

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

EDUC 800
Ways of Knowing
Fall, 2010
Research I, Room 201; Tuesday 4:30 – 7:10

Instructor

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Office hours: Tuesday 3:00-4:00 or by appointment

This course is a foundation course for the Ph.D. in Education program. The purpose of the course is to explore how we come to know and accept a method(s) of inquiry among the various ways of knowing. Using a seminar approach structured around readings, reflections on those readings, class discussions, and individual research, the course seeks to develop in students an ability to reflect critically on the strengths and limitations of the various ways of knowing and to become aware of the implications of the different ways of knowing for research and practice.

Course Description: Provides understanding of characteristic ways of knowing in various liberal arts disciplines while examining subject matter, key concepts, principles, methods, and theories. Analyzes philosophical traditions underlying educational practice and research. Required course during the first semester in the program

Course Objectives:

1. Students will understand the traditions of inquiry that serve as the underlying foundations for inquiry in education research, including rationalism, empiricism, positivism, logical positivism, and post-positivism.
2. Students will understand how these traditions attract adherents and understand how and why they have changed over the centuries.
3. Students will analyze and explain some important personal, sociocultural, professional, political, and other influences on ways of knowing.
4. Students will explore how various ways of knowing affect individual scholars, research, and practice in education and related fields.
5. Students will describe, compare, and contrast the ways of knowing from a variety of perspectives.
6. Students will expand and refine their scholarship abilities including critical and analytic reading, writing, thinking, oral communication, and the use of scholarly resources.

How this Course Supports GSE's Priorities

This introductory course seeks to develop each student's ability to be a reflective practitioner who becomes grounded in the ways we come to know through inquiry. Through the readings, the classroom conversations, discussions, and presentations, it is intended that each student will become

more analytic about the conduct of inquiry and one's own perspectives on inquiry and the nature of knowledge, and to develop a respect for the diversity of thought that characterizes inquiry.

Required Course Texts:

- Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Descartes, R. (1637). *Discourse on method and related writings*. New York: Penguin Classics.
Johnson, S. (2005) *Everything Bad is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making us Smarter*. New York: The Berkeley Publishing Group.
Kuhn, T. (1976). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

There are four book chapters on e-reserve and four journal articles on blackboard.

Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N., & Tarule, J. (1997). *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. New York: Basic Books.

Eisner, E. W. (1994). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs* (3rd ed). New York: Macmillan. (pp. 212-249). This is chapter 10, Connoisseurship and Criticism

Lyons, N., & LaBoskey, V. K. (2002). *Narrative inquiry in practice*. New York: Teachers College Press. (pp. vii – 27)

Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (1982). Roger Harker and Schonhausen: From the familiar to the strange and back again. In G. Spindler (Ed), *Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational anthropology in action* (pp. 21-46). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Heights, IL.

Recommended Text:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. (Recommended for entire doctoral program).

Electronic Requirements

Students must activate and access their GMU email accounts. Go to <http://mail.gmu.edu/> to access your GMU email.

Students will also be expected to access Blackboard to download pertinent course documents. Blackboard can be accessed by going to <http://blackboard.gmu.edu>.

There is a link to e-reserve articles on the Blackboard site and this one goes directly to the ereserves. When you get there, please find our materials through the drop down menu by my name, not our course (<http://furbo.gmu.edu/cgi-bin/ers/OSCRnexttermgen.cgi>). The password is schrum

CEHD Course Expectations

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Attendance is mandatory, as the discussions that take place in this class are essential to achieving the course objectives.

Each student is expected to complete all the assigned readings and participate in the discussions. It is expected that each student will be attuned to group dynamics in order to ensure the active participation of all in the class.

If you must miss a class, you are responsible for notifying me (preferably in advance) and for completing any assignments, readings, etc. before the start of the next class.

Assignments

Weekly Journal Reflections (8 x 4 = 32%)

You are expected to prepare 8 reflection papers as noted in the tentative class schedule, turned in ELECTRONICALLY by 8pm Monday night before our Tuesday class session on which we will discuss the topic. The intent of these brief papers (2-3 pages, double-spaced) is to help you become thoughtful and analytic about some rather conceptual, and sometimes complex, course content. You should look upon these papers as an opportunity to engage me in discussion as you grow over the semester.

