

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

EDRS 621

Qualitative Inquiry in Education

Summer 2012, Session A

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 7:05 pm – 10:00 pm

Thompson Hall L108

PROFESSOR

Name: Dr. Kimberly Sheridan

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Office hours: By appointment

Virtual Office hours: Monday and Thursday 10 AM-12 Noon

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*email is the best way to contact me

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the study of basic application of naturalistic research methods. It examines major theoretical frameworks, and qualitative research techniques, which include participant observation, interviewing, coding, and interpretation of data.

(Prerequisite: EDRS 590 or equivalent)

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

This course is designed to be highly interactive as students are guided through the process of learning to use, conduct, and write about qualitative research in education. The course will be taught using lectures, class discussions, and individual and group activities. Technologies such as web-based discussion boards and qualitative research software may also serve as a medium for instruction. Students should be prepared to participate and lead discussions during each class meeting.

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS:

I have designated Monday and Thursday between 10AM-12 noon each week as my time to read and respond to emails for this course.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

This course is designed to enable students to:

- gain a basic understanding of current qualitative research methods and the theories and epistemologies that have influenced their development.
- gain experience with data collection techniques including participant observation and qualitative interviewing.
- gain an understanding of basic approaches to qualitative data analysis and interpretation, including categorization strategies such as coding and matrices, and connecting strategies such as case studies

- find, understand, evaluate, and apply published research that is relevant to their field.
- thoughtfully consider ethical issues in qualitative research
- thoughtfully consider validity issues in qualitative research

RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

The program goals are consistent with the following Learner-centered psychological principles (APA Division 15) outlined by the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force in Education.

- Principle 1: The Nature of Learning Process
- Principle 2: Goals of the Learning Process
- Principle 3: Construction of Knowledge
- Principle 4: Strategic Thinking
- Principle 5: Thinking about Thinking
- Principle 6: Context of Learning
- Principle 7: Motivational and Emotional Influences on Learning
- Principle 8: Intrinsic Motivation to Learn
- Principle 9: Effects of Motivation on Affect
- Principle 10: Developmental Influences on Learning
- Principle 11: Social Influences on Learning
- Principle 12: Individual Differences on Learning
- Principle 13: Learning and Diversity
- Principle 14: Standards and Assessment

For more information please see:

American Psychological Association (1997). *Learner-centered psychological principles: A framework for school redesign and reform.*

<http://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/learner-centered.pdf>

Retrieved August 25, 2011.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts

Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Recommended resources:

Weiss, R. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interviewing.* New York: Free Press.

Additional required articles will be drawn from the GMU electronic databases or available on Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation 10%

During class sessions in this course, we work on learning concepts, practicing the craft of qualitative research, and reflecting and analyzing research. It is essential to your learning that you come prepared to thoughtfully participate. Please complete required readings and participate thoughtfully in class activities and discussions. More than one absence, except under extenuating circumstances, will automatically lower your participation grade.

2. Article critique 30%

You will write a critical analysis of a qualitative research article on a topic related to your research proposal. Details on the assignment and evaluation criteria will be handed out in class.

3. Research Memos 30%

You will be regularly writing memos—sometimes in response to specific prompts, other times independently as you think of them in response to the readings. You will keep these in a journal on Blackboard and are expected to have a minimum of ten thoughtful entries.

4. Field observation project 30%

You will propose, conduct, and write field notes and an analytic memo on a 1 -2 hour field observation relevant to your research proposal. Details on the assignment and evaluation criteria will be handed out in class.

Or

Interview project 30%

You will write an interview protocol, conduct a 1 to 1.5 hour interview, transcribe the interview and write an analytic memo. Details on the assignment and evaluation criteria will be handed out in class.

Grading Scale

A+ = 98 – 100%	A = 93 – 97.99%	A- = 90 – 92.99%
B+ = 88 – 89.99%	B = 83 – 87.99%	B- = 80 – 82.99%
C = 70 – 79.99%	F < 70%	

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- 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.

d. 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/>].

e. 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 the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

g. 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/>].

ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES

Paper Format

- 1 inch margins on all sides, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font.
- Include the following information: title, name, date, professor, course number.
- All papers should be proofread for spelling, grammar, and clarity errors.
- Citation and references in APA format.
- Turned in electronically to Blackboard in the Assignment folder.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due at or before the start of class on the assigned due date. Late assignments will be marked down by half a letter grade for each day the assignment is late. If there are questions or concerns about a particular situation, please contact me via email in advance of the deadline.

