George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Research Methods

EDRS 850-001 – GROUNDED THEORY
3 Credits, Spring 2018
Monday, 10am-12:40pm, TH1010 – Fairfax Campus

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

EDRS 812, EDRS 822 (or permission of instructor)

University Catalog Course Description

Prepares students to apply and critique grounded theory and related methods. Includes various approaches to design with particular attention to analysis techniques and theoretical selection, sensitivity, and saturation. Recommends students obtain IRB approval prior to beginning this course. Offered by Graduate School of Education. May not be repeated for credit.

Course Overview

This class will be collaborative and interactive—be prepared for discussion! Questions are encouraged and expected, and alternative viewpoints are welcome. I value contributions to our discussions and ask you to speak up! However, I do expect you to support your assertions. Also, I expect all of us to create an educational climate of open debate that is respectful and democratic. Your participation will be evaluated by the quality and integrity of your contribution, not the quantity! Please note reading and assignment due dates. Contact me if you have questions or concerns about this material.

There are five main components of the course:

1. Class meetings. Each class will incorporate a blend of mini-lectures on key topics, demonstrations, class exercises, and/or discussion.

2. Discussion. We will dedicate a considerable amount of time to discussion; be prepared to connect your specific interests to the readings and to offer feedback to peer projects.

3. Assigned readings. These readings are an essential part of the course; they provide necessary preparation for class lectures, activities, and discussions, and they cover important aspects of the topic for further learning and understanding. Additional readings are provided to support individual exploration of methods and application.

4. Peer review. Each student in the class will provide peer review for at least two other student projects. This is not graded as a separate assignment, but it will count toward participation.

5. Data collection and analysis project. The final project will focus on methods of data collection/analysis, and critique of readings and application. Guidelines for this project are provided below; guidelines for the final project report will be given out in class and posted on the course Blackboard site.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered using a seminar format.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:
- Review and critique development of grounded theory across disciplines
- Identify and critique opportunities for theoretical selection, sensitivity, and saturation
- Distinguish between grounded theory and "theorizing from qualitative data"
- Apply various analysis techniques appropriate to design and research questions
- Critique the literature and application of grounded theory related methods

Professional Standards

Not Applicable.

Required Texts

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Clarke, A. E. (2005). *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. L. (2014) *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Recommended Texts

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
Clarke, A. E., Friese, C, & Washburn, R. (Eds.). (2016). *Situational analysis in practice: Mapping research with grounded theory.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor. All assignments will be submitted as hard copy to the instructor at the beginning of class.

- **Assignments and Examinations**

    Draft Data Collection/Analysis Report. You will develop a draft report that communicates your design choices and rationale. We will discuss formats in class. However, if you want to use this as a part of your dissertation, I suggest strongly that you talk with your advisor about technical expectations. I want this to be a useful foundation for both your class research project and academic development. The assignment should not exceed 10 pages (double space, one-inch margins); this page limitation does not include title page, abstract, references, and appendices. (Be careful, though, about over-relying on appendices; if you cannot make the argument in the manuscript itself, appendices will not be useful.)

    Final Data Collection/Analysis Report. Based on my comments and feedback from at least two peers (and your dissertation chair/methodologist, if applicable), you will finalize your report and critique the methods and related readings. The assignment should not exceed 20 pages (double space, one-inch margins); this page limitation does not include title page, abstract, references, and appendices. (Again, be careful about over-relying on appendices; if you cannot make the argument in the manuscript itself, appendices will not be useful.)

    Related Non-Graded Assignments. Other non-graded assignments are expected during the course and contribute to your final project report. I will not accept late non-graded assignments.

- **Other Requirements**

    Participation is not equivalent to attendance! The following criteria are expected:

    ✓ Prepared for discussion and tasks.
    ✓ Maintains balance between speaking and listening roles.
    ✓ Listens attentively and offers constructive feedback.
    ✓ Accepts diversity in viewpoints and negotiates differences.
    ✓ Shares leadership roles.

    HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH approval is highly suggested for this project. Since this project is expected to contribute directly to your dissertation or other project, your advisor should review and sign the paperwork. If you do not have an IRB-approved project, please discuss with me immediately. **I might have or know of a project you can join for course completion.**

    <u>**YOU MAY NOT COLLECT DATA WITHOUT IRB APPROVAL.**</u>

- **Grading**

  Weighting

Assignment	Points
Draft Report	25
Final Report	50
Participation	25
Total Points	**100**

  Grading Scale

A+	98-100%	B+	88-89%	C	70-79%
A	93-97%	B	83-87%	F	below 70%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%		

  Other Policies

  Grades on assignments turned in late will be reduced 10%, and assignments more than one week late will not be accepted. Data collection and analysis assignments are required for completion of the research paper. These assignments are not graded, but they are the foundation of your research project. To receive timely feedback, assignments must be completed by due date.