Paper on a New Way of Knowing (40%)

Select a new way of knowing for you, e.g. a new theory in your field, an area within the arts, sciences, or social sciences, or an interdisciplinary area of inquiry. Explore this new way of knowing. Prepare a paper (about 2500 words/10 pages) that demonstrates: 1) your understanding of the basic assumptions of this approach, and 2) what it is that makes this approach a new way of knowing for you. Note: depth and analysis are more important than breadth. APA format required. **Paper is due: 11/16.**

As part of the development of your paper, please submit via email, a one-page description of your proposed project and way of knowing so we can agree early in the semester (no later than the eighth class - **10/19**). The outline should address the following questions:

1. What is the way of knowing you will explore?
2. How do you propose to study it?
3. What are your tentative sources?

If appropriate, I will share your thoughts with others who have identified a similar area to explore.

Evaluation of the final paper: The main criteria are a clearly defined focus, clear and accurate presentation of its assumptions and definitions about knowing, a demonstrated understanding of the implications for research, and clear organization and writing (*see scoring rubric below*).

Reflective Analysis on Ways of Knowing (20%)

You are expected to keep a weekly journal (above) that is both reflective and analytic during the course. The overall purpose is to use informal journal writing as a means to think and reflect on the content of the course. In particular, the journal is a means for you to connect course material to your own experiences and to analyze the course readings critically. The course outline lists specific assignments for the journal. For this final paper, you will look across the semester and consider its effects on you. The guiding questions for this final paper are:

1. How would you have described your way(s) of knowing, learning, and thinking when you began this class?
2. As you consider your autobiography/personal history, what factors personal, experiential, familial, sociocultural, historical, and/or disciplinary influenced your ways of knowing?
3. How has the course affected your ways of knowing as a practitioner and as a researcher?
4. How would you describe your current way of knowing?
5. What are the implications of your reflections on questions 3 and 4 above for your personal and professional growth during your doctoral study?

Criteria for assessment include: evidence of serious reflection and analysis, clear organization and clear writing. This paper is the culminating activity of the course and is by 8 pm on the Sunday before the last class (**12/5**).

Participation (8%):

Our class will consist almost entirely of discussions in pairs, groups, or as a whole class. Sometimes groups will produce something (a poem, an advertisement, etc.) and sometimes you will present your ideas to the rest of us. Regardless of the format, your active participation is essential. Together we will develop a guideline for what that means and what constitutes abuse of that. In other words, our learning community will create its own set of expectations.

All assignments must be completed in MSWord and turned in electronically. Late assignments will not be accepted without making prior arrangements with me. You must name your file (not the subject of your email): lastname_reflectionx. So my first reflection would be **Schrum_reflection1 and so on.**

SUMMARY OF DUE DATES:

Weekly Reflection Papers (Due by 8pm electronically the day before our class)

Reflection #1 --September 12

Reflection #2 --September 19

Reflection #3 – October 3

Reflection #4 – October 17

Reflection #5 – October 24

Reflection #6 – October 31
Reflection #7 – November 7
Reflection #8 – November 30

New Way of Knowing Paper
Topic Proposal Due by October 19
Paper Due November 15

Reflective Analysis on Ways of Knowing
Due by 8pm on Wednesday, December 8, 2010

Course Delivery

My teaching style revolves around “learning via conversation.” In addition to classroom attendance and participation, you are expected to complete readings, whole class and small group discussions, group, pair, and individual projects, internet research, analyses of case studies, and reflections on practice. I will use GMU’s web-accessible Blackboard (www.blackboard.gmu.edu version) course framework regularly throughout the course.

