

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**Ph.D. in Education Program**

EDUC 800 001 Ways of Knowing  
3 Credits; Fall 2017; CRN 71471  
Tuesday 4:30 – 7:10, Aug. 28 - Dec. 11; West 1007

**Instructor Information**

**Professor:** Nancy M. Holincheck, Ph.D., NBCT  
**Class Days/Time:** Mondays, 4:30-7:10  
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**Prerequisite:** Admission to the Ph.D. program

**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 Overview:** 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.

**Learner Outcomes:**

As a result of this course, students participating in EDUC 800 will be able to:

1. Describe, compare, and contrast ways of knowing from a variety of perspectives.
2. Describe ways of knowing of individuals and groups and analyze and explain personal, sociocultural, professional, political, and other influences on ways of knowing.
3. Explain how various ways of knowing affect individual scholars, research, and practice in education and related fields.
4. Expand upon and further refine their scholarship abilities, including critical and analytic reading, writing, thinking, oral communication, and the use of scholarly resources.

This introductory course seeks to develop each Ph.D. student's ability to become grounded in the ways we come to know through inquiry and research based practice. Through the readings, dialogic discussions, critical reflections, 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, as well as develop a respect for the diversity of thought that characterizes inquiry.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS/ RELATED READINGS**

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Harvard University Press.

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

Kuhn, T. (2012). *The structure of scientific revolutions (fourth edition)*. University of Chicago Press.

Strogatz, S. (2004). *Sync: How order emerges from chaos in the universe, nature, and daily life*. New York: Hyperion.

**Additional Readings will be drawn from the following and may be accessed through our course Blackboard site at: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/>**

Barone, T. (2009). Comments on Coulter and Smith: Narrative researchers as witnesses of injustice and ages of social change. *Educational Researcher*, 38(8), 591-597.

Clandinin, D. J., & Murphy, M. S. (2009). Comments on Coulter and Smith: Relational ontological commitments in narrative research. *Educational Researcher*, 38(8), 598-602.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.

Coulter, C. A., & Smith, M. L. (2009). The construction zone: literacy elements in narrative research. *Educational Researcher*, 38(8), 577-590.

Duncan, G., & Ridley-Duff, R. (2014). Appreciative Inquiry as a method of transforming identity and power in Pakistani women. *Action Research*, 12(2), 117-135.

Ellerton, P. (2017, August 3). How do you know that what you know is true? That's epistemology [Blog post.] Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/how-do-you-know-that-what-you-know-is-true-thatsepistemology-63884>

Fendler, L. (2003). Teacher reflection in a hall of mirrors: Historical influences and political reverberations. *Educational researcher*, 32(3), 16-25.

Gage, N. L. (2009). The paradigm wars and their aftermath A "historical" sketch of research on teaching since 1989. *Educational Researcher*, 18(7), 4-10.

Hall, E. T. (1989). *Beyond culture*. New York City: Anchor Books.

Kilgore, D. (2001). Critical and postmodern perspectives on adult learning. In S. Merriam (ed.), *The new update on adult learning theory*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Maxwell, J. A. (2011). Paradigms or toolkits? Philosophical and methodological positions as heuristics for mixed methods research. *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*, 24(2), 27-30.
- Moen, T., Gudmundsdottir, S., & Flem, A. (2003). Inclusive practice: A biographical approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 19, 359-370.
- Morine-Dershimer, et al., (1986) A Case study of Teaching from *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 2(4), 299-328.
- Mueller, J., & O'Connor, C. (2007). Telling and retelling about self and “others”: How preservice teacher s (re)interpret privilege and disadvantage in one college classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 840-856.
- Rose, E. (2013). *On reflection: An essay on technology, education, and the status of thought in the 21st century*. Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Rizo, F. M. (1991). The controversy about quantification in social research: An extension of Gage's “historical sketch”. *Educational Researcher*, 20(9), 9-12.
- Swain, M., & Deters, P. (2007). “New” mainstream SLA theory: Expanded and enriched. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91, pp. 820-836.
- Valentine, G. (2007). Theorizing and researching intersectionality: A challenge for feminist geography. *The Professional Geographer*, 59(1), 10-21.
- Wheatley, M. J. (1993). Chaos and complexity: What can science teach. *OD Practitioner*, 25(3), 2-10.

