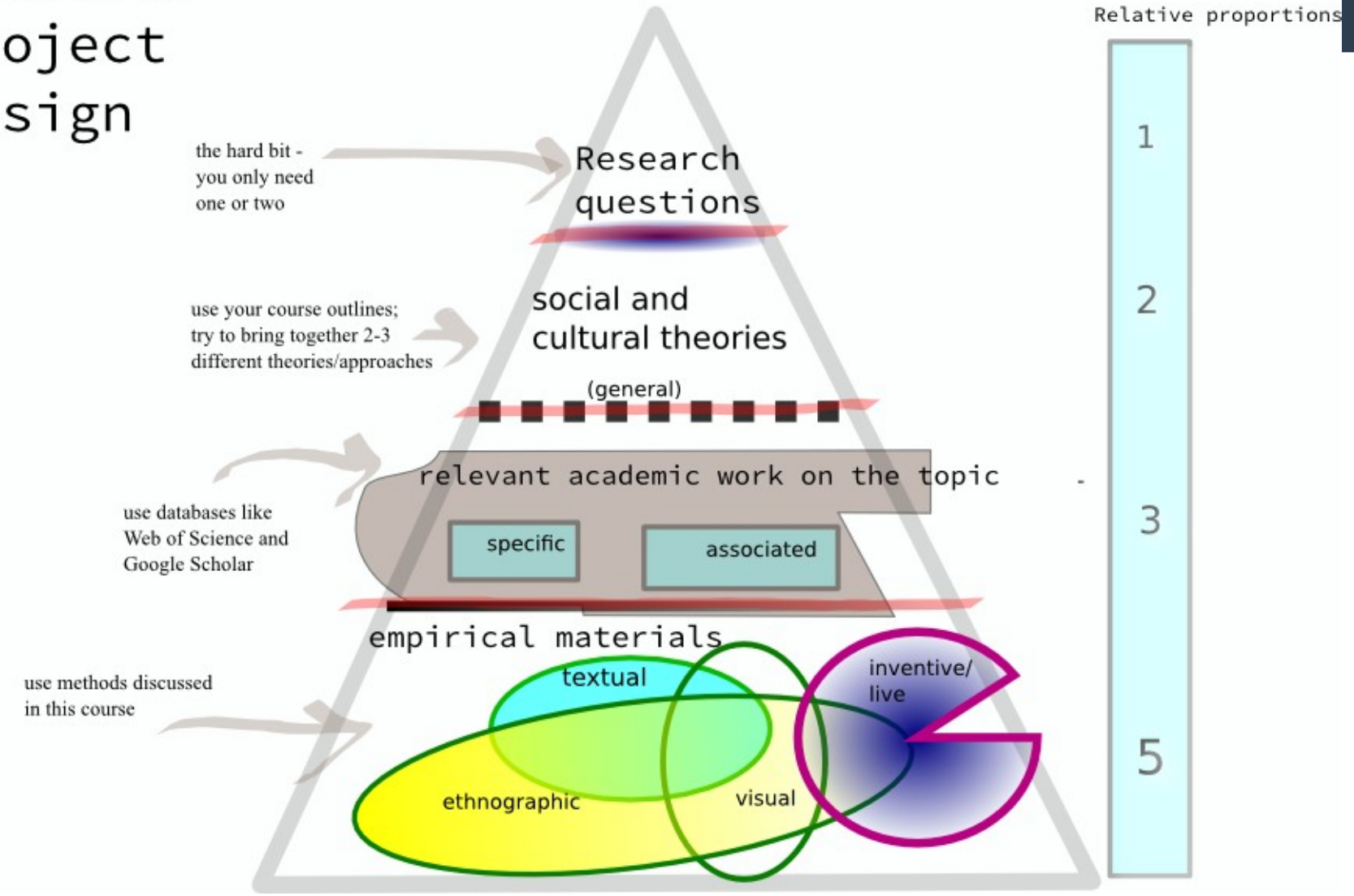


Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Supervisor meeting											
Submission of proposal											
Data collection methods											
Literature review											

Overview

- Re-visiting and amending research questions
- Re-visiting **discourse analysis**
- Finishing the online project: the plan/timetable of a project
- Preparation for presentations
- Essay question

Research project design



Revisiting the research questions

Exercise: research questions checklist

1. **Does the question address current problems or approaches in media and cultural studies?**
2. **Does the question have any built-in assumptions about culture, media, power, experience, values, etc.?**
3. **Are the terms used in the question reasonably well-defined?**
4. **Is the question empirically researchable given your time and resources?**
5. **Does the question have the potential to contribute something new?**

If there any problems with your research questions, discuss in the group how to fix them.