	Topic	Assignments
Class 1 August 31	Introduction; syllabus, Lynne; Each other Start <i>Close Encounters of the Third Kind</i>	Essay 1: I know _____ because _____ (in class activity) a) What are some well-known facts about your discipline? What does the knowledge base of your discipline incorporate? b) Pay particular attention to how you know these things and write about that in the “because” section e.g., through printed material, wisdom, an authority in your field, peers who confirmed your thinking, research findings, reason, experience, experimentation, comparisons, reflection, self-study, searching, intuition, spiritual understanding..., etc. c) What isn’t so clear? d) How would you go about finding answers to the things that aren’t so clear for you?
Class 2 September 7	Shared Experience – Film: Finish <i>Close Encounters of the Third Kind</i>	Reflection paper 1: After viewing the film, briefly write your review of it. Then, locate as many reviews as possible of this film. In your journal, write an essay about the reviews paying particular attention to the ways of knowing that various people use. We will discuss in class first What conclusions can you draw? Due before September 14th Read: Descartes (1 st half) <i>for next week</i>
Class 3	Debriefing the film	Reflection paper 2: What are some examples

September 14	Cartesian ethos: How we've come to define "knowing" SJR and Puzzles	of the scientific method, rationalism, empiricism, and positivism in your job, discipline, and/or life? Due before September 21 Read: Descartes (2 nd half) <i>for next week</i>
Class 4 September 21	More on Descartes and the foundations of inquiry The Perspective Problem in the Study of Teaching - Shared Experience: A Case of the Study of Teaching Watching Former Secretary Bennett teach a class [you will also find a short transcript of some of the lesson in blackboard]	Viewing questions: How well did Secretary Bennett teach the class? What did you find yourself watching, looking for, and looking at as you watched the video? Reflection 3: Draw a pictorial representation of the relationships among the approaches to analyzing Bennett's teaching, and bring a copy of your representation on an overhead transparency, single PowerPoint, or other artistic representation to class on October 5. Place the approach you find most consistent with your way of knowing at the center of the pictorial representation so we can see how you view yourself. Read: Morine-Dersheimer; Eisner; Rosenshine; Delamont; & Peterson plus Bennett's response (in folder on Blackboard)
Class 5 September 28	NO CLASS	Read: Kuhn in two parts pp. 1 – 110 (<i>for next week</i>); work on your Reflection 3
Class 6 October 5	What is a Scientific Revolution? Group Poem creation Show graphical representations	Read: Kuhn pp. 111-210 (<i>for next class on October 19</i>) Reflection 4: Imagine a conversation between Kuhn and Descartes: what would Kuhn say to Descartes about his Discourse? Many have argued that Descartes created a scientific revolution. Does it meet Kuhn's attributes? Why or why not? Due before class on October 19. New Way of Knowing paper topic (due before next class – 10-19)
Class 7 October 19	A philosophical view of how ways of knowing change	Reflection 5: How does the second half of Kuhn's perspective appeal to you? Why? What is it specifically about his perspective that helps you understand how we come to know? Did you find any weaknesses in his argument, i.e., things you just could not accept? What were they and why? Due before class on October 26. Read: Bruner, pp. 1 – 99 (<i>for next week</i>)
Class 8 October 26	The Culture of Education; presentations of your graphic.	Reflection 6: Fit the first half of Bruner with Cartesian philosophy. How does Bruner argue that we come to know? What does he mean by

		<p>the culture of education is the influence of culture on how we come to know? New Way of Knowing paper topic due Read: Bruner, pp. 100 – 185 (for next week)</p>
Class 9 November 2	The Culture of Education and Knowing; Practitioners' Ways of Knowing;	<p>Reflection 7: What is the essence of Bruner's argument about culture? How does it fit into your own way of knowing? Describe an issue in your field through the eyes of Bruner.</p> <p>For Next week: Read Belenky et al. (this is on electronic reserves) Read: Lyons and LaBoskey, pp. vii – 27 (this is on electronic reserves)</p>
Class 10 November 9	Women's Ways of Knowing Narrative -- not all Narratives are created equal (the good, the bad, and the ugly)	<p>Consider the five ways of knowing from Belenky: Silence; Received Knowledge; Subjective Knowledge; Procedural Knowledge; Constructed Knowledge</p> <p>For Next Week: Read: Eisner & Powell article (on blackboard and e-reserves); Spindler & Spindler chapter (pp. 21 – 46); Eisner's chapter on Connoisseurship and Criticism .</p> <p>Work on New Way of Knowing paper</p>
Class 11 November 16	What is Connoisseurship and Criticism? How does it relate (or does it) to Aesthetic Inquiry?	<p>Consider Eisner & Powell's view of knowing; Imagine something you need to make strange to you to teach someone else, as Spindler & Spindler describe</p> <p>"New Way of Knowing" paper due on 11/16 Read Johnson's <i>Everything Bad is good for you</i></p>
Class 12 November 23	Popular Culture – discussing Johnson. Come to class with notes to create a presentation (advertisement, poster, etc.) to answer this question: A child of the future is in quest of understanding how you come to know things and understanding popular culture; use the Kuhn, Descartes, and Johnson to respond to the child How might their work serve or not serve the child in her/his world?	<p>Finish Reading Johnson's <i>Everything Bad . . .</i> for next week</p> <p>Reflection 8 : Watch two or three sitcoms; how do they shape knowing; what do they tell us about ourselves OR Watch two versions of the national news (ABC, NBC, CBS) on the same night; how do they shape knowing</p> <p>Work on Final Analysis Research Paper</p>
Class 13	Pulling it all together: What	Create a graphic, artifact, or other

