

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

EDUC 800-004: Ways of Knowing  
Fall, 2012  
Tuesdays, 4:30 – 7:10  
Research Hall 202

**Instructor:**

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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 methods 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.

**No Prerequisites**

**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.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Students will describe, compare, and contrast ways of knowing from a variety of perspectives.
2. Students will describe ways of knowing of individuals and groups and will analyze and explain personal, sociocultural, professional, political, and other influences on ways of knowing.
3. Students will explore how various ways of knowing affect individual scholars, research, and practice in education and related fields.
4. 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 Core Values**

This introductory course seeks to develop each student's ability to become grounded in the ways we come to know through inquiry and research based practice. 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, research based practice and the nature of knowledge, and to develop a respect for the diversity of thought that characterizes inquiry.

### Required Course Texts:

Bruner, Jerome. (1987). *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Harvard University Press.

Descartes, Rene. (1637). *Discourse on method and related writings*. Penguin Classics.

Kuhn, Thomas. (1976). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.

Lyons, Nona & LaBoskey, Vicki Kubler. (2002). *Narrative inquiry in practice*. New York: Teachers College Press

### Other Required Texts:

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

Students will participate in small group discussions using a book or five related articles selected by the group and approved by the instructor (details later in this document).

Several articles will be provided electronically (see schedule for due dates). These will be posted to BB at least two weeks before due date.

### Course Delivery

This course is a doctoral seminar, and my teaching style revolves around the concept of “learning via conversation.” As such it is expected that you will read in advance of class and continue to try to find the bigger picture as you learn to sort through the findings of one study to the next. In addition to classroom attendance and participation, I expect you to participate fully in whole class and small group discussions, group, pair, and individual projects, internet research, analyses of case studies, and reflections on practice. We will use GMU’s web-accessible Blackboard course framework throughout the course. You must use your GMU email account.

### Additional Course Requirements

- Attendance is required, as the discussions that take place in this class are essential to achieving the course objectives.
- Each student is expected to complete all the assignments on time, and participate in the discussions. It is also 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 or come late to class, you are responsible for notifying me (preferably in advance) via email, if possible. Assignment due dates will not change without prior approval and for compelling reasons. Professionalism in making decisions about missing class or coming late is assumed.

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

1. GMU Policies and Resources for Students
  - a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
  - b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
  - c. 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/>].
2. Professional Dispositions  
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.
3. 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/>
4. For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>] For RHT Syllabi: For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, [Graduate School](#) of Education, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu/>]

## **Assignments (see attached schedule, reading list, and due dates)**

### **1. Reading and Reflections (20%)**

Reading assignments and due dates are noted on the chart in this syllabus. In addition, you will prepare 6 brief reflection papers during the semester. These are due at the beginning of particular classes (post to blackboard and bring a paper or electronic copy to class for your own use during discussion). The intent of these papers (3 pages-no more- double-spaced) is to provide a means for engagement and analysis related to some rather conceptual, and sometimes complex, course content. They also will serve as a springboard for discussion. Evaluation will be based both on active participation in class and preparation of a brief but thoughtful paper on the assigned schedule.

### **2. Topic study group (20%)**

With a group of 2-3 others in the class, you will read and discuss an approved book or 5 published papers related to a “way of knowing.” You will read material on a schedule you devise together and hold discussions on 4 specified occasions in class. At the end of the course, you will create a visual (such as a diagram or semantic map) to share what your group has learned. Evaluation will be based on active participation in the group (during class) and in making a thoughtful, coherent, but brief presentation (15 min).

### **3. Paper on a “new way of knowing” and presentation (40%).** Course signature assignment. See description later in this syllabus with scoring guide.

### **4. Reflective Analysis on Ways of Knowing (20%)**

For this final paper, you will look across the semester and consider its effects on you. The guiding questions for this final paper are:

- a) As you consider your autobiography/personal history, what factors -- personal, experiential, familial, sociocultural, historical, and/or disciplinary – have influenced your ways of knowing? How do you know?
- b) Has the course affected your ways of knowing as a practitioner and as a researcher? If so, how?
- c) Describe some widely accepted ways of knowing in your field.
- d) How would you describe your current way of knowing?
- e) How can you include what was learned in your doctoral portfolio?