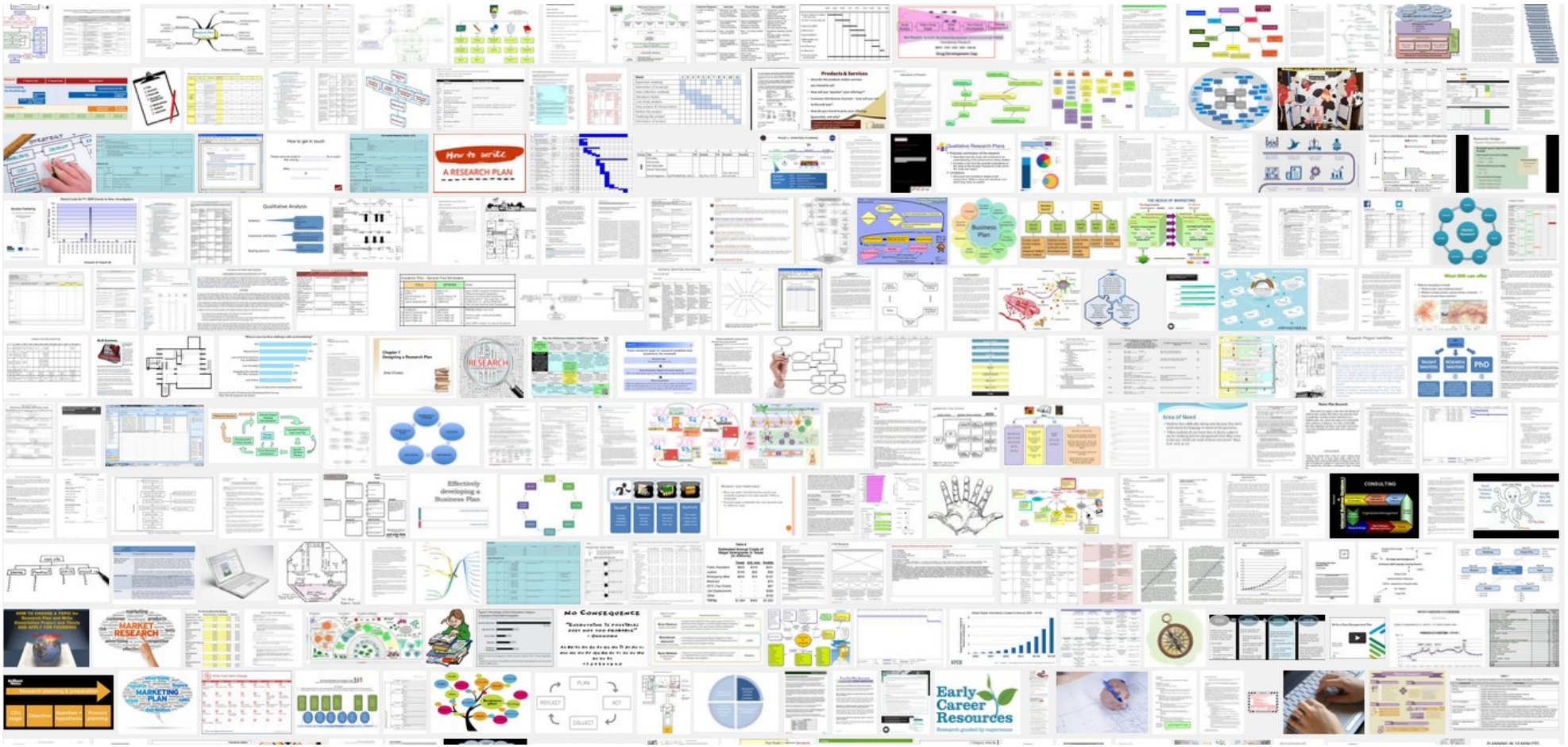
Re-visiting discourse analysis

- Read short extract from Kendall & Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods*, pages 139-141.
- What is the contrast between two different ways of analysing 'discourse' (in Focault's sense of that term)?
- What would this contrast mean practically?
- Did any of the guest researchers this term do discourse analysis?