November 30	questions do we have? What have we learned?	representation of your field looking through a different lens – ask questions or reflect on what you see in a new light
Class 14 December 7	Final Session - pulling it all together, discussions or presentations of New Ways of Knowing paper	We will determine in class our plans for this last night of presentations, discussion, and understandings.
Class 15 December 14	No Class	Reflective Analysis paper due 12/12 “Knowing” paper due

Potential topics for “new way of knowing papers”

1. Behaviorism
2. Chaos theory
3. Confucianism
4. Constructivism
5. Critical Theory
6. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
7. Hermeneutics
8. Phenomenology
9. Positivism
10. Postmodernism
11. Post-Colonialism
12. Post Positivism
13. Pragmatism
14. Reconstructionism
15. Schema Theory
16. Social Constructionism
17. Feminist Theory

EDUC 800: Signature Assignment

Paper on a New Way of Knowing (40%)

Select a new way of knowing for you, e.g. a new theory in your field, an area within the arts, sciences, or social sciences, or an interdisciplinary area of inquiry. Explore this new way of knowing. Prepare a paper (about 2500 words/10 pages) that demonstrates: 1) your understanding of

the basic assumptions of this approach, and 2) what it is that makes this approach a new way of knowing for you. Note: depth and analysis are more important than breadth. APA format required. Evaluation of the final paper: The main criteria are a clearly defined focus, clear and accurate presentation of its assumptions and definitions about knowing, a demonstrated understanding of the implications for research, and clear organization and writing (*see scoring rubric below*).

Overall Scoring

1 = fails to meet standards	2 = meets standards (basic)	3 = exceeds standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus of the paper and/or its roots are neither clearly identified nor clearly described. • The fundamental assumptions are clearly explained and the key terms are defined. • Neither the research questions are clear nor are the examples clearly presented • The paper is hard to follow as the points are not connected into a coherent whole; inattention to grammar, typographical errors and misspelled words; failure to consult APA is evident. • No attention is given to how this way of knowing is new to you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus: the way of knowing is clearly identified and its historical roots are clearly described • The fundamental assumptions about the nature of knowledge in the “way” are explained clearly and the key terms necessary to understand this way of knowing are defined. • Demonstrated understanding of the implications for research: the nature of the research questions this way of knowing has been used to explore are included and described clearly. • Organization and Clarity: the paper is well-organized; the argument flows easily from point to point; follows APA writing guidelines. • Clear and relevant discussion of why this is a new way of knowing for you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus of the paper is clearly stated and its historical roots are clearly described. A high degree of expertise is evidenced in establishing focus through integrating comments on readings from the course • The fundamental assumptions are clearly and expertly explained and relevant key terms are clearly defined and elaborated upon to contrast various paradigms/epistemological perspectives from course readings and class discussions • The nature of the research questions is included and significant examples relevant to one’s personal, professional and doctoral activities are clearly presented A high degree of understanding is exhibited. • The paper is very well-organized with the logic following from point to point; follows APA guidelines explicitly; there are no grammatical errors, typos, misspelled words, etc. • Delineations between your previous way of knowing and that of this “other” perspective are clear and considerable insight is demonstrated.