

Essay: Foundations of Communication Research Methods

Due: Monday, 1/30 on D2L by class time (9 AM)

Grade: 100 pts (5% of course grade)

Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to illustrate that you know the difference between positivist and interpretive approaches to research in the communication field. You need to demonstrate that you can critically analyze approaches that other studies use and that you know how to differentiate among approaches when designing your own study.

First, using the readings from Unit 1 (L&T, Park & Guan, and Chen), please answer the following questions. Your paper should be in essay format, NOT in a question and answer format:

- What is the definition and some characteristics of a positivist approach?
- What is the definition and some characteristics of an interpretive approach?
- What is the difference between positivist and interpretivist approaches to studying the relationship between communication and social life?
- What different methods might you use for each approach?
- What are quantitative methods?
- What are qualitative methods?

Use L&T when defining terms, and compare and contrast the two face-work articles when referencing differences in study design.

Second, discuss a potential study that you could conduct during the time of this class. In a few sentences, state the type of communication you are interested in studying and the qualitative methods through which you could learn about that type of communication. Explicitly state why your study is *interpretive* (e.g., this is an interpretive study because...).

Requirements

- 3-5 double spaced pages, Times New Roman, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins,
- Organization
 - Introduction of the paper with a thesis sentence
 - Each paragraph has a topic sentence
 - Use quotes (from readings) and/or specific examples to support points you make in different parts of the essay
 - A good organizational trick: quote from readings, explain quote in your own words, give an example of concept (e.g. L&T say positivism is...That means...For example in x article they do...)
- Citations:
 - Cite ideas and quotes from readings with last name of the author, and if you use a quote, the page number – DO NOT INCLUDE TITLES OF READINGS
 - i.e. Lindlof and Taylor (year) define a positivist approach as, “.....” (p. #)