

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Graduate School of Education

EDRS 822 - ADVANCED APPLICATIONS OF QUALITATIVE METHODS

CRN – 12027 3 credits, Spring 2016
Wednesdays, 4:30-7:10 pm, West 1001

PROFESSOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

- A. Prerequisite(s):** EDRS 810 and 812 or equivalent coursework.
- B. University catalog course description:** Advanced seminar devoted to study of current topics in qualitative research. Deals with cutting-edge information on selected advanced topics in qualitative research, and provides opportunities to apply new skills and knowledge to projects related to students' interests.
- C. Expanded course description:**

Geometric patterns are seen as a cornerstone of Islamic decoration, mainly due to their non-representational quality and associations with balance and order. Circles, squares, stars and multisided polygons are duplicated, interlaced, and arranged in intricate combinations to form highly complex patterns...All Islamic pattern is based on the idea that what we see is always and only a part of a whole that extends to infinity.

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar

What does this quote on Islamic Art have to do with Advanced Qualitative Research Methods? One could ask what does not? Culture, patterns, analysis, reflexivity and interpretation are common to both and increasingly research methods seek to better understand the complexities that are inherent to the context, culture, and question.

What are the theoretical and practical implications that undergird approaches to qualitative methodology? What are the innate meanings, hidden challenges, and critical juxtapositions that inform the ways in which we "do" research? This course is an advanced seminar that will try to answer these questions and focus on current and emerging issues in qualitative research. In this course, student will explore the philosophical underpinnings of design and application, as well as various analytical techniques. This course consists of three modules, each on a particular aspect of qualitative research including design and theories of qualitative research, methods and analysis and finally quality issues and ethics in conducting qualitative research.

This advanced course offers students flexibility to pursue methodological interests as they build towards their dissertation and the instructor will expect students to work closely with their major

advisor in developing the questions and research focus that they will subsequently build on during this course.

OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to enable students to:

- Develop an awareness of alternative philosophies and methods of qualitative research in relation to general perspectives of inquiry.
- Develop alternative research designs for various forms of qualitative research.
- Develop and critique various methods of data collection and analysis, depending on emerging and changing research design.
- Critique data collection and analysis techniques in relation to relevant literature on qualitative research methods.
- Critique your research project and suggest areas for improvement.
- Critique empirical qualitative research according to standards for quality research.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

This course includes a variety of learning activities: discussions in seminar format, text-based/multi-media presentation of course materials, experiential learning activities including interactive assignments, cooperative learning group activities, online discussions and activities, and lecture.

TEXTS

Required

Demerath, P. (2009). *Producing success: The culture of personal advancement in an American high school*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (2013). *The landscape of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Luttrell, W. (Ed.). (2010). *Qualitative educational research: Readings in reflexive methodology and transformative practice*. New York: Routledge.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Other readings as assigned. (Articles available on Blackboard in the Readings Folder.)

A dissertation of your choice (details to be provided in class).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

This course demands active and engaged participation, thorough reading of assigned texts and articles, as well the willingness to be critical readers of research. While each student will have significantly

different research interests, I expect students to be critical friends to each other and create safe spaces for dialogue, conversation and yes, even critique.

Attendance and Participation (25 points – 15 for attendance and participation and 10 for 2 learning presentations)

Attendance and Participation: Class participation is important not only for each individual student's learning, but for the learning and success of our class as a whole. Class participation is a factor in grading; instructors may use absences, tardiness, or early departure in both on-line and campus class sessions as de facto evidence of non-participation and as a result lower a student's grade (Mason Catalog 2011-12).

Please note the following attendance and participation policies:

1. Two tardies are equal to one absence, and missing 30% or more of class sessions will result in automatic course failure. For each unexcused absence (a determination made by the instructor) one point will be deducted from your attendance and class participation points up to a total of 15 points.
2. Participants are expected to read the assigned materials, complete on-line activities including pre-session Blackboard assignments, arrive promptly, attend all class meetings for the entire session, and participate in on-line and face-to-face class discussions.
3. If, due to an emergency, you will not be able to participate during a given week of class, please contact the professor as soon as possible. Students are responsible for obtaining information given during class discussions/sessions despite attendance from a classmate.

