Meeting Day/time: Tuesdays 7:20 pm - 10 pm
Location: Innovation 336

Professor: Anastasia P. Samaras, Ph.D.
Email: asamaras@gmu.edu
Web: mason.gmu.edu/~asamaras
Phone: 703-489-1663
Office hours: email/call for apt.

Course Description
Teaches how to apply qualitative data collection and analysis procedures in educational research, including ethnographic and other field-based methods, and unobtrusive measures. Prerequisites. Satisfactory completion of EDUC 810 or equivalent, or permission of instructor.

Course Goals
This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Understand the essential characteristics of qualitative research and the key ways in which this approach differs from other research strategies.

2. Understand the assumptions embodied in the major approaches to qualitative research, and the implications of these for doing and evaluating qualitative studies.

3. Design and carry out a small-scale qualitative study.

4. Communicate publically and in writing and with peer review on the design, process, and results of such a study.

5. Be able to use these understandings to critique published qualitative research while building an understanding and repertoire for later personal publication.

Course Objectives

- Develop and critique a personal philosophy of qualitative research in relation to general perspectives of inquiry.
- Identify appropriate research designs for various forms of qualitative research.
- Identify appropriate methods of data collection and analysis, depending on purpose and design of a research project.
- Develop a pilot study to practice data collection and analysis techniques.
• Situate your study in an appropriate literature base and field of study.
• Critique your research project and suggest areas for improvement.
• Identify appropriate avenues for dissemination of your research.

Course Structure

1. Weekly Class Dialogue
This course utilizes a weekly seminar format that is collaborative, interactive, and dialogic, i.e., sociocultural and designed within Vygotskian tenets of pedagogy and learning. Seminars will include professor and student-led discussions, and student presentations that will take place during class meetings. Each class will encourage discussion your developing understanding of qualitative theory and practice; less about the quantity of your talk, and more about your sharing of your ongoing, honest, deep and critical analysis of your meaning making and your ability to listen to other’s thinking in a respectful and non-judgmental manner, and with an appreciation of the opportunity to learn about your research by participating in your peer’s struggles with making sense of qualitative research as well. You are expected to participate in class discussions with openness, consideration, and effort to “hear for” and “listen to” others as you also seek to be understood.

2. Peer Review
Our work will involve mutual support, collaboration, and continuous peer review. You will participate in a research and writing support group which will be explained in class. Virtually all research designs go through some type of peer review process in academia, including the dissertation proposal stage, requests for funding, or when a study is reviewed for publication. For this reason, I am having you involved in a collaborative, peer review process, designed to be supportive as well as constructive. You will provide, and receive, constructive suggestions to assist you in improving your thinking and in looking at something familiar in a new way. In a collaborative relationship, you are expected to practice your best professional relationship skills in your discussions. This collaboration/peer review will provide us with opportunities to see the value of collaborating as well as the challenges. It gives us practice.

3. Assigned Readings
You are expected to complete all class readings prior to each session so as to engage in active dialogue and sharing of ideas. To be successful in the course, you will need to read to become familiar with qualitative research to conduct your research and participate in our forum. Reading assignments are listed for the day on which they will be discussed. My expectation is for you to read and apply the readings to your research project. You should informally journal and/or take notes about the readings. Come to class prepared to share important concepts in the readings and the connections you are able to make from the readings to your learning and research experiences. Go beyond "what the author said." Share the questions you have about the reading in class. Your active participation is a major requirement of this course. Please notify professor if you must miss a class. There is no way to "make up" for class time that is missed.
4. Research Project
An individual (or collaborative) qualitative research project. General guidelines for this project are provided below; specific guidelines for the project assignments are posted on Blackboard.

