



Fachbereich 9 - Medienstudiengänge

Department 9 - Media Courses

Kommentar zur Lehrveranstaltung im SoSe 2026

Description of seminars

Veranstalter*in: Prof. Dr. Andreas Hepp

Lecturer:

Titel (dt.):

Titel (engl.): DMS / MPE D.1-2 Practical seminar 2: Media ethnography

(immer
angeben)

Beschreibung:

Description:

A media ethnography is always a unique journey: you immerse yourself in new (media) worlds, approach them through a variety of data, and develop a grounded description of what you find. Ethnography is the method of choice when you want to understand not just what people say, but what they actually do—the texture of everyday media use, the contradictions, the unexpected. Given the rapid rise of communicative AI and its effects on everyday life, journalism, politics, and culture, ethnographic approaches are more relevant than ever.

This practical methods seminar gives you the full toolkit: you will learn how to design and carry out a media ethnographic study from start to finish, including qualitative interviewing, on-site observation, online data collection, memo writing, and qualitative coding using Grounded Theory. You will not just study methods in theory—you will practice them in a real research setting.

What makes this seminar stand out

Field research at re:publica, Berlin (18–20 May 2026)

Rather than simulating fieldwork in a classroom, you will conduct real interviews and observations at re:publica—one of Europe's largest and most vibrant conferences on digital culture, media, and society. The sessions before the field trip prepare you specifically for this, and the session afterwards helps you process and analyze what you found. This is ethnography as it is actually practiced.

OpenQDA: collaborative coding software from ZeMKI

This seminar includes a hands-on workshop with OpenQDA—open-source qualitative data analysis software developed right here at ZeMKI. Designed for collaborative and transparent research, it is used in ongoing projects in the department. You will learn not just how to code qualitative data, but how to do it collaboratively in a modern digital research environment.

Open to MA and PhD students

In addition to MA students from both programs, this seminar is explicitly open to PhD students who wish to develop or deepen their ethnographic methods skills for their dissertations. Learning alongside researchers at different career stages enriches the seminar for everyone.

What you will be able to do

By the end of this seminar, you will be able to:

- Design and conduct a full media ethnographic research study, from question formulation to write-up.
- Conduct qualitative interviews and on-site observations in real research environments.
- Collect qualitative data online and prepare it for analysis.

- Analyze qualitative data systematically using Grounded Theory (open coding, focused coding, type-building).
- Work collaboratively with qualitative data using the OpenQDA software.
- Write and present a media ethnographic research report.
- Reflect critically on the ethics of ethnographic research.

What you will produce

By the end of this seminar, you will have carried out a complete media ethnographic study and written it up in a 20-page research report (deadline: September 15, 2026). This is a tangible piece of research—a portfolio item and a foundation for your MA thesis or PhD dissertation.

Throughout the seminar, you will actively contribute through:

- Active participation and collaborative group work in sessions
- Short progress presentations
- One formal presentation
- Reading and engaging with core texts
- Data collection and analysis

Literatur:

Literature:

Bryant, A., & Charmaz, K. (Eds.). (2019). *The SAGE handbook of current developments in grounded theory*. London: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory. Second edition*. London: Sage.

Kozinets, R. (2020). *Netnography. Third edition*. London: Sage.

Murphy, P. D. (2011). Locating media ethnography. In V. Nightingale (Ed.), *The handbook of media audiences* (Vol. 5, pp. 380-401). Malden: Wiley.

Nafus, D., & Knox, H. (Eds.). (2018). *Ethnography for a data-saturated world*. Manchester University Press.

Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J. (2016). *Digital ethnography. Principles and practice*. LA, London: Sage.

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. London: Sage.

Thomas, G. (2026). *How to do your research project: A guide for students*. 5th edition. London: Sage