Assessment Rubrics

Draft and Final Paper Guidelines:

Quality research stems from a well-thought-out draft and serious attention to editing. The **<u>draft</u>** includes three general areas: (1) what you are interested in studying and how it fits into a grounded theory or related design (connect conceptual framework to purpose, research questions, and methods), (2) what methods are most appropriate for this project, and (3) your critique of readings and application of methods. The final paper revisits the draft in relation to continued reading, synthesizing, and data collection/analysis to include findings and a scholarly critique of design choices and application.

- The purpose of the study should be a well-worded, concise statement of research intent. Keep in mind your resources, unit of analysis, and audience. Remember, your purpose guides the entire research process—keep it relevant, balanced, and doable!!!

- The significance of the study should include a statement of how your research will contribute to either your field of study or to practice. This section requires you to think ahead of your project and to envision the impact of the study.

- Methodology includes a conceptual framework for methods and is a statement of methods choices—this section will evolve during the research process. This section should address design, site and/or sample selection, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques.

- Findings are usually presented as a set of themes or categories, but may also include narrative and other types of representation; we will discuss options in class. Keep in mind this course does NOT evaluate your themes. Instead, the goal is to explain and critique the process of identification and support of those themes.

- Critique of methods may be a separate section in the final paper, or critique may be integrated across the final paper. You do not need to critique every choice! I suggest you focus on 3-5 specific areas that require methods critique and support with methods literature. In other words, I want you to be a scholar of your method!

Points are not based on the findings of the study—this assignment is to evaluate your knowledge and use and critique of qualitative case study methodology. However, the findings should be relevant, supporting the purpose of the study. The following areas will be evaluated:

Logic—reasoning is rational, conclusive, and well supported
Clarity—presentation is clear and concise
Flow—material is arranged logically
Support—evidence supports findings/arguments
Defense—answers to questions are concise, direct, and well supported
Fit—findings/discussion fit purpose/problem
Rigor—attention to rigor in research design and project implementation
Writing style—logic, clarity, flow, technical (grammar, spelling, punctuation)

STUDENT:

Assignments: General Guidelines/Assessment Rubric

___20%	Problem/Purpose Development	R/C___	I/E___	T___
___20%	Methodology	R/C___	I/E___	T___
___20%	Findings/Discussion	R/C___	I/E___	T___
___20%	Critique of Methodology	R/C___	I/E___	T___
___20%	Technical	R/C___	I/E___	T___

___100% Total Score

Reflection and Critique: avoids surface presentation and summary of topic; identifies and meets relevant need; provides neutral presentation of strengths and weaknesses of topic; evaluates strengths and weaknesses; states and supports position.

C   No reflection, no critique
B-   Reflective on experience and personal opinions; no critique
B   Reflective on experience; reflection of material and/or theory embedded
B+   Reflective of material and/or theory
A-   Critique initiated; critique lacks validity and is not maintained
A   Critique initiated; critique is valid but not maintained
A+   Critique initiated; critique is valid and well maintained

Integration and Evidence: provides comprehensive connections across course material (i.e., readings, discussions, previous learning, and personal experiences); balances theory and practice; provides appropriate and adequate support for ideas, facts, and propositions.

C   No integration, no evidence
B-   Material OR experience integrated to some degree; inadequate support
B   Material AND experience integrated to some degree; inadequate support
B+   Material AND experience integrated well; inadequate support
A-   Material OR experience integrated well; limited support
A   Material AND experience integrated well; partial support is valid but not maintained
A+   Material AND experience integrated well; conclusive support is valid and maintained

Technical Soundness: characterizes professionalism and scholarship; attends to audience composition and needs; exhibits drafting and editing appropriate for graduate-level work. Marked items require attention:

____Grammar	____Readability	____APA Style
____Punctuation	____Tone/Voice	____Cover page
____Spelling	____Language	____Abstract
____Agreement	____Flow	____Citations
____Sentence structure	____Transitions	____Quotations
____Paragraph structure	____Preview/Summary	____References

Professional Dispositions

See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/

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/.

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 https://ds.gmu.edu/).

- Students must silence all sound emitting devices 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/.