Assignments
High quality work (i.e., “A” work) is expected on all assignments and in class participation. All assignments must be completed. For full consideration, all assignments are due to professor electronically in the digital drop box prior to the beginning of class on the day they are due, unless otherwise announced. Blackboard will not accept deposits after the due date and time of class. Late assignments will not be accepted without making prior arrangements with the professor. All written assignments are to be word-processed using Times Roman 12 pt font, double-spaced, and submitted electronically on our class Blackboard drop box at http://courses.gmu.edu/. You need to install Java at java.com to upload assignments. Title each assignment with your last name and the name of the project/assignment, e.g., Smith.ResProp.02.16.10. Also bring a copy of the completed assignment to class for discussion which you can later place in the appendix of your report. It is suggested that you save your work on your personal digital drop box on BB. Use APA style. See American Psychological Association. (2009). Publication Manual (6th ed.). Author: Washington, DC. Also see Owl Purdue Formatting Guide at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Minute Exit Folders
You will be given a file folder. Use this folder to submit your assignments. I will return assignments in your individual folder. Also, at the end of each class, please take a minute and write a brief reflection on the class session and what question(s) remain unanswered in your folder and date each entry. Your comments will provide feedback to help me be responsive to your learning needs. Turn your folder in at the end of each class.

CEHD Course Expectations
The Graduate School of Education expects that all students abide by the following: Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions, Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code. Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible use of Computing at the bottom of the screen. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Emergency Procedures
You are encouraged to sign up for emergency alerts by visiting the website https://alert.gmu.edu. There are emergency posters in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises. Further information on http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert.
**Required Course Texts**

*Other assigned readings available through Blackboard (BB), E-reserves (ER), and E-journal (EJ).*

**Recommended Readings and Texts**

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Graduate Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Substantially Exceeds Standard</td>
<td>99 - 100</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Satisfactory / Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Meets Standard</td>
<td>93 – 98.9</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Satisfactory / Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Meets Standard</td>
<td>90 – 92.9</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>Satisfactory / Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Approaches Standard</td>
<td>88 – 89.9</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>Satisfactory/Passing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Assignments and Evaluation

1. Participation
2. Research Project

#### 1. Participation Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Exemplary 30 pts.</th>
<th>Accomplished 27-29 pts</th>
<th>Developing 25-26 pts</th>
<th>Undeveloped Below 25 pts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation are critical components of this course. It gives you the opportunity to learn from and contribute to building a positive classroom experience and learning community. Participants contribute to each others’ learning by actively listening, exchanging ideas, sharing learning from reading and websites, and supporting each other’s efforts.</td>
<td>Outstanding Participation; participates regularly and actively in discussions and activities. Promotes conversation focused on the topic. Comments demonstrate a high level of understanding and contribution from assigned readings. Listens actively to peers. Prompts peer feedback and input. Purposely shares leadership roles in group work.</td>
<td>Participates in discussions and activities on a regular basis; questions and comments reveal thought and reflection and some contribution from assigned readings. Frequently involves peers in discussion. Shares leadership roles in group work.</td>
<td>Doesn’t contribute to discussions or activities very often, but generally reveals some thought and reflection and some contribution from assigned readings. Follows rather than leads group activities. Solicits some peer discussion. Misses classes. Somewhat late for class. Misses or is late for classes. Does not make up work. Does not share leadership roles in group work.</td>
<td>Few contributions to class discussions. Little evidence of participation and contribution from assigned reading. Shows little concern for peers’ learning or input. Misses or is late for classes. Does not make up work. Does not share leadership roles in group work.</td>
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</table>

#### 2. Research Project

The research project is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your understanding and application of qualitative research. Seize that opportunity to delve and dabble into your possible dissertation topic. Use this assignment to move you toward and forward in your Ph.D. journey. You will develop and conduct a pilot study of your methods based on your research interests and program of study. This project results in a comprehensive paper of roughly 6,000 words or 20-24 pages and not including references and appendix. The range of possible projects that you can conduct is extremely broad. The main requirement is that the project has to be genuinely qualitative in nature. Almost any setting, or set of participants, is a potential source of data for your research, including a setting or topic with which you have a prior role or involvement. There are six additional requirements for your research project (Numbers 1-5 adapted from Maxwell, 2009 and Reybold 2009):

