

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
PhD Program

EDRS 822, Section 002 – Advanced Applications of Qualitative Methods
3 credits, Fall 2017
Tuesdays, 7:20-10pm, East 134 - Fairfax Campus

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 includes a variety of learning activities: discussions in seminar format, text-based/multi-media presentation of course materials, experiential learning activities including interactive assignments, cooperative learning group activities, online discussions and activities, and lecture.

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:

There is no required texts for the course. All readings will be articles and book chapters posted on Blackboard.

Recommended texts (you can order these online if you so choose; I will provide a few chapters of each on pdf):

- Carspecken (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Crotty, M. (2015). *The foundations of social research*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (2013). *The landscape of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- Hatch, A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in educational settings*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (Eds.) (2003). *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Luttrell, W. (Ed.). (2010). *Qualitative educational research: Readings in reflexive methodology and transformative practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Patel, L. (2016). *Decolonizing educational research*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *Thinking qualitatively: Methods of mind*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Web Resources and Networks:

There are several web resources that you may find useful. Many of these sites have listservs that you can join if you are interested in receiving regular updates and information regarding qualitative research methodologies and methods. I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with these useful resources.

- The International Institute for Qualitative Methodology's Webinar series: <http://www.iiqm.ualberta.ca/WebinarSeries/MasterClassWebinarSeries.aspx>
- Methodspace (<http://www.methodspace.com/>)
- The Qualitative Report (<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/index.html>)

- Top Qualitative Research Blogs (<http://www.qualitative360.com/news-and-blogs/11-editor-s-pick-top-qualitative-research-blogs>)

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 and 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	25
2. Module 1 Paper	25
3. Module 2 Paper	25
4. Module 3 Paper	25

100 total points

Participation (25 points)

Module Papers (25 points each):

Over the course of the semester, you will write three scholarly papers. One way to look at these three papers is that together they have the potential to 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. All papers will be emailed to the instructor by class time on the date due.

I am open to other options – perhaps conducting an analysis of some qualitative data you have instead of doing a paper for the second module. If you think a different assignment would be more useful for you for any of these modules, you must come to me well ahead of time and get approval to pursue that route.

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:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.

In most instances, these papers should provide:

1. A clear and adequate introduction of each module (4 points);
2. A scholarly exploration of relevance and connection to your researcher identity, topic, or interests (4 points);
3. Concerns that might need to be taken into account (4 points);
4. Critical decision points and junctures (4 points);
5. Gaps that will still need to be addressed or direction for future exploration (4 points).

6. Clarity of writing, effort, and APA formatting, and careful editing will earn 5 points.

Due to the individualized nature of these papers and the different needs of students, I may provide additional guidance or make alterations to these general expectations.

Grading Policy

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%
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.

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/>

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason 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 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 <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced 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/api/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- 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/>).
- 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/>).
- The George Mason University Office of Student Support staff helps students negotiate life situations by connecting them with appropriate campus and off-campus resources. Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone (703-993-5376). Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://studentsupport.gmu.edu/>, and the OSS staff will follow up with the student.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
MODULE ONE: Back to basics and current questions		
Aug 29	Course Introduction	
Sep 5 – online discussion	What are we doing? What should we be doing? Why choose qualitative inquiry?	Hatch 2006 Denzin and Lincoln Introduction Knoblauch 2013
Sep 12	Scientism and paradigms – what gets in the way of doing what we should be doing?	Lather 2006a Lather 2006b – paradigm proliferation
Sep 19	What do we need to know to move forward? The politics of evidence	Morse Denzin and Giardina
Sep 26	So, how do we proceed? Questions of objectivity, subjectivity, bias, and reflexivity	Peshkin 1988 Lynch 2000 Breuer and Roth 2003
MODULE TWO: Qualitative Research Design		
Oct 3	The paradox of qualitative research design; connecting epistemology with research design decisions	Morse 2003 Agee Duggleby and Williams 2016 Mantzoukas MODULE ONE PAPER DUE
Oct 10	Data collection and decisions: - Focus Groups - Interpersonal Process Recall	Owens et al IPR Resources on Blackboard Dennis et al, Chapter 7
Oct 17	Qualitative Data Analysis: Beyond Coding Interpretive Sequence Analysis	Peshkin, A. (2000) Carspecken, Ch. 7, 8
Oct 24	No class held – debrief analysis with at least one peer outside of class	
Oct 31	No class held – meet individually with Meagan outside of class (skype encouraged) to discuss class progress to date, upcoming research design, data collection, and analysis decisions	
Nov 7	Qualitative Data Analysis: Beyond Coding - Power Analysis	Review Carspecken, Ch. 7, 8
Nov 14	Qualitative Data Analysis: Beyond Coding - Analysis of Interactive Care	Korth
MODULE THREE: What is “good” qualitative inquiry?		
Nov 21	Validity and quality	Moss et al McCabe and Holmes 2009

		Tracy 2010 Bochner 2000 MODULE TWO PAPER DUE
Nov 28	Ethics: The Researcher's Role and Representation in Qualitative Inquiry	Probst 2016 Leigh 2013 Ellis 2007
Dec 5	TBD	