Grady and chaflin

Grady: becoming a visual sociologist

Why?

* visual media dominate society
* visual data: tangibly objective and irreducibly subjective
* using images makes argument more vivid and more lucid
* documentary format can be adapted to treat sociological topics well

why hasn’t it taken off?

* form of shyness? (????)
* performance anxiety

here are the steps that matter:

1. treat images as data and NOT as instructional aid
   1. the more we learn about images, how they are made, etc, the more we can understand/interpret them (i.e., images have histories, have processes of production, etc)
   2. pictures encode a lot of data in one place – they call for us to imbue them with meaning
   3. illustration of point sells images short --- it cuts things off, rather then opens them up – simplifies complex subjects
   4. need to learn to look at images differently, more closely – pictures always contain extraneous material
2. images must be viewed seriously
   1. usually used for emotional response – which trains students to see them in a certain way
   2. do it more often in class
   3. sociology – turns the mundane into meaningful
   4. collective viewing has value
3. always think sociologically
   1. defining questions – what counts as a sociological question?
   2. Operationalizing variables -- Methods
      1. Define universe of meaning
      2. Sample from that universe
         1. “random”
         2. “scripts”
      3. Code the data – his example: what counts as “nudity”
   3. Providing insight – what new ways of seeing are offered?
4. Learn a craft
   1. Respect tools
   2. One step at a time
   3. Be prepared to fail \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*
   4. Start simply – better to get 10 decent, than 1 perfect
5. Always produce images
   1. Improves “eye”
   2. Better understand the choices of others
   3. Tips:
      1. Wide angle – lots of information
      2. Make sure to make visible subjects and what they are doing
      3. Evaluate shots
      4. Use medium that makes sense for use
6. Look at other people’s work
   1. Helps improve own work
   2. Stimulate imagination.thinking
   3. Comparative – different people shot the “same” topic differently
7. Integrate visual into existing courses
8. Construct entire course
9. Produce visual essay
10. Empower students
11. Organize colleagues
12. Become active with other visual sociologists

Chalfen: looking 2 ways

* a way to study both “site” and “sight”
* Jenks: “the modern world is very much a “seen” phenomenon. Sociology, however, itself in many senses the emergent discourse of modernity, has been rather neglectful of addressing cultural ocular conventions and has subsequently become somewhat inarticulate in relation to the visual dimensions of social relations” (1995)
* What is visual sociology? “a cultural approach to the study of how people look through time and space” (25)
* Eyeglasses (I have examples!) [[your brain will adjust]]
* Cameras don’t take pictures
* 2 ways people look: 1) how they appear, 2) how they see [[things to keep in mind: “according to whom?”]]

things to think about with the looking as appearing…

* looking as reflection of state of mind/state of self
* body size/shape
* body color
* modifications (temp and permanent)
* add/ons (e.g., fashion, etc.)
* carry/ons [accessories]
* wrapping the body/wrapping the culture

extending appearance…

* how to bodies move through space
* occupy space?

Material culture

* our stuff
* our surroundings
* our garbage
* etc.

how people look/see  
MICRO

* the norms of looking – what can we look at, what can’t we, who decides, for what reasons?
* Where do people’s eyes go? How is that (not) policed?

MACRO

* how are we taught to look at…
  + art
  + pop culture
  + scientific images
  + tourist spaces/activities
* reception studies (how are things interpreted?)
* epistemology (how do we know?)

let’s add cameras!

* same distinction between seeing and looking, now with the camera added on
* what are the conditions that people find themselves in front of the camera? How does that change their appearance? Their looking?

Indigenous ways of seeing (e.g., photo voice – like at Vermont folklife museum)

Home media – how is home life constructed through visual narratives?