# SOCL923 Critical Methods in Media and Cultural Studies 2014

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This was the first year I have run the course. There were 10 MA students, all doing the course for credit. Attendance on the course was very good overall, with only a few absences throughout the term. I only note this because it is quite unusual.

The format of the classes this year generally consisted of lectures/presentations for the first third of the session,  practical work on methods for the next third and a structured interview/conversation with a visitor for the remainder. Throughout the course, students were working each week on a group research project. The final few weeks of the course switched to work on group research projects. Throughout the course, students were given readings in preparation for the class, and follow-up work to do on group research blogs. (The course website documents this work week by week.) They also presented an overview of their project in the final week of the course.

The best features of the course for me were the conversations with visiting colleagues and the final project presentations. The conversations started out fairly weakly, but over the course, the students started to frame better questions and to sustain discussion with the visitors more effectively. I thought this kind of activity might also help them do better interviews in general. Similarly, the research projects floundered for many weeks, with quite strange postings on group research blogs and many diverging contributions. Around weeks 8-9, the projects took on greater consistency, and at least some of the students seemed to be grasping how research projects could be designed.

Written feedback and electronic evaluations from the students were highly positive. They asked for more visitors (although I don't see how that can fit), and gave useful feedback on how they managed the readings. I plan to change some of the readings for next year.

I varied the assessment for the course slightly by introducing assessment for the research blogs.