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 due at the beginning of the last class meeting. It should be about 6 double spaced pages (no more than 7).

**EDUC 800: Paper on a New Way of Knowing (Signature Assignment) (40%)**

Select a new way of knowing (for you), e.g. a theory in your field, an area within the arts, sciences, or social sciences, or an interdisciplinary area of inquiry. Discuss your choice with your instructor. Explore this new way of knowing through reading of scholarly books and articles and interviewing at least one expert (in person or via email). Prepare a paper (about 2500 words/10 pages). Note: depth and analysis are more important than breadth. APA format required.

As part of the development of your paper, please submit via Blackboard, a one-page description of your proposed project so we can agree early in the semester **no later than the ninth week (10/30)**. **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).

<b>1 = Fails to meet standards</b>	<b>2 = Basic/meets standards</b>	<b>3 = Accomplished</b>	<b>Score (partial points may be given in each category)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus of the paper and/or its roots are neither clearly identified nor clearly described.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus: the way of knowing is clearly identified and its historical roots are clearly described</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	8 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No attention is given to how this way of knowing is new to you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and relevant discussion of why this is a new way of knowing for you.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delineations between your way of knowing and that of this “other” perspective are clear and considerable insight is demonstrated</li> </ul>	4 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fundamental assumptions are clearly explained and the key terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fundamental assumptions about the nature of knowledge in the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fundamental assumptions are clearly and expertly</li> </ul>	8 points

are defined.	“way” are explained clearly and the key terms necessary to understand this way of knowing are defined.	explained and relevant key terms are clearly defined and elaborated upon.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neither the research questions are clear nor are the examples clearly presented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The nature of the research questions is included and significant relevant examples are clearly presented. A high degree of understanding is exhibited</li> </ul>	8 points
The paper is hard to follow as the points are not connected into a coherent whole;	Organization and Clarity: the paper is well-organized; the argument flows easily from point to point	The paper is very well-organized with the logic following from point to point.	8 points
Inattention to grammar, typographical errors and misspelled words; failure to consult APA is evident.	Follows APA writing guidelines in most cases; some errors evident	Follows APA guidelines explicitly; there are no grammatical errors, typos, misspelled words, etc.	4 points
			Total points earned:  (out of 40)

**Tentative Schedule, Ways of Knowing, Fall 2012 (any changes will be provided in writing)**

	Date	Topic	Assignment Due on this Date
Class 1	Aug 28	Introduction- Goals of course	In class group task
Class 2	Sept. 4	What is a Way of Knowing? How do you know what you know?  Shared Experience: Part I, <b>Film, Close Encounters of the Third Kind.</b> Discussion- what types of “knowing” are illustrated in this film?  Intro to Descartes	<b>Journal entry 1:</b> <b>Think about your experiences as a child and as an adult:</b> <b>At this point in your life, (1) how do you learn best? Why do you think so? (2) What are some examples of knowledge that are personally important to you? How do you know this ‘knowledge’ is ‘true’ (or is it?).</b>
Class 3	Sept. 11	Part II of Film/debrief  Descartes	Descartes Part I  Also see Blackboard for article A
Class 4	Sept. 18	Descartes	Read Descartes Part II  <b>Journal Entry 2: How does Descartes define “knowing”? What do you think Descartes would say about the film “Close Encounters/”</b>
Class 5	Sept. 25	Kuhn  Sign up for topic group in class	Kuhn, preface and sections I-IV
Class 6	Oct 2	Kuhn  Topic group discussion	Kuhn, Sections V-VIII  Topic group reading (1)
No Class	Oct 9 Fall break	(Monday classes are held Tuesday this week; no Tuesday classes).	<b>Turn in via BB (special instructions will be posted) on Oct 9 –</b> <b>Journal Entry 3:</b> Imagine a conversation between Kuhn and Descartes: what would Kuhn say to Descartes about his <i>Discourse</i> ? Many have argued that Descartes created a scientific revolution. Does it meet Kuhn’s attributes? Why or why not?

