

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

EDRS 822 .001- ADVANCED APPLICATIONS OF QUALITATIVE METHODS
3 credits, Spring 2020
Tuesdays 7:20-10:00 pm, Music/Theater Building 1008, Fairfax Campus

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. Course Overview

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.

COURSE DELIVERY METHOD

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.

My philosophy towards the content of this course is exploratory and investigative. Students are expected to be prepared, engage actively, and question their assumptions critically, and support peers

in exploring their own perceptions towards research. Systematic study of an issue requires a deeper understanding of why the research matters, how it can be undertaken ethically, and the role the researcher plays in the process. As the instructor, it is my job to press students to question their own knowledge and beliefs, and as such, the course will depend on the active presence of students' over the 15 weeks.

LEARNER 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.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Not applicable.

TEXTS

REQUIRED

Crotty, M. (2015). *The foundations of social research*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Hatch, A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in educational settings*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press

Other readings as assigned. (Articles available on Blackboard under Course Content).

RECOMMENDED - Supplemental Texts (*just for your information—you do not need to purchase*)

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

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (Eds.) (2003). *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

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

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Patel, L. (2016). *Decolonizing educational research*. New York, NY: Routledge

Saldaña, J. (2015). *Thinking qualitatively: Methods of mind*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

COURSE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

This course demands active and engaged participation, thorough reading of assigned texts and articles, as well as 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.

ASSIGNMENTS

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 sent via EMAIL to me by the due date.

Module Paper 1 – Theory and Philosophy (25 points): This paper should be 10-pages long, where you explore particular ontological and epistemological perspectives in greater depth. Your goal is to answer the question someone might pose to you asking “Hmm, you seem to define yourself as a, tell me what you mean by that?” So – this paper would depend on you preparing to defend your answer using literature beyond what you are exposed to in class. You might address the history of a particular stance or even two stances, the major definitions, the critiques that exist in the field, and how these stances make sense to you as a researcher.

For this paper - Final grade will be determined by the following checklist:

1. Has the author provided a clear rationale for the selection of the particular ontology and epistemology for their paper (3 points)?
2. Has the author provided a clear understanding of the background and history, the debates and the critiques of this particular theoretical stance (5 points)?
3. Has the author provided at least 8-10 citations beyond the class readings describing their theoretical stance that go beyond assigned readings? (8 points)?
4. Clarity of writing, effort, and APA formatting, and careful editing will earn 4 points. Each mistake after the first one will result in a loss of points.

Module Paper 2 – Design and Methods (25 points): This paper should be 10-pages long, and should explore either your understanding of one or two designs, similar to Module Paper 1 or it should explain your choice of design for your dissertation and present all components of that design. For Option 1, you would present an in-depth understanding of two designs: the history, the definitions and critiques. For option 2, you will present one design and defend your choice of that design exploring the definitions and critiques. Again, this would be to answer the question “Hmm – I see you are selecting XYZ as your design – tell me why?” In addition, you will be exploring the components of your design including but not limited to selection of site and participants, methods/tools of data collection, and analysis as well as a clear defense of why you are making the decisions you are making.

For this paper - Final grade will be determined by the following checklist:

1. Has the author provided a clear rationale for the selection of the particular design for their paper (3 points)?

2. Has the author provided a clear understanding of the background and history, the debates and the critiques of this particular design and how it fits in with their ontological and epistemological stance? (5 points)?
3. Has the author provided critical decision points that would emerge from the choice of design to extrapolate to complete their understanding of the design (8 points)?
4. Has the author provided at least 4-5 citations beyond the class readings describing various components of the design? (5 points)?
5. Clarity of writing, effort, and APA formatting, and careful editing will earn 4 points. Each mistake after the first one will result in a loss of points.

Module Paper 3 – Quality (25 points): This paper should be 10-pages long and should explore the components that affect the fidelity or quality of your study. This Module paper will explore the issues of researcher reflexivity, bias, positionality, ethics, limitations, and other components that are aligned with your ontological and epistemological positions as well as in congruence with your choices of design. This paper would answer the question “Hmm, How do I trust your work?” This addresses issues of transparency, rigor and quality of your work and is critical to the trust the reader puts into your work.

