

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Ph.D. in Education Program

EDUC 800 – *Ways of Knowing*

3 Credits, CRN 21982

Spring 2019

Wednesday, 4:30 to 7:10 pm, Robinson Hall B120

Faculty

Name: Dr. Mark Helmsing, Assistant Professor of Education
Office Hours: By appointment in person or online
Office Location: Thompson Hall 1801, Fairfax Campus
Office Phone: 703-933-2384
Email Address: mhelmsin@gmu.edu

Prerequisites/Corequisites

None

University Catalog 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.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered using a seminar format that meets face-to-face more than 75% of the time with some additional course content delivered asynchronously online using Blackboard. 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 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); *Blackboard* web-based course management system to extend classroom learning and foster personal and collaborative reflection.

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.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

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.

Course Readings

All required course readings will be available to access through the course Blackboard site in weekly folders for downloading as PDF, video, audio, or DOC files. There are no *required* books students need to purchase for this course. There are four recommended books students are *encouraged* to purchase for reference to supplement their studies and work during the doctoral program:

- American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual* (6th ed.). Author: Washington, DC. (Recommended for entire doctoral program – all written submissions must be APA format).
- Booth, W.C., Colcomb, G.G., Williams, J.M., Bizup, J., & Fitzgerald, W.T. (2016). *The craft of research* (4th ed.). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press. (Recommended for entire doctoral program).
- Graff, G. & Birkenstein, C. (2014). *They say, I say: The moves that matter in academic writing* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Norton. (Recommended for entire doctoral program).
- Thomson, P. and Walker, M. (Eds.). (2010). *The Routledge Doctoral Student's Companion*. New York: Routledge. (Recommended for entire doctoral program).

Course Performance Evaluation

- **Attendance:** Face to face 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. Early departures are considered part of class attendance as an absence unless approved by the instructor.
- **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 (in advance) and for completing any assignments, readings, etc. before the start of the next class. Only absences identified in the Mason catalog will be considered excused; other absences will be reflected as part of your participation grade. If you anticipate being absent for two or more classes, you should reconsider taking this class at this time.
- **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.*
- **Inclement Weather:** If class is cancelled *by the university* due to inclement weather we will move the class discussion to Blackboard for the week on the discussion board. The class week then will be Thursday through the following Tuesday evening. *Participation in Blackboard is not voluntary during this period of time.* Each member of the class is expected to logon and actively participate in class discussion for the equivalent (2.5 hrs.) of our normal face-to-face class. Each member of the class is expected to actively engage others in conversation and extending our learning through inquiry based questions related to the designated assignment. Comments such as “I agree” do not count nor do overly long answers without questions. Please read the guidelines posted to Blackboard about conduct during online discussions.

Professional Dispositions

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

Class Schedule

The class schedule is inserted at the end of this syllabus. Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Course Assignments

- **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 30% 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.
- **Reflective Essays (5 x 5 = 25%)**
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 essays are designed to capture your growth and understanding of each way of knowing as you proceed through the course. The intent of these brief essays (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 essays as an opportunity to engage your instructor in discussion as you grow over the semester.

- **Research Paper on a New Way of Knowing (NWOK) (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. As part of the development of your paper, please submit via email, a one-page description of your proposed project so we can agree early in the semester (no later than the ninth course meeting). 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?

Criteria for this assessment include: This assignment is the performance-based assessment for EDUC 800. The main criteria are a clearly defined focus, clear and accurate presentation of assumptions and definitions about your selected way of knowing, a demonstrated understanding of the implications for research, and clear organization and writing (*see scoring rubric overview on page nine*).

- **Final Reflective Essay on Ways of Knowing (15%)**

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 this 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 **(Due May 1, 4:00 PM)**. **As this is a reflective essay, complete APA format is not required.**

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

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 courses is as follows:

Grade	Score	Graduate Courses
A+	100	Highly 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

In order to receive an A+ in this course all participation, assignments and discussion must be at the very highest level and represent the highest level of discourse for a PhD program.