Class Schedule (*indicates non-required reading; EX indicates GT study example)

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

SECTION 1 GROUNDED THEORY VS. THEORIZING FROM QR DATA

01/28 The role of theory/theories in qualitative research

Corbin & Strauss, chpt. 1
Charmaz, chpt. 1
*Glaser & Strauss, chpts. 1-4

02/04 The history of grounded theory… and why that matters

Corbin & Strauss, chpt. 2
Charmaz, chpts. 2-4
Clarke, Prologue, chpt. 1
*Walker & Myrick (2006) GT Process & Procedure

02/11 When and why to theorize from your data, even if you're not doing GT

Corbin & Strauss, chpts. 3-4
Charmaz, chpt. 5
*Charmaz (2011) GT & Social Justice Research
*Starks & Trinidad (2007) PHEN, DA, & GT

02/18 DIALOGUE: Identify your conceptual framework for GT/Theorizing

For in-class discussion, prepare a <u>one-page</u> visual and/or narrative conceptual framework of your approach to GT (10 copies). This is not graded!

DUE: IRB approval, if required.

SECTION 2 ANALYZING TOWARD THEORY

02/25 Traditional constant comparative analysis… and critique

*Glaser & Strauss, chpts. 5-8
Clarke, chpt. 2
Corbin & Strauss (1990) GT Procedures, Criteria
Greckhamer & Koro-Ljungberg (2005) Erosion of Method
*O'Connor, Netting, & Thomas (2008) GT & IRB

03/04 Constructivist constant comparative analysis… and critique

> Corbin & Strauss, chpts. 5-6 (12-13)
> Charmaz, chpts. 6-7
> Clarke, chpts. 3-7

> CHOOSE 2
> EX: Harry, Sturges, & Klinger (2005) Mapping the Process
> EX: Kolb (2011) Sympathy Work
> EX: Komives et al. (2005) Developing Leadership ID
> EX: Leisenring (2011) ID Claims, Partner Violence
> EX: McDowell (2000) Home Schooling

03/11 NO CLASS. Spring Break

03/18 Thematic network analysis, situational analysis and QR metasynthesis

> Attride-Stirling (2001) Thematic Networks
> Pascale (2010) Analytic Induction
> EX: Reybold (2003) Pathways to the Professorate
> *Finfgeld-Connett (2013) Content Analysis & Theorizing
> *Sandelowski & Barroso (2003) Metasynthesis, Method

> CHOOSE 2 (These works 'follow' the longitudinal GT Pathways)
> EX: Reybold (2005) Surrendering the Dream (Faculty Dissatisfaction)
> EX: Reybold (2008) Structuring of Faculty Ethicality
> EX: Reybold & Alamia (2008) Academic Transitions
> EX: Reybold & Corda (2011) Service to the Academy
> EX: Reybold et al. (2014) Counselor Educators & Hurricane Katrina

03/25 DIALOGUE: Choosing and blending your analysis methods

> **For in-class discussion, prepare a <u>one-page</u> visual and/or narrative of your analysis choices and rationale (10 copies). Be sure to identify the principles of your study that align with grounded theory and/or theorizing from QR data, your unit of analysis, and general proposed methods. This is not graded!**

> **DUE: Draft paper with peer feedback.**

SECTION 3 RETURNING TO THE BASICS OF GROUNDED THEORY… AGAIN

04/01 Theoretical selection/sensitivity/saturation

> *Glaser & Strauss, chpts. 9-12
> Corbin & Strauss, chpts. 7-8 (14)
> Reybold, Lammert, & Stribling (2013) Selection as Thinking Forward
> Adair & Pastori (2011) Coding Frameworks, Children Crossing Borders Project

04/08 Gaps and questions. Now what?

      Corbin & Strauss, chpt. 9
      Charmaz, chpt. 9

      EX: Reybold (2014) Irony of Ethics

04/05 NO CLASS - CIES

04/22 Pulling it all together: A core category? A model?

      Corbin & Strauss, chpts. 15, 16
      Charmaz, chpts. 11, 12
      *Ryan & Bernard (2003) ID Themes
      *Gerring (1999) "Good" Concept

      EX: Sandelowski & Barroso (2003) Motherhood, HIV

04/29 DIALOGUE: Choosing and blending your methods

      For in-class discussion, prepare a <u>one-page</u> visual and/or narrative of your final paper (10 copies). Highlight the iterative and emergent process, and explain how peer feedback contributed to your project. This is not graded!

05/06 Final project due!

      Include ALL original graded and non-graded assignments WITH MY COMMENTS.

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