### **Recommended Text**

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

### **Course Expectations for all students:**

- **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory, as the discussions that take place in this class are essential to achieving the course objectives. Unexcused absences will be reflected as a deduction in your class participation grade. If you find you must miss a class, please contact the professor *in advance* and arrange for information lost due to your absence.
- **Tardiness:** Prompt arrival for the beginning of class is expected.
- **Participation:** Each student is expected to complete all the assigned readings before the assigned class and participate actively in discussions. It is expected that each student will be attuned to and respectful of group dynamics to ensure the active participation of all in the class.
- **Absence:** 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:** All assignments must be completed in MS Word and sent to your professor as an email attachment or posted on Blackboard, as requirements indicate, on their due date. *Late assignments will not be accepted without making prior arrangements with your professor.*

## **MASON POLICIES and RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing -- See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>.
- 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. *In EDUC 800 all email communication regarding course performance will be sent using Mason email addresses.*
- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consist 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/>).
- 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/>).
- The George Mason University Writing Center Staff provide 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/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.  
*Regarding electronic devices (such as laptops, cell phones, etc.), please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your participation grade.*

## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS**

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

### **CORE VALUES COMMITMENT**

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to *Social justice, Innovation, Research-based practice, Ethical leadership, and Collaboration*. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values>]

EDCI 800 reflects the mission and core beliefs of the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University through its commitment to engage doctoral students in critical reflection and research literature that promotes ethical educational leadership, deep understanding of a world perspective in educational decision-making, knowledgeable teacher education professionals who can teach their content and work effectively with diverse language learners, understand and implement research-based practice, and collaborate productively with colleagues. CEHD's five Core Values are integrated with and actively incorporated in the course content, discussions, and student work associated with EDUC 800:

- Collaboration
- Ethical Leadership
- Innovation
- Research-based Practice
- Social Justice

## GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/> ]

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

**Course Delivery.** This is a “face-to -face” doctoral seminar. Dialogic in nature, EDUC 800 is predicated upon expanding knowledge and understanding through interactive discussion, critical reflection, and research. Course delivery is designed to be learner-focused in multiple ways in order to meet the course objectives and the needs of participants. A variety of in-class, on-line, cooperative, and individualized instructional approaches include:

- *Student and professor directed discussions and dialogic participation;*
- *Discussions* (i.e., active involvement of students in learning by asking questions that engage doctoral students in deep critical thinking and engaged verbal interaction);
- *Cooperative and Collaborative learning* (i.e., small group learning interactions emphasizing learning from and with others);
- *Multimedia*
- *Blackboard* web-based course management system to extend classroom learning and foster personal and collaborative reflection.

My teaching style revolves around dialogic interaction. 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 as you move from one author/study to the next. In addition to classroom attendance and participation, you are expected 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.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

	<i>Points</i>
Participation & Professionalism	30
Journal Reflections (6)	30

Paper on a New Way of Knowing	30
Closing Reflection on Ways of Knowing	10
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Participation & Professionalism (30%)**

Students will be asked to work individually or in small groups in class throughout the semester. Students may also be asked to participate in online Blackboard Discussions outside of class time. Because of the importance of lecture and discussion to your total learning experience, you are strongly encouraged to be completely engaged in all aspects of your work in and outside the scope of our F2F meeting times.

Attendance, punctuality, preparation, and active contribution to small and large group efforts are essential. These elements will reflect the professional attitude implied in the course goals and will account for 20% of your course grade. Students who must miss a class must notify the instructor (preferably in advance) and are responsible for completing all assignments and readings for the next class.