Learning Presentations

During weeks 5 and 10 students will be provided with instructions to prepare a short presentation based on readings to share with a small group of classmates. One will be face to face, while the other will be online. Each student must prepare a 1-page handout of their plan for the presentation addressing these key elements: What I learned, what I am critiquing, further questions I have and how I will organize my session. More details will be provided in class.

Module Papers (3)

Over the course of the semester, you will write three scholarly papers. One way to look at these three papers is that together they will become a draft of your chapter three for your dissertation. If you are not doing a qualitative dissertation, or you are not ready to write your chapter three, then these three papers will stand as scholarly explorations of the three main topics of the course: theory and philosophy; design and methods; and quality. All papers will be emailed to the instructor by classtime on the date due.

Each paper will address the topics covered during that particular segment of the class. Guidance for these papers will be relatively individual as the papers will be representations of where each of you is located as a scholar. There are clear parameters of what these papers should and should not be:

- a. They are not a regurgitation of the readings assigned. The readings assigned are a snapshot of the field. You will be expected to find literature that addresses your stance, design or concerns on quality. These papers will represent what you are learning as you explore your identity as a qualitative researcher.
- b. These papers should not provide more than a single page that focuses on your research

interests. While you may draw upon methodological issues from literature in your chosen topic, none of these papers are to be about reviewing your literature on the topic. These are to be research methods focused and as such you can connect to your field, but will draw upon methodological considerations.

- c. These papers should be technically correct and between 9-12 pages in length. APA guidelines for writing and referencing are expected. Points will be deducted for repetitive mistakes.
- d. These papers will allow you to interact personally with the material based on your own research interests and dissertation development. I suggest you communicate directly with your major professor/dissertation advisor about these assignments, as they may be used in either your proposal or dissertation. I would be happy to discuss this with you and your advisor via e-mail.

In most instances, these papers should provide a clear and adequate introduction of each module (4 points); a scholarly exploration of relevance and connection to your researcher identity, topic, or interests (4 points); concerns that might need to be taken into account (4 points); critical decision points and junctures (4 points); and gaps that will still need to be addressed or direction for future exploration (4 points). Clarity of writing, effort, and APA formatting, and careful editing will earn 5 points. Yet, due to the individualized nature of these papers and the different needs of students, the instructor may provide additional guidance or make alterations to these general expectations.

Course Assessment

Assignment	Points
Participation	25
Module One Paper	25
Module Two Paper	25
Module Three Paper	25
Total	100

Grades on assignments turned in late will be reduced 10%, and assignments more than one week late will not be accepted. Attendance is very important to class participation; one point will be deducted per class-hour absence.

Grading Scale:

At George Mason University, course work is measured in terms of quantity and quality. A credit normally represents one hour per week of lecture or recitation or not fewer than two hours per week of laboratory work throughout a semester. The number of credits is a measure of quantity. The grade is a measure of quality. The system for grading graduate courses is as follows:

Grade	GRADING	Graduate Courses
A+	100	Satisfactory / Passing
A	94-99	Satisfactory / Passing
A-	90-93	Satisfactory / Passing

B+	85-89	Satisfactory / Passing
B	80-84	Satisfactory / Passing
C	70-79	Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education
F	<69	Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education

All assignments will be evaluated holistically using a mastery grading system; the general rubric is described below. A student must demonstrate “mastery” of each requirement of an assignment; doing so will result in a “B” level score. Only if a student additionally exceeds the expectations for that requirement—through quality, quantity, or the creativity of her/his work—will she/he be assessed with an “A” level score. With a mastery grading system, students must *choose* to “go above and beyond” in order to earn “A” level scores.