PERFORMANCE BASED ASSESSMENT

RUBRIC FOR EDRS 621 ARTICLE CRITIQUE:28 points total

	1 Does not meet standards	2 Approaching Standards	3 Meets Standards	4 Exceeds Standards
Writing and Mechanics	Writing has significant stylistic, grammatical or organizational issues AND there are significant errors in APA usage.	Writing has stylistic, grammatical, or organizational issues OR there are significant errors in APA usage.	Writing is clear and APA style has minor or no errors.	Excellent writing APA style has very minor or no errors
Description of how five components of research design are reflected in the article.	There are many inaccuracies in how components of research design are addressed AND several need further development.	There are some inaccuracies in how components of research design are addressed, OR 3 or more need further development.	Each component of research is addressed accurately. One or two need further development.	Each component of research is treated fully and accurately
Analysis of Relationships Among Design Elements	Does not analyze of relationship among design elements.	Analysis of relationships among design elements is present, but either contains inaccuracies or is not adequately developed.	Accurate account of some key relationships among design elements.	Insightful and accurate account of how key research design elements relate.
Analysis of Presentation of Findings	There is minimal analysis of the presentation of findings.	Strengths and limitations of the presentation of findings are discussed. Claims need further explication or leave key gaps.	Strengths and limitations of the presentation of findings are discussed and claims are reasonable and meaningful.	Insightful accounts of the qualities, strengths and limitations of the presentation of findings. Claims are reasonable and meaningful.
Analysis of Validity Issues	Validity issues are not addressed.	Validity issues are discussed but there are some gaps or inaccuracies.	Validity issues and strategies are discussed accurately.	Careful and accurate treatment of validity issues and strategies used. Discussion extends beyond author's account.
Use of Evidence to support Explanations and judgments	There is minimal use evidence to support claims.	Uses evidence to support some claims.	Uses evidence to illustrate and support most claims.	Consistently uses evidence well to explicate, support and illustrate claims.
Reflection Component	There is minimal or no reflection section.	Reflective component is present but is under-developed or	Reflections are developed and have clear connections to	Reflections are thoughtfully and fully developed with clear and

		lacks connections to analysis.	analysis.	meaningful connections to analysis.
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Proposed Class Schedule: Note updates to this will be made as needed on Blackboard site so check before each class session.

Date	Topics	Readings/Assignments due
5/21 M	Introduction to Qualitative Research	Review Syllabus
5/23 W	Logic of Qualitative Research	B&B*, ch 1., Maxwell**, ch 1
5/25 F	Coming to Research Questions, Technique: Field Observation	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 4 p. 117-129 Bogdan & Biklen Appendix B Read Maxwell, Ch 2 <i>Goals</i>
5/28 M	No class, Memorial Day	Citi Training for Human Subject Review completed by this date.
5/30 W	Qualitative research design: Goals, purposes and conceptual context Technique: Qualitative Interviewing	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 2 <i>Research Design</i> Maxwell, Chapter Ch 3 <i>Conceptual Framework</i> , Ch 4, <i>Research Questions</i>
6/1 F	Qualitative research design: Alignment among elements	Bring in copy of article you would like to use for article critique (can bring in multiple possibilities if you want help selecting). Read Stevens et al. for critique workshop (article will be posted on Bb).
6/4 M	Reading Qualitative research from a design perspective, Introduction to validity issues	Review Maxwell, Ch 1 and Read Maxwell, Ch 6 <i>Validity</i> Bring in your qualitative research article and initial memo on it for the article critique assignment for workshop
6/6 W	Qualitative Research: Methods	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 3

		<i>Fieldwork</i> , Ch 4, <i>Qualitative Data</i> Maxwell, Ch 5, <i>Methods</i> Memo describing the site or participant you plan to use for your observation/ interview assignment and explaining why you made that choice.
6/8 F	Qualitative Research Design: Validity	Revisit Maxwell, Ch 6 <i>Validity</i> and think deeply and write a memo about how it might apply to your proposed project
6/11 M	Qualitative Research Design: Analysis	Revisit Bogdan & Biklen, ch 5, <i>Data Analysis and</i> <i>Interpretation</i> Maxwell: Comparing and Connecting (on blackboard) Article Critique Due
6/13 W	No class. Dr. Sheridan out of town	
6/15 F	Analytic techniques: Nvivo/Atlas ti	
6/18 M	Ethics, Reliability, Generalizability	Maxwell, J. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. <i>Harvard</i> <i>Educational Review</i> , 62(3), 279- 300 (on-line)
6/20 W	Individual presentations on projects	Observation/Interview project Due
6/22 F	Individual presentations on projects	All memos should be completed in Bb journals.

* Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

** Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.