

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
PhD Program

EDRS 822, Section DL1 – Advanced Applications of Qualitative Methods
3 credits, Spring 2020
Online

Faculty

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Prerequisite:

Successful completion (with a grade of B- or higher) of EDRS 810 and EDRS 812, or equivalent coursework or experience.

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.

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 will be delivered online (76% or more) using an asynchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on January 15, 2020.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see:
https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool. [Delete this sentence if not applicable.]
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download: [Add or delete options, as desire.]
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player:
<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

- Course Week:
Because asynchronous courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will start on Monday, and finish on Saturday.
- Log-in Frequency:
Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 4 times per week.
- Participation:
Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.

- Technical Competence:
Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:
Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload:
Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support:
Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- Netiquette:
The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- Accommodations:
Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

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.

Required Texts:

All readings will be posted on the class Blackboard site.

My Approach/Commitment:

In this course, my primary goal is to establish a safe and inclusive environment that will support your learning. Throughout the semester, I invite your questions and critiques, desiring thoughtful dialogue to be central to our learning experience. In this course, we will work to understand a variety of positions and practices associated with the qualitative inquiry process, pushing one another to question taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions. Throughout the course, we will remind each other that there is not “one right” way to carry out a qualitative research study. Rather, there are many theoretical and methodological positions from which to work when considering qualitative research. As such, we will work to understand a variety of positions. This does not mean that you may not disagree with one another or with me about these varied perspectives and approaches. Yet, in order to facilitate our learning environment, we will each work to cultivate a classroom space that generates respectful, thoughtful, and empathetic understanding. What we come to learn is a shared experience; thus, we will all work to cultivate a community of learners.

In our learning community, I will position myself as a co-learner, as well as a teacher. Hence, if I am teaching and you are not learning, then I am not teaching. Please let me know! Throughout the semester, I welcome your feedback and will encourage your participation in an informal mid-semester evaluation. In addition, throughout the semester, you can expect feedback from me, with this feedback designed to support your growth as a qualitative researcher.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

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 learning.

In all of your assignments, I am looking for evidence of: (1) understanding and the application of the concepts and processes learned and discussed in class/online; (2) critical reflection and responses to issues and concepts; (3) clarity of expression; (4) explicit connections among ideas; and (5) complete work with no grammatical or spelling errors. All assignments are due on the date listed in the Schedule table below. Incompletes and Withdrawals are strongly discouraged and are only given when the conditions of the university are met and after a conference with the instructor at the initiation of the student.

Assignments	Points
1. Participation	30
2. Module 1 Paper	20
3. Module 2 Paper	25

4. Module 3 Paper

25

100 total points

Participation (30 points)*Online discussions*

Asynchronous online discussions will form the bulk of our interactions for this course so it's important that you participate regularly, fully, and appropriately.

- I will post a weekly video each Monday of each week that gives an overview of the readings, and mini-lecture, and presents some questions to consider.
- You will each create weekly videos, 3-5 minutes (equivalent to 3-5 written paragraphs) in length, in which you offer an overview of the readings, connect to other readings we've had, and pose remaining questions. Post these within the weekly forums as a new thread (embed the videos) by Tuesday, 11:59pm EST each week.
- Respond in text *or* embedded video to at least two peers' posts/threads by Thursday, 11:59pm EST each week
- Respond in text or embedded video within your original thread by Saturday, 11:59pm EST each week.
- Before you start posting, consider the norms and ideas for "netiquette" presented here (I do not expect we will have issues, but you never know):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwdqQjCfWSc>

Practices

Most weeks during the course I will post some kind of practice to get you thinking more deeply about concepts we go over in class. For example, during the first module I might ask that you create a positionality mind map using a particular online tool and share it with your peers.

During the second module I might ask that you engage in a collaborative workshop to brainstorm around research design. During the third module I might ask that you present a review of some creative dissemination outlets/opportunities. Any practices will be "assigned" during my weekly Monday video, so if nothing is mentioned there is no practice that week.

Individual Synchronous Meetings

You are required to meet with me individually and synchronously once per module. This will be a quick check in to find out how you're doing in the course, what questions you have, if you have concerns, etc. Consider it a friendly advising opportunity. You will not be required to prepare anything for each meeting – just show up and chat. (Information provided by instructor to those enrolled in course.) Please connect with me before the second week of class. I have tried to offer several times taking into consideration the various time zones you are in, but if none of the proposed times work, please contact me via email so we can make alternate plans to connect. Also, keep in mind that even though we will be meeting during these scheduled times, we can always connect whenever you need to – simply send an email and we can set a time to chat.

Module Papers (70 points total):

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 validity and quality. All papers will be submitted on Blackboard by the due date.

Module Paper 1 –Theory and Philosophy (20 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 onto-epistemological stance? (5 points)
3. Has the author provided at least 8-10 citations beyond the class readings describing their onto-epistemological stance that go beyond assigned readings and that connect to appropriate theories and philosophies in a coherent way? (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, among other things connecting back to your onto-epistemological stance and theoretical perspective.

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 validity/quality/trustworthiness means to them in a qualitative study? (4 points)
2. Has the author provided a clear understanding of how their understanding of validity/quality/trustworthiness is linked to ontology, epistemology and design? (4 points)
3. Has the author identified and described 4-5 key issues of validity/quality/trustworthiness 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 validity/quality/trustworthiness? (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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Grading

The following is the grading scale. As noted above, your final grade is based on the number of points you earn throughout the semester.