- “A” level score = Student work is well-organized, exceptionally thorough and thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines, as well as including additional relevant component. Student supports assertions with multiple concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified and extended to other contexts. Student work is exceptionally creative, includes additional artifacts, and/or intentionally supports peers’ efforts.
- “B” level score = Student work is well organized, thorough, thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines. Student supports assertions with concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified.
- “C” level score = Student provides cursory responses to assignment requirements. Student followed all format and component guidelines. Development of ideas is somewhat vague, incomplete, or rudimentary. Compelling support for assertions is typically not provided.
- “F” level score = Student work is so brief that any reasonably accurate assessment is impossible

GMU Policies and Resources for students

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>]
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at soon as possible. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
MODULE ONE: Philosophy and Theory of Qualitative Research		
WEEK 1 January 20	Course Introduction Syllabus and Introductions Course overview and syllabus requirements Course Expectations and interests	No readings this week PLEASE NOTE – you must read Demerath’s book on your own schedule – but it must be finished by the start of module 2 – Feb 25 th .
WEEK 2 January 27	Overview of QR Paradigms and Conceptual Frameworks	Denzin and Lincoln - chapters 1 and 3 Patton, chpts. 1 Luttrell, chpt. 1 Labaree, D. F. (1998) Flick (2015)
WEEK 3 February 3	The Ongoing Debate: The Value of Qualitative Research Questioned	Denzin and Lincoln - chapters 6 Patton, chpt. 2-3 Luttrell, chpt. 4 Hammersley, M. (2000). Demerath, P. (2006)
WEEK 4 February 10	Framing Design to Orientation	Denzin and Lincoln - chapters 9 Patton, chpt. 4 Luttrell (preview section two) Koro-Ljungberg, M. Yendol-Hoppey, D., Smith, J. J., &

		Hayes, S. B. (2009).
WEEK 5 February 17	Learning Presentation 1	
MODULE TWO: Design and Methods of Qualitative Research		
WEEK 6 February 24	Selection: A Critique of Convenience	Patton, chpt. 5 Ghaffar-Kuchar, A. (2014). 'Narrow-minded and oppressive' or a 'superior culture'? Implications of divergent representations of Islam for Pakistani-American youth. <i>Race, Ethnicity and Education</i> . MODULE PAPER ONE DUE
WEEK 7 March 2	Evaluating Qualitative Methods of Data Collection	Patton, chpts. 6-7 Brown, L., & Durrheim, K. (2009). Gubrium, E., & Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2005). Kvale, S. (2006).
March 7-12	SPRING BREAK	NO CLASS
Week 8 March 16	Beyond Coding: Interpreting and Generating Meaning	Patton, chpt. 8 Luttrell, chpts. 12, 26-27 Kvale, S. (1996). Maxwell, J. (2004).
WEEK 9 March 23	Techniques, analysis and making meaning	Enosh, G., & Buchbinder, E. (2005). Wolgemuth, J. R. (2006).
WEEK 10 March 30	Online Learning Presentation – Class this week will not meet face to face	
MODULE THREE: Quality Issues in Qualitative Research		
WEEK 11 April 6	Quality and finality(?) of QR	Denzin & Lincoln – chapter 4 Luttrell, chpts. 11, 17, 22, 27 Koro-Ljungberg & Barko (2012) Demerath & Mathias (2015) Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007). V Module Paper Two due

WEEK 12 April 13	Trust and Rigor	Patton, chpt. 9 Cho, J., & Trent, A. (2006). Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton (2001)
WEEK 13 April 20	Ethics in Qualitative Research Representing the "other" in qualitative research.	Denzin & Lincoln – chpt 5 Luttrell, chpts. 7-8 Freeman, M. (2000). Ghaffar-Kuchar, A. (2014). Writing culture; inscribing lives: a reflective treatise on the burden of representation in native research. <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i> . Baily, S. (2011).
Week 14 April 27	Ethics in Qualitative Research Part 2	Denzin & Lincoln – chpt 14 Reybold, L. E. (2008). Anfara, Jr., V. A., Brown, K. M., & Mangione, T. L. (2002). Howe, K. R. (2009).
WEEK 15 May 4	Dialogue: Module Paper Three Discussion topics are decided by class focus. This can be a comprehensive review and/or assessment of the material covered thus far or an additional topic that would be helpful for the class – no new reading will be assigned however. Module Paper Three due	