1. **No covert research.** This is 1) ethically problematic, 2) too difficult to manage for someone just beginning to learn qualitative research, 3) restricts your research options, and 4) doesn't allow you to learn the key skill of negotiation with those you study. You must have the informed consent of the participants in your research. We will discuss this in more detail in connection with one of the assignments, developing a proposal for Human Subjects approval for your study (in most cases you will not need actual HSRB approval for your course project, unless you are collecting person-identifiable data from minors or plan to publish the results).
2. **No primarily comparative studies.** Your main research question can't focus on a difference between two groups or settings or between two categories of people. While explicitly comparative studies are a valid and important form of qualitative research, they are not a useful way to learn how to do qualitative research. Comparison is likely to 1) push you toward more quantitative questions and modes of thinking, 2) reduce the depth of understanding you can gain of one group, setting, or category, and 3) make it more difficult for you to learn what is essential in qualitative research. In most cases, a course project based primarily on observation should be limited to a single setting.

3. A **minimum of 1) 3 hours of interviews, or 2) 3 hours of observations of a single setting, plus at least one hour of interview data with one or more participants in that setting.** For an interview study, you will need to record your interviews (using either audiotape or videotape), and to transcribe at least 3 hours of interview material. Normally, this will involve interviewing at least 3 different participants. In special circumstances, it may be possible to work with a single participant; check with me. For an observational study, you will need to do at least 3 hours of observations of your setting, taking written notes, and to reorganize, rewrite, and expand your rough notes to make them usable for analysis. Normally, this will involve at least 3 separate observations. The difference in the amount of material required for interview and observational studies is because interviews require more time to transcribe, and because they usually provide more material to work with for analysis. (Videotaped observations are a special case; if you plan to videotape some activity, talk to me about the amount of material required, which depends on the kind of analysis you'll be doing.) Copies of your transcripts or rewritten observational notes must be included in the appendix of report.

4. **Data collection must take place across the semester.** You cannot rely mainly on previously collected data, or conduct all of your observations or interviews in a brief period (one week or less). You need to be able to learn from your experiences, and to make corrections to your study design and techniques as you proceed.

5. **You will need to share your work for feedback.** Any arrangements that you make with participants in your study must not prevent discussing your fieldnotes and interview transcripts (with pseudonyms used) in class. (Class members will be required to respect the confidentiality of this information.) Sharing your work in class is the only way that I can really assess the actual process of your research, and is also an important part of that process. You cannot do the work of this class in isolation.

If you are studying a setting where you have a prior role, or are interviewing people with whom you have a prior relationship, you need to **discuss with me the special issues that this raises,** and will need to address these issues in your final report. You are free to use as a setting for your research project the same site that you are using in work for another course or for an internship. However, if you do this, the amount of work involved must be appropriate for the total amount of credit—normally, you can't use the same work (e.g., turning in the same report) to get credit for two courses. In any case, if you are using the work to satisfy two different courses or requirements, you **must submit, both to me and to the other instructor or supervisor, a written description of how you will use your work in this setting to satisfy the requirements of both courses,** and get our signatures indicating our approval of your plans.
6. A Researcher Log
Since the research project is a large-scale endeavor, I have designed a series of professor and peer supported and graded assignments towards your successful project completion. You are required to catalogue these assignments in a researcher log and bring them to class for discussion and critique with critical friends. Please post the 4 assignments noted below on Blackboard (BB).

a. Curiosity Memo  
b. Context and Participants Memo  
c. Researcher Identity Memo: POST ON BB  
d. Observation Memo  
e. Research Proposal: POST ON BB  
f. Data Collection Memo  
g. Research Project Draft: POST ON BB  
h. Response to CF on Research Draft: POST ON BB

These non-graded assignments are working drafts you can incorporate into your final project report. In essence the 70 total points are incorporated into these mini assignments since completing them, builds a stronger and higher quality report. If you do not complete the assignments on time, you will not be able to participate adequately in class discussions, and I will not be able to give you timely feedback.

Qualitative Research Resources

Websites
Association for Qualitative Research (AQR)
According to this web site, “AQR is an international organisation which aims to further the practice and study of qualitative research.”  

