

ANT: from methodological principles to concrete strategies for managing the in-between

Faculty

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Prerequisites

Only PhD students are accepted, and the course is aimed at students with a social scientific background. In preparation of the course, students are expected to produce a short paper. It must include a description of their project (1 page), discussions of the central methodological challenges of the project (1 page), as well as an excerpt from the analyses of the thesis (2-3 pages). Students are also expected to prepare a short presentation of their paper and to participate actively in discussions. Participation in the entire course is a prerequisite for receiving the course diploma.

Aim and content

This course will address some of the methodological challenges of producing analyses based on Actor-Network-Theory and related theoretical frameworks (predominantly approaches which have grown out of the tradition of Science and Technology Studies).

The aim is to interrogate how we might devise concrete research strategies based on Actor-Network-Theory's material semiotic approach, in particular the principles of symmetry and agnosticism. A premise underlying the concept of actor-networks is that we should not strive for the reconciliation of dualities (between, for instance, subject/object, material/symbolic, virtual/real), but completely dissolve them and follow how heterogeneous actants are interwoven in complex assemblages that both comprise and transcend such categories. Now, while ANT scholars have argued *theoretically* for the dissolution of dualities and offered countless *empirical stories* of heterogeneous networks, the ANT literature is rarely particularly articulate about what we could call middle-range methodological issues regarding, for instance, casing, delineation, etc. Hence, although theoretical discussions and empirical examples are part of this course, it will give priority to discussions about challenges arising from concrete research designs. If we consider ANT a methodology of the in-between of 'the virtual and the real', 'the immaterial and the material', 'the social and the technical', we might ask how we turn this type of methodological sensibility into concrete strategies. We will discuss the possibilities and pitfalls of giving equal attention to different kinds of interpretations, agencies and elements in our production and analysis of empirical material. And we will discuss how to go about creating convincing accounts which do not privilege particular actors or presuppose

established groups, and which are not stuck in social explanations or technological determinist views. We will explore how to produce analyses which interweave resources such as to bring out the diversity of empirical situations rather than rely on the structuring of accounts into virtual and real, immaterial and material, and social and technical. And, we will ask, if the analytical ambition is to weave together different types of resources into integrated wholes, how do we decide what the whole is, and which types of resources to exclude?

Lecture plan

The morning sessions are devoted to lectures given by invited guest faculty. They offer examples of coherent vocabularies tackling some of the issues described above. The rest of the course is designed to focus on the methodological problems arising from the participants' own work. Therefore, each afternoon is structured thematically, to address the central challenges described in participants' papers. The required papers are thus of the utmost importance as input to the course.

20 September

21 September

22 September

23 September

9-10 Introduction to the course	9.30-10: Wrap up on yesterday's work	9.30-10: Wrap up on yesterday's work	9.30-10: Wrap up on yesterday's work
10-12: Mike Michael: 'Idiotic Methodology: Poetic Matter and Virtual Events'	10-12 Barbara Czarniawska: ANT and organizing	10-12 Anne Beaulieu: Network Realism: A virtual ethnographic perspective on visual knowledge in networks	10-12: Exercise: Rethink your paper
12-13 lunch	12-13 lunch	12-13 lunch	12-13 lunch
13-16 Discussions of central methodological problems based on participants papers	13-16 Discussions of central methodological problems based on participants papers	13-16 Discussions of central methodological problems based on participants papers	13-14.30: Wrap up

Teaching methods

The teaching style of the course is a mixture of lectures, discussion seminars with short presentations, and group work. A large part of the course consists of dialogues in which students are expected to be very active. Rather than presenting programmatic statements of ANT or offering case-stories to learn from, we will have discussions of incomplete research designs as our basis for exploring how ANT methodological principles can be translated into specific methods. This is to support PhD students in demonstrating methodological craftsmanship through convincing accounts of mundane choices and middle-range methodological concerns.

Learning Objectives

Students should acquire a refined understanding of ANT as a methodological framework and be able to formulate coherent answers to questions about their own methodological use of ANT-principles. The course does not introduce to specific methods, neither does it give an introduction to ANT as theory.

Course literature

Beaulieu, Anne (forthcoming, 2010) 'From Co-location to Co-Presence', *Social Studies of Science*.

Beaulieu, Anne, Andrea Scharnhorst, and Paul Wouters (2007): 'Not Another Case Study: A Middle-Range Interrogation of Ethnographic Case Studies in the Exploration of E-science' *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 32 (6): 672-692.

Czarniawska, B. & Hernes, T. (eds.) (2005) ANT and organizing. Malmö/Copenhagen: Liber/CBS (Introduction)

Czarniawska, B. (2008) A theory of organizing. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar (Chapters 1 and 2)

Dodge, Martin (2005): 'The Role of Maps in Virtual Research Methods' in C. Hine (ed), *Virtual Methods – issues in social research on the Internet*, Berg, Oxford

Fraser, M. (forthcoming) 'Facts, Ethics and Event,' in C. Bruun Jensen and K. Rödje (eds) *Deleuzian Intersections in Science, Technology and Anthropology*. New York: Berghahn Press

Gaver, W., Boucher, A., Pennington, S., and Walker, B. (2004) 'Cultural Probes and the value of uncertainty', *Interactions*, Volume XI.5, pp. 53-56

Michael, Mike and W. Gaver (2009) 'Home beyond home: Dwelling with threshold devices' *Space and Culture*, 12, 359-370.

Michael, M. (2009). 'Engaging with Engagement: The complexity of material beliefs'. In J. Beaver, T. Kerridge and S. Pennington (eds), *Material Beliefs* (pp. 3-6). London: Goldsmiths

Pantzar, Mika, Elizabeth Shove, and Martin Hand: 'Innovations in fun: the careers and carriers of digital photography and floorball'

www.ncrc.fi/files/4717/2005_01_publications_manufacturingleisure.pdf

Stengers, I. (2005) 'The Cosmopolitical Proposal'. In B. Latour and P. Weibel (eds), *Making Things Public* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press pp.994-1003.

Suggested further readings

Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist performativity. *Sign*, 23, 801-831.

Czarniawska, B. & Hernes, T. (eds.) (2005) *ANT and organizing*. Malmö/Copenhagen: Liber/CBS (Introduction)

Latour, B. (2005) *Re-assembling the social*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Michael, M. (in press). Anecdote. In C. Lury and N. Wakeford (eds). *Inventive Methods: The Happening of the Social*. Routledge

Michael, M. (2009). 'The-Cellphone-In-The-Countryside': On Some Ironic Spatialities Of Technonature'. In Damian White And Chris Wilbert (eds). *Technonatures* (pp. 85-104). Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press.

Practical information

Time: 20-23 September 2010

Place: Department of Organization, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

ECTS: 4 points

Deadline for submitting application and short papers: 15 August 2010

Maximum participants: 20

PhD students not enrolled in The Organization and Management School can apply to participate free of charge. This application should include a short description of their institutional affiliation and their PhD-project and submitted before 1 August to:

Department of Organization

Kilevej 15

2000 Frederiksberg

Denmark

Att. Katja Høgh Tingleff