EDUC 800: Ways of Knowing  
Section 001  
Spring, 2010  
Innovation Hall 316  
Tuesday: 4:30 pm - 7:10 p.m.

Dr. Shelley D. Wong  
325 Robinson Hall  
swong1@gmu.edu  
703-993-3513  
Office hours: Tuesday, 2:30-4:00 and by appointment

Course Description:

This 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. The course will focus on feminist, critical, cultural, and post colonial challenges to traditional epistemologies in educational research. We use a seminar approach structured around readings, reflections on those readings, class discussions, and individual research to develop students’ ability to reflect critically on the strengths and limitations of the various ways of knowing and to become aware of the implications they have for research and practice.

Course Objectives:

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. Required course during the first semester in the program.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will understand the traditions of inquiry that serve as the underlying foundations for inquiry in education research, including rationalism, empiricism, positivism, logical positivism, and post-positivism.
2. Students will understand how these traditions and attract adherents and understand how and why they have changed over the centuries.
3. Students will analyze and explain some important personal, sociocultural, professional, political, and other influences on ways of knowing reflecting on their own disciplinary lenses and training.
4. Students will explore how various ways of knowing affect individual scholars, research, and practice in education and related fields such as philosophy, anthropology, and sociology.
5. Students will describe, compare, and contrast the ways of knowing from a variety of perspectives including: feminist, critical race, cultural-historical, post-colonial and post-structural.
6. Students will expand and refine their scholarship abilities including critical and analytic reading, writing, thinking, oral communication, and the use of scholarly resources.

**How this Course Supports GSE’s Priorities:**

This introductory course seeks to develop each student’s ability to be a reflective practitioner who becomes grounded in the ways we come to know through inquiry. Through the classroom conversations, discussions, and presentations, it is intended that we as a classroom community become more analytic about the conduct of inquiry and one’s own perspectives to develop a respect for the diversity of thought that characterizes inquiry.

**MASON SAFETY/SECURITY:** Visit the web sites (https://alert.gmu.edu) to familiarize yourself with what to do in case of an emergency or crisis.

**How to get access to Blackboard Learning System:**

1. Go to the GMU website: www.gmu.edu
2. Under “STUDENT” you will find “Blackboard-Log into Blackboard” Click to log in.
3. Enter your username: it should be your email username minus the “gmu.edu” (i.e. swong1)
4. Find the course EDUC 800 Section 001 2010.

**Required Course Texts:**


**Recommended Course Texts:**


Course Assignments:

1. Journal Reflections – (30 points@15 points each): Students are to keep a reading journal that is both reflective and analytic. As you read, define whatever questions that arise for you in the readings. Reflect on the reasons why you are asking these questions. The overall purpose of our journaling is the use of personal writing as a means to think and reflect as well as to prepare for class discussions. In particular, the reflections are a means to connect course readings to our personal experiences and to analyze course readings critically. Although there is no specific length requirement, two to three pages might serve to frame the scope of writing. Reflections should be thoughtful and clear. They are opportunities for the student and the instructor to interact one on one. You may elect to do a dialogic or double entry journal with quotes on the left column and your reflections on the right column. See General Criteria for Assessment. Journals will be collected on March 3rd and April 21st. Please put your name on the cover page of the journal, but not on headers.

2. Participation in class discussions – (10 points): Discourse and interaction are in essential part of this if you are absent from class, or a passive participant, your colleagues will not benefit from the knowledge and insights that you have to offer the class. Your thoughts and ideas about the readings are welcomed. For this reason, please bring your reading journals to class and come prepared to share. See Class Participation Assessment below:

Class Participation Assessment

Please assess the participation of each student in your group according to criteria listed below. Consider overall participation, rating each of the five areas numerically from 0 to 2 (in .5 increments). Total class participation is worth 10% of the final grade. Participation will be based on the average of instructor/peer evaluation scores. I encourage comments regarding evaluation decisions, particularly if you score participation very low or very high.
_____ Prepared for group discussion and assignments

_____ Maintained balance between speaking and listening roles

_____ Listened attentively and offered constructive feedback

_____ Accepted diversity in viewpoints and negotiated differences

_____ Shared leadership roles in group activities

3. Final Project (select either the Reflective or the Knowing paper) – (35 points). Due: May 4th

A) Reflective Analysis Paper:
  Drawing on reflections, class discussions, course activities, students will write a scholarly paper that addresses the following questions:
  1. How would you have described your way(s) of knowing, learning, and thinking when you began this class?
  2. As you consider your autobiography/personal history, what factors personal, experiential, familial, socio-cultural, historical, and/or disciplinary influenced your ways of knowing?
  3. How has the course affected your ways of knowing as a practitioner and as a researcher?
  4. What are the implications of your reflections for your personal, professional and doctoral activities?

Criteria for assessment include: evidence of serious reflection and analysis, clear organization and clear writing. See General Criteria for Assessment. As part of the development of your paper, please submit a 2-3 page rationale for your selection of a topic. Due Feb. 2nd.