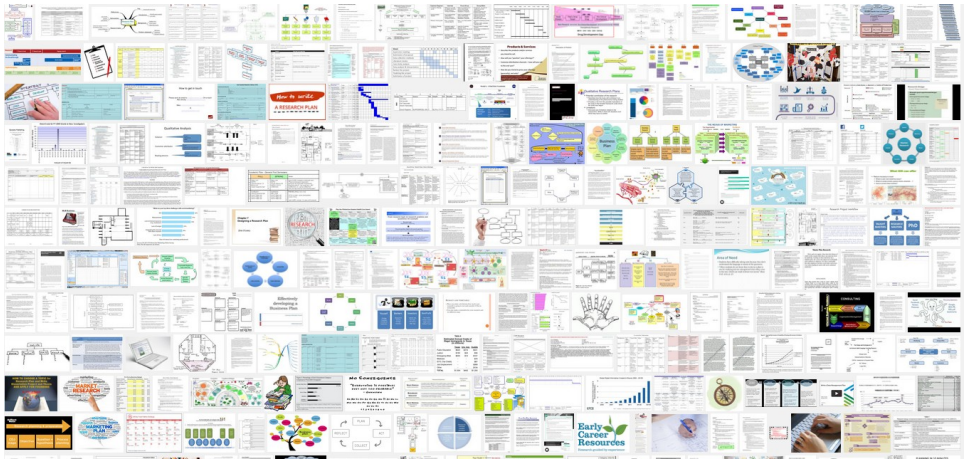
Revisiting discourse analysis for group research projects

- Identify some of the materials, documents, things or places in your group project that you might address using discourse analysis?
- How does this approach shift emphasis away from meaning? What does it emphasise instead of meaning?

Making a research plan



Making a research timetable?



- **Why do you need a plan or timetable at all? Why not just do the research?**
- **Timetable as one place where research questions are translated into actually do-able research activities**
- **Plans and timetables will always change and be revised as you do the research**

Exercise: the research timetable

- **Given your revised research questions (and the examples and approaches/methods you have on the blog), design a research plan for a project that would last 3 months**
  - **See Google images for many examples of how this can be done**
  - **Usually in the form of a timetable**
- Put the research plan online **and** write a description (300-400 words) that highlights the key features of the plan.
  - e.g. the way different methods help you deal with a particular research question.
  - e.g. any particularly unusual focus or novel approaches

Methods overview

	images	texts	places/things	people	organisations
semiotics	x	x	x		
compositional analysis	x		?		
discourse analysis of documents	x	x			x
discourse analysis of institutions/practices			x		x
ethnography of audiences			x	x	x
ethnography of media objects	x	x	x		
Participatory and live methods	x		x	x	x

Assessment criteria for the online group research project

1. The blog should show regular and frequent contributions from all members of a research throughout the course.

2. The contents of the blog should document the development of the research project beginning from choice of topic, through framing of questions, consideration of relevant academic work, design of research, examples of materials, objects, things, and events relating to the project, and critical, theoretically and methodologically informed writing about how the research group carried out the project.

3. The blog should demonstrate the research group has a considered and practiced with a range of different research methods and approaches, and this range of methods should include visual, textual, and audiovisual analysis, ethnographic and interview techniques, as well as consideration of medium specificity. It may also include activist, participant, and other kinds of critical practice such as photography, video-making, sound recordings, etc.

4. Effective research blogs will make use of the many different blogging possibilities of displaying images, writing entries, tagging entries to organise them, linking to other sources (including other blogs), and feedback through comments.

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Guidance on presentations (week 10)

- 12-15 minutes;
- 8-10 slides
- Everyone presents some part of the project

Typical presentation structure (12-15 minutes)

- **Title-introduction – framing remarks**
- **Topic and research question**
- **Related work – overview**
- **Plan of research**
- **Concrete examples**
- **Conclusion**
  - Implications
  - Remaining questions/problems

Essay question

Nick Couldry defines media cultures in this way:

> **I use the term “media culture” .. to refer to collections of sense-making practices whose main resources of meaning are media. The only criterion for identifying a media culture is that its members are likely to recognize its distinctiveness, its way of “hanging together”. When I say “sense-making”, I do not mean that media cultures are exclusively or primarily ways of making sense *of media*. I mean instead that they are ways of making sense *of the world* that work primarily *through*, or in reliance on, media' (Couldry Media, *Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*. 2012, 159–160).**

Critically analyse what this claim means for the practice of media and cultural studies research today. Describe how your group research project addressed the methodological challenges of empirically researching contemporary media culture. You will need to spend some time in your essay describing what your research was about, but this description should mainly support your reflections on the challenges of researching media cultures.

Essay question discussion

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- **Why did Adrian choose this quote from Couldry? Is he crazy?**
- **What has it got to do with methods in media and cultural studies? It talks about media and sense-making.**
- **What are the hard parts of this question?**
- **How does the group research project help me discuss this topic?**