Grading Scale

A	93% - 100%
A-	90 – 92.9%
B+	87% - 89.9%
B	83% - 86.9%
B-	80% - 82.9%
C+	77% - 79.9%
C	74% - 76.9%

Professional Dispositions

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

Class Schedule

Week of	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
MODULE ONE: Considering Qualitative Inquiry		
Jan 20	<p>Course Introduction, The State of the Field of Qualitative Inquiry</p> <p><i>Practice:</i> Please introduce yourself to the class via embedded video in the first week’s discussion on Blackboard. Talk a bit about your background in qualitative or other forms of inquiry (no name-dropping required), as well as any concerns or questions you might have. Some personal details would be great. Conclude by talking a bit about how you see the state of qualitative inquiry right now, some assumptions you might have made before the readings, how you’re coming into the course, what you need, etc.</p>	<p>Skim: preface and introduction: https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=4StZvMUWJf0C&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=qualitative+research+by+denzin+and+lincoln+volume+5&ots=qASVycCNY&sig=aiVy6NZrtZGZ55hh-94sFS6y0KA#v=onepage&q=qualitative%20research%20by%20denzin%20and%20lincoln%20volume%205&f=false</p>
Jan 27	<p>What are we doing? What should we be doing? Why choose qualitative inquiry? And what is “methodological creativity??”</p> <p><i>Practice:</i> Use your preferred electronic method/program to create a paradigm “map” that you can share with the rest of the class. Create it this week and continue to add</p>	<p>Kuntz (The Responsible Methodology Intro) Hatch 2006 Knoblauch 2013</p>

	to it, edit it, change it, for the rest of this module. Pull from readings and discussions you've had in other classes if that's helpful. Be creative and enjoy this!	
Feb 3	Considering "paradigms" and thinking about what gets in the way of doing what we should be doing? <i>No Practice This Week</i>	Lather 2006a Lather 2006b
Feb 10	Connecting positionality, onto-epistemology, theory, methodology, and methods. <i>Practice:</i> Locate yourself/your work on your paradigm map if you have not done so already. Overlay or somehow represent your positionality and/or onto-epistemological stance/commitments on your paradigm map. Share with the class. <i>Connections:</i> Connect with the instructor this week.	Crotty, Ch. 1 Peshkin 1988 Lynch 2000 Breuer and Roth 2003
Feb 17	What do we need to know to move forward? The politics of evidence <i>Practice:</i> Add to your paradigm map "forces" at play as you encounter them or as you consider them important to your current and future work.	View: Michelle Fine, Troubling Calls for "Evidence": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9UeNbUOYdI Read: Morse Denzin and Giardina
MODULE TWO: Qualitative research design		
Feb 24	Thinking with theory <i>Practice:</i> Find and share with classmates through the discussion board for the week one scholarly article from your field or having to do with your area of interest that clearly articulates theory in relation to the research.	Listen: https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/eraqrsig/episodes/2018-05-28T05_45_01-07_00 Read as an example of thinking with theory: Lester 2014 MODULE ONE PAPER DUE BY FRIDAY AT 11:59PM ON BLACKBOARD
Mar 2	The basics of designing qualitative inquiry design	Agee

	<i>Practice:</i> Formulate 3 research questions related to your own research interest. Also create a short (1 paragraph at most) argument to <i>not</i> create a research question.	Duggleby and Williams 2016 Mantzoukas Morse 2003
Mar 9	Onto-epistemological, theoretical, and methodological congruence <i>Practice:</i> Create a flow-chart that highlights the congruence among the onto-epistemology, theory, methodology, and methods detailed in one of the methodology chapters assigned for this week.	Schertz et al, 2018 Choose 1: Lindsey Burke Ch. 3 Terry Galanti Ch. 3 Melissa Hauber Ch. 3
Mar 16	<i>No classwork – GMU Spring Break</i>	
Mar 23	Creativity in qualitative inquiry design <i>Practice:</i> Imagine you are one of the students who wrote one of the dissertations assigned last week. How might you be more creative in your research design? Consider using one of the tools/methods highlighted in the online resources offered to the right. Include this reflection in your weekly discussion participation. <i>Connections:</i> Connect with the instructor this week.	Choose 1: Anthony Keith Ch. 3 Tim Cox Ch. 3 Review for examples of creativity in design: 1. http://researchforempowerment.com/burned/ (scroll to bottom for links to “methods”) 2. http://www.networkedtoolbox.com/workareas/tools/
MODULE THREE: What is “good” qualitative inquiry?		
Mar 30	Validity, quality, trustworthiness <i>Practice:</i> Imagine you are having lunch with one of the authors we’ve read this week. How would you respond to their argument about validity? Include a reflection of what this might look like in your weekly discussion.	Moss et al McCabe and Holmes 2009 Bochner 2000 Massey and Barreras 2013 (“Impact Validity”) MODULE TWO PAPER DUE BY FRIDAY AT 11:59PM ON BLACKBOARD
Apr 6	Validity as praxis <i>Practice:</i> Go back to your paradigm map. How can you represent validity as praxis throughout your research process? Add to it as you see fit.	Dennis 2018 Ross and Li, 2020 View: Short video of Ross and Li discussing validity

Apr 13	Ethics: The Researcher's Role in Qualitative Inquiry <i>No Practice This Week</i>	Probst 2016 Leigh 2013
Apr 20	Ethics as praxis <i>Practice:</i> Go back to your paradigm map. How can you represent ethics as praxis throughout your research process? Add to it as you see fit. Share with the group. <i>Connections:</i> Connect with the instructor this week.	Barbour 2010 Call-Cummings et al 2019 Ellis 2007
Apr 27	Moving forward, issues of writing, representation, and dissemination in qualitative inquiry <i>No Practice This Week</i>	Anders & Lester 2015 Bhattacharya, 2016 Fine 1994 Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012 MODULE THREE PAPER DUE BY 12/8 AT 11:59PM ON BLACKBOARD

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

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/>).
- 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 tk20help@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/> .