George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Graduate School of Education

EDRS 822 .001- ADVANCED APPLICATIONS OF QUALITATIVE METHODS
3 credits, Spring 2018
Tuesdays 7:20-10:00 pm, Thompson Hall, L028

PROFESSOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A. **Prerequisite(s):** EDRS 810 and 812 or equivalent coursework.

B. **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.

C. **Course Overview**
Geometric patterns are seen as a cornerstone of Islamic decoration, mainly due to their non-representational quality and associations with balance and order. Circles, squares, stars and multisided polygons are duplicated, interlaced, and arranged in intricate combinations to form highly complex patterns…All Islamic pattern is based on the idea that what we see is always and only a part of a whole that extends to infinity.

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar

What does this quote on Islamic Art have to do with Advanced Qualitative Research Methods? One could ask what does not? Culture, patterns, analysis, reflexivity and interpretation are common to both and increasingly research methods seek to better understand the complexities that are inherent to the context, culture, and question.

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.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Not applicable.

TEXTS

REQUIRED
Crotty, M. (2015). *The foundations of social research.* Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Hatch, A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in educational settings.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press

Ravitch, S. M. & Riggan, M. (2017). *Reason and rigor. How conceptual frameworks guide research.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Other readings as assigned. (Articles available on Blackboard under Course Content).

RECOMMENDED - Supplemental Texts (*just* for your information—you do *not* need to purchase)
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.

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. (2015). *Thinking qualitatively: Methods of mind.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

COURSE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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 yes, even critique.

ASSIGNMENTS
Module Papers (3)

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

Module Paper 1 –Theory and Philosophy: This paper should be 10-pages long, where you explore a particular ontological and epistemological perspective in greater depth. Your goal is to answer the question someone might pose to you asking "Hmm, you seem to define yourself as a ……, tell me what you mean by that?" So – this paper would depend on your preparing to defend your answer using literature beyond what you are exposed to in class, to present your answer. You might address the history of a particular stance or even two stances, the major definitions, the critiques that exist in the field, and how these stances makes sense to you as a researcher.

Module Paper 2 – Design and Methods: This paper should be 10-pages long, and should explore either your understanding of one or two designs, similar to Module Paper 1 or it should explain your choice of design for your dissertation and present all components of that design. For Option 1, you would present an in-depth understanding of two designs: the history, the definitions and critiques. For option 2, you will present one design and defend your choice of that design exploring the definitions and critiques. Again, this would be to answer the question "Hmm – I see you are selecting XYZ as your design – tell me why?" In addition, you will be exploring the components of your design including but not limited to selection of site and participants, methods/tools of data collection, and analysis as well as a clear defense of why you are making the decisions you are making.

Module Paper 3 – Quality: This paper should be 10-pages long and should explore the components that affect the fidelity or quality of your study. This Module paper will explore the issues of researcher reflexivity, bias, postionality, ethics, limitations, and other components that are aligned with your ontological and epistemological positions as well as in congruence with your choices of design. This paper would answer the question "Hmm, How do I trust your work?" This addresses issues of transparency, rigor and quality of your work and is critical to the trust the reader puts into your work.

Important Considerations

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 (5 points);

2. Clear organization of multiple sections in the paper that take the reader clearly through your thought processes (5 points)

3. A scholarly exploration of definitions and content beyond what is addressed in class (10 points).

4. A thorough understanding of what you are espousing to be your stance, design, or understandings of quality (5 points).

5. 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, the instructor may provide additional guidance or make alterations to these general expectations.

OTHER REQUREMENTS
Attendance and Participation (10 points)
Attendance and Participation: Class participation is important not only for each individual student's learning, but for the learning and success of our class as a whole. Class participation is a factor in grading; instructors may use absences, tardiness, or early departure in both on-line and campus class sessions as de facto evidence of non-participation and as a result lower a student's grade (Mason Catalog 2011-12).
Please note the following attendance and participation policies:
1. Two tardies are equal to one absence, and missing 30% or more of class sessions will result in automatic course failure. For each unexcused absence (a determination made by the instructor) one point will be deducted from your attendance and class participation points up to a total of 15 points.
2. Participants are expected to read the assigned materials, complete on-line activities including pre-session Blackboard assignments, arrive promptly, attend all class meetings for the entire session, and participate in on-line and face-to-face class discussions.

3. If, due to an emergency, you will not be able to participate during a given week of class, please contact the professor as soon as possible. Students are responsible for obtaining information given during class discussions/sessions despite attendance from a classmate.

Course Assessment

Assignment	Points
Participation	10
Module One Paper	30
Module Two Paper	30
Module Three Paper	30
Total	**100**

Grades on assignments turned in late will be reduced 10%, and assignments more than one week late will not be accepted. Attendance is very important to class participation; one point will be deducted per class-hour absence.