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/>. 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 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

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

- 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.
- 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>

EDUC 800-Ways of Knowing Tentative Class Schedule

***Instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule based on needs of the class and timelines**

Class	Date	Topic & Readings	Work Due
1	Jan 23	<p align="center">Course Introduction: <i>How</i> do we know?</p> <p>1. Introductory materials and activities in class</p>	
2	Jan 30	<p align="center">What Are Our Ways of Knowing?</p> <p>1. How to be a Successful Doctoral Student 2. Challenges of Becoming A Scholar (2012) 3. Rose, On Reflection (Chapter 2) 4. Ellerton, How do you know that what you know is true? That's epistemology</p>	
3	Feb 6	<p align="center">The Science of Research & Nature of Knowledge</p> <p>1. Lagemman, Scientific Research in Education - Intro 2. Moran, What Counts as Knowledge? 3. López-Alvarado, Educational Research: Educational Purposes, the Nature of Knowledge, and Ethical Issues 4. Stone, Numbers</p>	Due before class: Reflection Essay #1
4	Feb 12	<p align="center">Philosophical Perspectives on Knowing</p> <p>1. Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy <i>Discourse on Method</i> (pp. 1-54) 2. hooks, Black Looks: Race and Representation (Introduction & Chapter 3) 3. Said, <i>Orientalism</i> (Introduction & Chapter 1)</p>	
5.	Feb19	<p align="center">The Scientific Revolution and its Impact on Knowledge</p> <p>1. Kuhn in two parts (pp. 1 – 110) 2. Merchant, The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and Scientific Revolution 3. Jasanoff, Ordering Knowledge, Ordering Society</p>	Due before class: Reflection Essay #2
N/A	Feb 27	<p>Spend Time Working on NWOK Outline/Proposal (NO CLASS SESSION)</p>	

6	Mar 6	<p style="text-align: center;">Pragmatism and Inquiry</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dewey, Logic: The Theory of Inquiry 2. Bohman, Democracy as Inquiry, Inquiry as Democratic: Pragmatism, Social Science, and the Cognitive Division of Labor 3. West, The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual 	Due before class: Reflection Essay #3
N/A	Mar 13	<p>University Spring Break (NO CLASS SESSION)</p>	Please submit NWOK Outline & Proposal
7	Mar 20	<p style="text-align: center;">Chaos and Complexity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wheatley, Chaos & Complexity: What Can Science Teach 2. Hutchinson, New Complexity Theories: From Theoretical Innovation to Doctrinal Reform 3. Walby, Complexity Theory, Systems Theory, and Multiple Intersecting Social Inequalities 	
8	Mar 27	<p style="text-align: center;">Power & Knowledge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foucault, Panopticism 2. Freire, Pedagogy of the oppressed (chapter 1) 3. Kellner, Toward a Critical Theory of Education 4. Bernal, Critical race theory, Latino critical theory, and critical raced-gendered epistemologies: Recognizing students of color as holders and creators of knowledge 	.Due before class: Reflection Essay #4
9.	Apr 3	<p style="text-align: center;">Culture, Identity, & Knowledge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bruner, The Culture of Education (Chapters 1, 5, 6) 2. Yosso, Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth 3. Butler, Gender Trouble (Preface and Chapter 1) 4. Gupta and Ferguson, Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference 	
10	Apr 10	<p style="text-align: center;">Evidence, Methodology, & Creation of knowledge I</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maxwell, Paradigms or Toolkits? 2. Becker, Evidence Chapters 1 and 2 3. Yilmaz, Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Traditions 4. Valentine, Theorizing Researching Intersectionality 5. Oakley, et.al., The politics of evidence and methodology: lessons from the EPPI-Centre 	Due before class: Reflection Essay #5

11	Apr 17	<p>Evidence, Methodology, & Creation of Knowledge II</p> <p>1. Students generate readings from their fields</p>	
12	Apr 24	<p>Presentations of New Ways of Knowing</p>	<p>Final NWOK paper due before class</p>
13	May 1	<p>Course Wrap-Up and Reflection: Implications of Research and Doctoral Coursework</p>	<p>Final reflective paper due before class</p>