Class 7	Oct. 16	Kuhn  Topic group discussion	Kuhn, Sections IX through p. 210  <b>Journal Entry 4:</b> 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?  Topic group reading (2)
Class 8	Oct. 23	Bruner  Topic group discussion	Bruner , part I  Also see Blackboard for article B  Topic group reading (3)
Class 9	Oct 30	Bruner  Topic group discussion	Bruner, part II  Topic group reading (4)  Outline for knowing paper due
Class 10	Nov 6	Bruner  Topic group discussion	Bruner, part III.  <b>Journal Entry 5:</b> How does Bruner’s work fit into your own way of knowing? How does Bruner compare to Descartes and Kuhn?  Topic group reading (5)
Class 11	Nov. 13	Lyons & Boskey  Informal sharing of knowing paper topics – what we learned and next steps.	Lyons and LaBoskey, pp. vii-130  Knowing paper is due
Class 12	Nov. 20	Lyons and LaBoskey	Lyons and LaBoskey, pp. 133-199  Also see Blackboard for Article C  <b>Journal Entry 6:</b> What is a narrative way of knowing? How does this relate to your own field of study?
Class 13	Nov. 27	No class meeting – instructor traveling to Literacy Researchers Association Conference.	Topic groups prepare their visuals and presentations – can meet in person or electronically.



Class 14	Dec 4	Presentations - topic groups	Topic group graphics are due. Oral presentation 15 min.
Class 15	Dec. 11	Final discussion and celebration.	Reflective analysis is due – post to BB and bring a copy to class.

**Additional Recommended Readings:**

- Adams, D. W. (1988). Fundamental considerations: The deep meaning of Native American Schooling, 1880-1900. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(1), 1-28.
- Belenky, M.F., B. M. Clinchy, N.R. Goldberger, & J.M. Tarule. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice and mind*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN 0-465-099099-0
- Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Doubleday.
- Broomfield, J. (1997). *Other ways of knowing: Recharting our future with ageless wisdom*. Rochester, VT: Inner Tradition.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York, Macmillan.
- Hopper, T., & Sanford, K. (2008). Using poetic representation to support the development of teachers' knowledge. *Studying Teaching*, 4(1), 29-45.
- Eisner, Eliot. (1991). Educational criticism. In E. Eisner (ed.), *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. (pp. 85-105). New York: Macmillan.
- Eisner, E. W. (1993). Forms of understanding and the future of educational research. *Educational Researcher*, 22 (7), 5-11.
- Hofer, B. K., & Pintrich, P. R. (1997). The Development of Epistemological Theories: Beliefs about Knowledge and Knowing and Their Relation to Learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 67 (1), 88-140.
- Moen, T., Gudmundsdottir, S. & Flem, A. (2003). Inclusive practice: A biographical approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 19, 359–370.
- Henson, R. (2001). The effects of participation in research on teacher efficacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 17, 819–836.
- Mueller, J. & O'Connor, C. (2007). Telling and retelling about self and "others": How preservice teacher (re)interpret privilege and disadvantage in one college classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 23, 840–856.
- Phillips, D. C. (1995). The good, the bad, and the ugly: The many faces of constructivism. Educational Researcher, 24(7), pp. 5-12
- Strogatz, Steven. (2004). *Sync: How order emerges from chaos in the universe, nature, and daily life*. New York: Hyperion.

Tyack, D. B. (1976). Ways of seeing: An essay on the history of compulsory schooling. Harvard Educational Review, 46(3), 355-389.

Randy Pausch: *The Last Lecture* Video  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5\\_MqicxSo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5_MqicxSo)

**Vocabulary List – terms you may find helpful.**

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