### **Journal Reflection Papers (6 x 5 = 30%)**

You are encouraged to make time to reflect on weekly readings, class activities and class discussions. You will write six reflection papers as noted in the class schedule, turned in by the beginning of the class on the date we will discuss the topic. These reflections are designed to capture your growth and understanding of each way of knowing as you proceed through the course

The intent of these brief papers (2 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.

### **Due as assigned in Class Schedule**

### **Paper on a New Way of Knowing (30%)**

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 by Class 13.**

As part of the development of your paper, please submit to Blackboard a one-page description of your proposed project so we can agree early in the semester (no later than the ninth class). 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?

Evaluation of the final paper: *This assignment is the performance based assessment for EDUC 800.* 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*).

### **Closing Reflection on Ways of Knowing (10%)**

You will maintain regular reflective writings (above) that are both reflective and analytic in nature. The overall purpose is to use informal journal writing as a means to think, make personal connections to, and reflect on the content of the course. In particular, reflection 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 reflections. 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 describe your way(s) of knowing, learning, and thinking when you began this class? As you consider your autobiography/personal history, what factors personal, experiential, familial, sociocultural, historical, and/or disciplinary influenced your ways of knowing?
2. How has the course affected your ways of knowing as a practitioner and as a researcher? How would you describe the evolution of your current way of knowing?
3. What are some likely implications of your reflections on question 2 with regard to your personal and professional growth during your doctoral study? For your scholarly work?

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.

***All assignments must be completed in MS Word and submitted via Blackboard by the due date specified in the syllabus and on Blackboard.***

### **SUMMARY OF DUE DATES**

- Reflection #1 – Before class 3**
- Reflection #2 – Before class 4**
- Reflection #3 – Before class 6**
- Reflection #4 – Before class 8**
- Reflection #5 – Before class 10**
- Reflection #6 – Before class 11**

*New Way of Knowing Paper*

- **Description due before class 9**
- **Draft peer reviewed in class 12**
- **Paper due by class 13**

*Closing Reflection on Ways of Knowing*

**Due on December 11**

**Grading Scale:**

A = 94-100

A- = 90-93

B+ = 85-89

B = 80-84

C = 70-79

F = Did not meet course requirements



**Course Schedule: Fall 2017 for EDUC 800-Ways of Knowing  
Tentative Class Schedule**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings and Work Due this week</b>
1	August 28	What is a way of knowing, what ways of knowing have influenced you?	<b>READ:</b> No readings due for class 1
	September 4	No class: <i>Labor Day Holiday</i>	
2	September 11	What are our ways of knowing? And the foundations of inquiry?	<b>READ:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 2 from Rose, <i>On Reflection</i>, posted to Bb</li> <li>- Fendler, Teacher Reflection in a Hall of Mirrors, on Bb</li> <li>- Read assigned Jigsaw readings from Descartes' <i>Rules for Guiding One's Intelligence in Searching for the Truth (from first 13 rules: pp 117-169)</i></li> </ul>
3	September 18	Descartes: How are we coming to define "knowing"	<b>READ:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Descartes, Introduction (<i>pp xi-xxxiii</i>) and <i>Discourse on Method (pp. 1-54)</i></li> <li>- Ellerton Reading</li> </ul> <b>DUE:</b> Reflection 1 due to Blackboard by 11:59 pm, Sunday before class <b>Reflection 1 Prompt:</b> <i>How have the class activities, class discussions and readings on reflection furthered your thinking? What role do you see reflection playing in helping you to identify and develop an understanding of your and others' ways of knowing? The Fendler (2003) article references the complexities of reflection. Where do some of these complexities start to emerge for you?</i>
4	September 25	Identifying and developing expanding perspectives  What is a scientific revolution?	<b>READ:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kuhn in two parts pp. 1 – 110</li> </ul> <b>DUE:</b> Reflection 2 due to Blackboard by 11:59 pm, Sunday before class AND bring to class <b>Reflection 2 Prompt:</b> <i>Open your web browser and explore rationalism, empiricism, and positivism. Examine the basic tenets of each and their historical context. Create a pictorial representation (e.g., a concept map or other image) of how you see them reflected in your own way(s) of knowing. Think and Write (1 page): What are examples of these in your discipline, job, and/or life? Submit your reflection and a photo or scan of your image to Blackboard AND bring a copy to class 4.</i>