Grading Scale:

At George Mason University, course work is measured in terms of quantity and quality. A credit normally represents one hour per week of lecture or recitation or not fewer than two hours per week of laboratory work throughout a semester. The number of credits is a measure of quantity. The grade is a measure of quality. The system for grading graduate courses is as follows:

Grade	GRADING	Graduate Courses
A+	100	Satisfactory / Passing
A	94-99	Satisfactory / Passing
A-	90-93	Satisfactory / Passing
B+	85-89	Satisfactory / Passing
B	80-84	Satisfactory / Passing
C	70-79	Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education
F	<69	Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education

All assignments will be evaluated holistically using a mastery grading system; the general rubric is described below. A student must demonstrate "mastery" of each requirement of an assignment; doing so will result in a "B" level score. Only if a student additionally exceeds the expectations for that requirement—through quality, quantity, or the creativity of her/his work—will she/he be assessed with an "A" level score. With a mastery grading system, students must *choose* to "go above and beyond" in order to earn "A" level scores.

- "A" level score = Student work is well-organized, exceptionally thorough and thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines, as well as including additional relevant component. Student supports assertions with multiple concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified and extended to other contexts. Student work is exceptionally creative, includes additional artifacts, and/or intentionally supports peers' efforts.
- "B" level score = Student work is well organized, thorough, thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines. Student supports assertions with concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified.
- "C" level score = Student provides cursory responses to assignment requirements. Student followed all format and component guidelines. Development of ideas is somewhat vague, incomplete, or rudimentary. Compelling support for assertions is typically not provided.
- "F" level score = Student work is so brief that any reasonably accurate assessment is impossible

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See
https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/

PROPOSED CLASS 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: Philosophy and Theory of Qualitative Research		
WEEK 1 January 23 ONLINE CLASS THIS WEEK	**Course Introduction** Course introduction instructions will be posted online by January 20th for completion by January 28th.	**Class will meet ONLINE this week** Ravitch & Riggan – Chapter 1 and 2
WEEK 2 Jan 30	**Place and value of QR and the central focus on question**	Pryor (2010) Agee (2009) Crotty 1 Labaree, D. F. (1998) Creswell and Miller (2000)
WEEK 3 Feb 6	**Delving into paradigmatic boundaries**	Crotty 2-4 Hatch 1 Hammersley, M. (2000). Demerath, P. (2006)
WEEK 4 Feb 13	**Paradigms unpacked**	Guba & Lincoln (n.d). Crotty 5-7 Koro-Ljungberg, M. Yendol-Hoppey, D., Smith, J. J., & Hayes, S. B. (2009).
WEEK 5	**Letting it all come back together**	Crotty 8-9

Feb 20		Kvale, S. (1996). Ravitch & Riggan – Chapter 3
MODULE TWO: Design and Methods of Qualitative Research		
WEEK 6 Feb 27	**Understanding Design**	Hatch 2-3 Ravitch & Riggan – Chapter 4 **MODULE PAPER ONE DUE**
Week 7 March 6	**Selection and Decision points in design**	Ghaffar-Kuchar, A. (2014). 'Narrow-minded and oppressive' or a 'superior culture'? Implcations of divergent representations of Islam for Pakistani-American youth. *Race, Ethnicity and Education.* Brown, L., & Durrheim, K. (2009). Kvale, S. (2006)
Mason Spring Break – No class on March 13		
Week 8 March 20	**Beyond Coding: Interpreting and Generating Meaning**	Hatch 4 Saldaña 1-2 Gubrium, E., & Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2005). Enosh, G., & Buchbinder, E. (2005). Wolgemuth and Donohue. (2006). Baily, S. (2011).
WEEK 9 March 27 ONLINE	**Techniques, analysis and making meaning**	Hatch 5 Ravitch & Riggan – Chapter 5 ONLINE
WEEK 10 April 3	**Ethics of Design**	Ravitch & Riggan – Chapter 6 Saldaña – 3-4 **Module Paper Two due**
MODULE THREE: Quality Issues in Qualitative Research		
WEEK 11 April 10	**Quality and finality(?) of QR**	Anfara, Jr., V. A., Brown, K. M., & Mangione, T. L. (2002). Howe, K. R. (2009). Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007). Nind et al (2012)
WEEK 12 April 17	**Trust and Rigor** **Representing the "other" in qualitative research.**	Freeman, M. (2000). Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton (2001) Ghaffar-Kuchar, A. (2014). Writing culture; inscribing lives: a reflective treatise on the burden of representation in native research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education.* Cho, J., & Trent, A. (2006).

Week 13 April 24 ONLINE	**Ethics in Qualitative Research**	Group Work online
WEEK 14 May 1	**Wrapping up**	Ravitch & Riggan – Chapter 7-8-9

Module Paper Three DUE MAY 6th

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and 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/.

Professional Dispositions
See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/undergraduate#profdisp

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies
- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/.

- 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/aero/tk20. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/.

- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

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