

Dissertation Seminar
NETNOGRAPHY AND ONLINE CONSUMER RESEARCH

Academic Year: **2017/2018**

Semester: **2nd**

Instructor(s): **Pedro de Oliveira**

Max. Number of Students: **9**

Seminar Description:

This seminar is aimed at students interested in developing their Master thesis using netnography - qualitative methods of online consumer research. Developed by the anthropologist Robert Kozinets, it uses data 'naturally' found on the internet (blogs, social network pages, consumer forums, reader's columns, etc.) with a view of producing a cultural interpretation of a specific brand, industry/category, product or service.

Due to its versatility, netnography can be used across distinct problems and sectors to serve a variety of purposes: for instance, suggesting new strategies for positioning and product development (see bibliography, references 8 and 10); learning about gaming culture with the goal of understanding consumer's experience (see bibliography, reference 3); learning about a specific brand community to understand its culture and gain consumer insights for communication (see bibliography, reference 6); learning about the consumer/tourist experience across the board (see bibliography, reference 1).

The course combines a strong academic and applied components. Students start by picking a brand, product or service with significant social media presence. After identifying a particular problem or research question connected to it, students learn to curate down internet searches, collecting and analysing data in relation to their problem. Students are taught and encouraged to use a cultural approach in making sense of research data. Each thesis must end up with a set of strategic recommendations for their chosen brand, category, product or service.

Seminar Content:

The seminar is build around peer and supervisor's feedback by mixing individual and group sessions. Throughout, students present their work in a group, comparing and discussing ideas, questions and data interpretation. Each session involves completion of a task for which feedback will be given in the following session. Attendance is mandatory.

Group and individual sessions will focus on the following themes:

- Understanding Online Culture and Online Communities
- Netnography: Definition, Methods and Uses



- Netnography Case Studies
- Planning a Netnography: Defining a Research Problem
- Collecting and Analyzing Data
- Ethical Considerations in the Practice of Netnography
- Writing and Presenting Data

Seminar Objectives:

1. Prepare students to write a dissertation on a topic of their choosing using an approach rooted in netnography, present results in public and discuss it in a group context;
2. Conduct an adequate literature review to frame the chosen research problem;
3. Learn to gather, categorize, analyze, interpret, and evaluate relevant data in social media in the conduct of netnography;
4. Learn to use marketing frameworks to identify relevant problems with brands, critically understand the contexts underlying those problems, then successfully balance competing priorities and points of view in devising a solution;
5. Learn to apply netnography as a practical management tool

Bibliography / Recommended Textbook(s) / Additional Readings:

1. Ahmed Rageh, T.C. Melewar, Arch Woodside, (2013) "Using netnography research method to reveal the underlying dimensions of the customer/tourist experience", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* , Vol. 16 Issue: 2, pp.126-149
2. Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 1, 385-405.
3. García-Álvarez, Ercilia, Jordi López-Sintas, and Alexandra Samper-Martinez (2015). The Social Network Gamer's Experience of Play: A Netnography of Restaurant City on Facebook'. *Games and Culture*, 8 (July), 1-23
4. Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.
5. Kozinets, R.V. (2002). 'The field behind the screen: using netnography for marketing research in online communities', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39 (1): 62-72
6. Kozinets, R.V. (2007). Inno-Tribes: Star Trek as Wikimedia. In Cova, Bernard, Robert V. Kozinets & Avi Shankar, eds. (2007). *Consumer Tribes*. Oxford and Burlington, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 194-209

7. Kozinets, R.V. (2010a). *Netnography: Doing Ethnographic Research Online*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications
8. Kozinets, R.V. (2010b). *The marketer's secret weapon: how social media understanding drives innovation* (White Paper). California: Netbase Solutions, Inc.
9. Kozinets, R.V. (2015). *Netnography: Redefined (2nd edn)*. Abingdon: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
10. Oliveira, P. (2017) Looking into nostalgia and the Boca Doce brand in online communications: a netnographic exploration of a Portuguese instant dessert. *International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media*. Special Number 2 – Marketing and Digital Business, 48-66, Available at <http://u3isjournal.isvoug.pt/index.php/ijmcm>.

Biography:

Pedro Oliveira is a PhD anthropologist (Brunel University) with training in clinical psychology (Coimbra University), working in the intersection of theory and practice across several areas of consumer research. His main focus consists in bringing qualitative methods and cultural analysis to consumer research. As an individual worker or an agency worker, Pedro has consulted for companies like Sonae Sierra, Oni Communications, Esporão Wines, Critical Software, Novabase, Honda and Serco. In parallel with his activities as a corporate researcher, Pedro works as a clinical psychologist in private practice.

Contact(s) and Office Hours:

Pedro Oliveira
Email: PedroOliveira232@yahoo.com

Schedule:

- **Session I**, 5/02/2018, 18h – 20h
Content: Instructor Presentation. Module Introduction. Definition of Research Problem and Research Universe (i.e., potential web places for data collection)

Required Work: by Friday 9/02/2018 – send dissertation topic and initial definition of Research Universe (by 18.00)

- **Session II, 12/02/2018, 18h – 20h**

Content: Literature Review & Individual Feedback on previous assignment (dissertation topic + initial definition of Research Universe)

Required Work: literature review draft by the 23/02/2018, 18.00h

- **Session III**

Contents: Individual Meetings on the week of 26/02/2018 (one hour per student, face to face or skype).

Required Work: send final literature review by the 2/03/2018, 18.00

- **Session IV, 5/03/2018, 18h – 20h**

Contents: Methodology: Storying and collecting data/Fieldnotes - Ethical Considerations & Individual feedback on previous assignment & writing up a methodology summary

Required Work: Send Research Universe (places in the web where data will be collected) plus examples of data gathered with initial fieldnotes

- **Session V, 19/03/2018, 18h – 20h**

Contents: Making sense of data: grounded theory and cultural analysis & Feedback on Previous assignment

Required Work: Sending a thematic network of main themes identified at this point & sending a methodology summary

- **Session VI, 09/04/2018, 18h – 20h**

Contents: Making sense of data (cont.): articulating theory, fieldnotes, themes and research universe

Required Work: Submit three pages of written material based on netnographic fieldnotes integrating theory, analysis and consumers' data gathered on the internet

- **Session VII, week of 16/04/2018, individual supervisory sessions, one hour per student (face to face or skype)**

- **Session VIII**, 30/04/2018, 18h – 20h

Contents: Conclusions, Limitations and Final Recommendations

Required Work: send final chapter by the 11/05/2018, 18.00h

- **Session IX**, week of 14/05/2018 – individual meetings (one hour per student, face to face or skype) / Recommendations for Presentation

Deadlines:

The full list of dates and deadlines can be consulted [here](#).