International Center for Qualitative Inquiry
According to this web site, “The International Center for Qualitative Inquiry is a multidisciplinary institute at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.”  
Web site: http://www.c4qi.org/iaqi/home.html

Qualpage
According to this web site, “QualPage was originally designed as a private repository of information for graduate students learning about qualitative data analysis software (QDAS). Originally a Gopher site, it evolved into a Web page around 1994.”  
Web site: http://www.qualitativeresearch.uga.edu/QualPage/e_journals.htm

University of Georgia, College of Education, Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy  
This website lists journals focusing on qualitative research.  
Web site: http://www.coe.uga.edu/leap/qual/research/journals.html

Qualitative Research and Analysis (in addition to required and recommended books)


Interviewing

Writing and Publishing Resources

Writing

Websites on Publishing

Getting published as a graduate student in the sciences, Richard Reis see archives http://chronicle.com/jobs/2000/11/2000112402c.htm
Tomorrow’s Professors Listserv http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/postings.html

Publishing


# Tentative Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignment Due</th>
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| 1/19 | Introduction to the Course  
Keeping a Researcher Log  
Framing and reframing your Inquiry with Critical Friends | *Introductory Note sent to Bring Research Artifact and Curiosity Memo* |
| 1/26 | Qualitative Research as a Way of Knowing and Discovering  
Types of Qualitative Research | Read Glesne Chapters 1 & 2 and pp. 217-219  
Read Maxwell Chapters 1 & 2  
Read Corbin & Strauss: Chapter 2 on ER  
*Begin to read*  
Klein et al. on BB  
Becker Chapter 6 ER  
*Recommended*  
Koro-Ljungberg et al., on EJ |
| 2/2 | Selecting Site and Participants  
Research Ethics | Read Maxwell Chapter 5  
Read Glesne Chapter 6  
Read Samaras Chapter 7 on BB |
| 2/9 | Designing Your Study  
Pre-Study Considerations of Validity and Generalizability | Read Maxwell Chapter 6  
Read Peshkin on EJ  
*Bring us a researcher log memo about your context and participants.* |
| 2/16 | The Research Proposal | Read Maxwell Chapters 4 & 7  
Read Glesne Appendix  
*Recommended:*  
Wolcott Chapters 1-4  
Chapter 3 Schram on ER  
Samaras, QSE 2010  
*POST Researcher Identity Memo* |
| 2/23 | Literature Review and Conceptual Framework | Read Maxwell Chapter 3  
*POST Draft Research Proposal: Written and/or Visual* |
<p>| 3/2 | Being a Careful Observer | <em>Bring us a researcher log memo of your observations from hanging around a local bar, coffee house, or other public gathering place.</em> |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Read Chapters</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/8-3/14</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 3/16</td>
<td>Conducting Effective Interviews</td>
<td>Glesne Chapters 4 &amp; 5</td>
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<td>Read Marinósson on ER</td>
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<td>Bring us a researcher log memo about your data collection</td>
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<td>Recommended</td>
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<td>Seidman book</td>
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<td>9 3/23</td>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis</td>
<td>Glesne Chapter 7</td>
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<td>Read Samaras Chapter 10 on BB</td>
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<td>Bring us your oral critique of the analysis section of an article you found in lit rev</td>
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<td>10 3/30</td>
<td>Validation Workshop</td>
<td>Re-Read Maxwell Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Read Samaras Chapter 11 on BB</td>
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<td>Bring us a piece of your data analysis for peer validation workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 4/6</td>
<td>Writing Your Qualitative Research Report APA Style</td>
<td>Glesne Chapter 8-10</td>
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<td>Recommended</td>
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<td>Samaras Chapter 12 on BB</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wolcott Chapters 5-6</td>
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<td>12 4/13</td>
<td>Writing a Quality Abstract Critiquing and Revising Publishing</td>
<td>Bring your draft abstract on jump drive</td>
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<td>Read Samaras Chapter 13 on BB</td>
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<td>Wolcott Chapter 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 4/20</td>
<td>ONLINE WORK</td>
<td>POST Paper Draft to Critical Friend and Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 4/27</td>
<td>Author’s Chair</td>
<td>POST: Response Critical Friend on Research Draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 5/4</td>
<td>Professional Growth as a Developing Qualitative Researcher</td>
<td>POST: Final Research Project</td>
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<td>BRING printed final copy of research project.</td>
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