5	October 2	A philosophical view of how ways of knowing change	<b>READ:</b> - Kuhn, part 2, pp. 111-210
6	October 10  (Due to Fall Break, Monday classes meet on Tuesday this week; Tuesday classes do not meet)	The culture of education	<b>READ:</b> - Bruner, part 1, pp. 1 – 99 <b>DUE:</b> Reflection 3 due to Blackboard by 11:59 pm, Sunday before class <b>Reflection 3 Prompt:</b> <i>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? Additionally, note what specifically about Kuhn’s perspective helps you understand how we come to know?</i>
7	October 16	The culture of education and knowing	<b>READ:</b> - Bruner part 2, pp. 100 – 185
8	October 23	Narrative inquiry and expanding perspectives	<b>READ:</b> Readings posted to Bb: - Connelly & Clandinin - Barone - Clandinin & Murphy - Coulter & Smith <b>DUE:</b> Reflection 4 due to Blackboard by 11:59 pm, Sunday before class <b>Reflection 4 Prompt:</b> <i>Situate Bruner within Cartesian philosophy. How does Bruner argue that we come to know? What is the essence of Bruner’s argument about culture? How does it fit into your own way of knowing?</i>
9	October 30	Cultural Influences on Ways of Knowing	<b>READ:</b> Readings posted to Bb: - Chapter from Hall, <i>Beyond Culture</i> ; - Swain & Deters <b>DUE:</b> New Way of Knowing paper description due this week: submit to Bb and bring copy to class
10	November 6	Narrative and critical perspectives	<b>READ:</b> Readings posted to Bb - Gage - Rizo <i>Choose 2 of the following:</i> - Duncan & Ridley-Duff

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mueller &amp; O'Connor</li> <li>- Moen, Gudmundsdottir &amp; Flem</li> <li>- Valentine</li> </ul> <p><b>DUE:</b> Reflection 5 due to Blackboard by 11:59 pm, Sunday before class</p> <p><b>Reflection 5 Prompt:</b> <i>Consider the cultural influences you identified in the Cultural and Linguistics Scaffold begun in class 7 and continued in 9. Are the values, perspectives, and messages conveyed to you by these influences consistent with one another? How do you think these influences have affected your perspectives and your ways of knowing? How do you see them impacting you as a scholar and researcher?</i></p>
11	November 13	Chaos/Complexity: The New Revolution?	<p><b>READ:</b> - Strogatz pp. 1-100</p> <p><b>DUE:</b> Reflection 6 due to Blackboard by 11:59 pm, Sunday before class</p> <p><b>Reflection 6 Prompt:</b> <i>What arguments about the creation of knowledge are the authors from the preceding three weeks making? How do they fit with Descartes, Kuhn, and Bruner?</i></p>
12	November 20	Work Night	<p>No F2F class meeting tonight <i>Read for upcoming weeks</i> <i>Work on draft of Knowing paper; bring draft to class after Thanksgiving</i></p>
13	November 27	Chaos/Complexity and Post-Modernism,	<p><b>READ:</b> Readings posted to Bb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kilgore</li> <li>- Wheatley</li> </ul> <p><b>DUE:</b> Bring draft of "Knowing" paper to class</p>
14	December 4	Expanded Understandings	<p><b>READ:</b> <i>No new readings for this evening</i></p> <p><b>DUE:</b> "Knowing" paper due electronically by December 4</p>
15	December 11	Pulling our learning together: What do we know?	<p><b>READ:</b> - Maxwell's Paradigms or Toolkits?</p> <p><b>DUE:</b> Closing Reflection - December 11</p>