For this paper - Final grade will be determined by the following checklist:

1. Has the author provided a clear understanding of what quality means to them in a qualitative study? (4 points)?
2. Has the author provided a clear understanding of how their understanding of quality is linked to ontology, epistemology and design (4 points)?
3. Has the author identified and described 4-5 key issues of quality that they are particularly concerned about or are linked to their previous module papers (8 points)?
4. Has the author provided at least 6-8 citations beyond the class readings to further understand issues of quality (5 points)?
5. Clarity of writing, effort, and APA formatting, and careful editing will earn 4 points. Each mistake after the first one will result in a loss of points.

Important Considerations

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.

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.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation (25 points)

Attendance

There are no 'excused' absences in a class of this nature. I will not determine what absence is more or less important than another absence. It is my hope that you feel the material is important and the class experience valuable so you will not miss any classes. Saying that, if you are not able to make it to a class for personal or professional reason, please take the following steps:

1. Email me the date and reason for your absence.
2. Follow up with a classmate to get the information you missed.
3. Check in with me if you have any follow-up questions about content missed.

I will take the reason for your absence into account. I will also make determinations if your absence has been detrimental to your learning – frequently late or reasons for absence that could have been planned around leading to missing classes when you could not help missing class (illness etc).

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).

Your presence alone is not a reason to get full points. Active participation in preparation, class discussion, group work and timely follow up for paper deadlines (more on that in class), will be considered. At the end of the semester, you will be provided with a rating sheet to reflect on and address your participation as an individual and in comparison, to your classmates. I will take this reflection into consideration as I determine your participation grade.

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

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

Note – Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
WEEK 1 Jan 21	Course and Class Introductions	Readings Pryor (2010) Agee (2009) Pascale Chap 1 and 2 Trafford and Leshem (2009) Opening Assessment
WEEK 2 January 28	Place and value of QR and the central focus on question	Readings Crotty Chapter 1 Erickson 2011 Wright 2006 Labaree, D. F. (1998) Creswell and Miller (2000) Demerath 2006 Module Paper Exercise
WEEK 3 February 4	Delving into paradigmatic boundaries	Readings Hatch 1 Lather (2006) Koro-Ljungberg, M. Yendol-Hoppey, D., Smith, J. J., & Guba & Lincoln (n.d).
WEEK 4 February 11	Paradigms unpacked	Crotty 2-4 Knoblauch 2013
WEEK 5 February 18	Paradigms unpacked cont.	Crotty 5-7 Hatch 2-3 PEER FEEDBACK
WEEK 6 February 25	Letting it all come back together	Crotty 8-9 Koro-Ljungberg and Barko, 2012

Week 7 March 3	Understanding design	Hatch 4-5 MODULE PAPER 1 DUE
Spring Break – no class on March 10		
Week 8 March 17	Selection and Decision points in design	Brown, L., & Durrheim, K. (2009). Baily 2018 Kvale 2006 Quinlan 2008
WEEK 9 March 24	Data Collection Techniques - The Why rather than the how... ONLINE	Gubrium, E., & Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2005). Enosh, G., & Buchbinder, E. (2005). Wolgemuth and Donohue. (2006).
WEEK 10 March 31	Techniques, analysis and making meaning	Colley 2010 Bathmaker 2010 Noyes 2010 Gorard 2010
WEEK 11 April 7	Ethics of Design STUDENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE	Anfara, Jr., V. A., Brown, K. M., & Mangione, T. L. (2002). Nind et al (2012) Polkinghorne 2007 Leigh 2014 Module Paper Two due
WEEK 12 April 14	Researcher Identity – Taking on the mantle of researcher.	Freeman, M. (2000). Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton (2001) 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> . Cho, J., & Trent, A. (2006).
Week 13 April 21	Trust and Rigor Representing the “other” in qualitative research.	Tracy 2010 Vanner 2015
WEEK 14 April 28	Ethics in Qualitative Research Wrapping up	Charmaz 2004 Module Paper Exercise - PEER FEEDBACK Closing assessment – Evaluations

Module Paper Three DUE May 5th		

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and 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/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students*Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/> <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk2ohelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>.