B) Knowing Paper
  Students will select a way of knowing that is new to them, or, one which they would like to delve into more deeply. Examples include, but are not limited to, women’s ways of knowing, post-colonialism, and critical race theory. Your writing should articulate what you believe about teaching and learning and how this “new way of knowing” intersects with your professional practice and doctoral activities. As part of the development of your paper, please submit 2-3 pages that outlines your paper. Due February 16th.

This outline should address the following questions:
  1. What is the “way of knowing” you will explore?
  2. How do you propose to go about exploring it?
  3. A citation of a few of your sources?

Ways of Knowing Final Project Rubric
1. The author presents as a point of reference, a reflective description of knowing, learning and thinking when s/he began this class.

2. The paper addresses how the course has affected ones ways of knowing as a practitioner, and explores the implications for personal, professional and doctoral activities.

3. The paper addresses how the course has affected ones ways of knowing as a researcher.

4. The author integrates various comments on the readings from the course effectively to contrast various paradigms/epistemological perspectives.

5. The quality of the writing is appropriate for a doctoral level course. The paper is well organized and argued clearly and persuasively.

6. The paper presents the unique perspective or voice of the author with respect to the field of education.

7. The paper has been edited for misspelled words, subject verb agreement, incomplete and run-on sentences. About 10-12 pages, double spaced and in APA style.

5. Presentation – (25 points): As this is a reading intensive course and we could easily become overwhelmed and preoccupied with the readings rather than with the sharing of ideas. We have six thematic modules in our course; therefore, an efficient and effective way to handle the readings is to organize ourselves into reading groups, each selecting one of the last five modules. Each group will read the core text for their selected topic and then present to the class. For example, if you and your group select ‘Is Science Multicultural?’, your group is responsible for reading the entire Sandra Harding text, as well as researching the topic and author. The rest of the class will read the article(s)/chapter(s) selected by your group for that module. Your group presentation will serve as a backdrop for the class discussion of what everyone has read together.
Evaluation: Since this is a graduate level course, high quality work is expected on all assignments and in class. Points for all graded assignments will be based on the scope, quality, and creativity of the assignments. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted without making previous arrangements with the instructor. Points will be assigned to the Reflective Analysis and Knowing Papers using a rubric process. Both class participants and the course instructor will be involved in assessment of graded assignments. Prior to the due date for any assignment, the class will participate in the development of an assessment rubric. This rubric will result from a discussion of applicable course objectives and an elaboration of qualities and components associated with excellence in completion of the assignment. In this way, the development of the rubric will inform the final completion of the assignments as well as serve as the instrument for assessment and determination of points awarded.

Presentation Rubric:  (Scale of 1-5 points)
____ 1.  The presenters presented background on the author/authors to place their work in historical context/reveal significance of scholarly contributions.  The presentation included a handout of resources, additional readings, websites.
____ 2.   The presentation revealed some personal stances/experience/significance to knowing.  The unique voice of the participants came through.  There was either an activity or visual or hands on way of approaching the material—not only a traditional lecture.
____ 3.  The presenters posed questions/perspectives/that enabled active participation—dialogic classroom community—responded well to questions from the class.
____ 4.  The presenters researched the topic well.  (The expectation is that the group will have read the entire text and other related texts)
____ 5.  The presenters worked together as a team to bring out various aspects/points of view/experiences with the way(s) of knowing and to connect previous discussions, sessions, readings—rich inter-textuality and insights.

Course Requirements:

1.  Attendance is mandatory, as the discussions are an important part of the course objectives.
2.  Democratic classroom (see criteria for classroom participation).
3.  Each student is expected to complete all the assigned discussions. It is expected that each student will be attuned to ensure the active participation of all in the class.
4.  If you must miss a class, you are responsible for notifying completing any assignments, readings, etc. before the class begins.  If you miss more than 3 classes you should make arrangements to withdraw from the class.
5.  All assignments must be completed on a word processor and turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. (Late assignments will not be accepted without prior approval of the instructor; in addition the grade will be affected).

Honor Code:
All evaluations and homework will be taken under the GMU Honor Code. Students are expected to abide by the honor code set forth in the current edition of the Student Handbook. All exams, assignments, and papers are honor work. Plagiarism is also a violation of the honor code. The University’s Honor Code guidelines for academic honesty are at: http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm.

**How to Avoid Plagiarism**
http://www.collegeboard.com/article/0,3868,2-10-0-10314,00.html


**Disabilities:**

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. Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to discuss with the instructor any accommodations that can enhance their participation in the course.

**Schedule of Topics**

1/19   Week 1   Write Self-introduction and bring it with you to class.


**Unit One: Cultural Psychology (Weeks 2-3)**

**Text:** Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*

“One thing only I know, and that is that I know nothing.” Socrates

1/26   Week 2

Readings: 1) Bruner, Chapters 1, 2

2/2   Week 3   Reading: 1) Bruner, Chap. 3


**Final Project 2-3 page rationale**

**Unit Two: Women’s Ways of Knowing (Weeks 4-5)**
*Text: Belenky et.al., Women’s Ways of Knowing*

> “I have found that sitting in a place where you have never sat before can be inspiring.” Dodie Smith

2/9 Week 4 Reading: 1) Belenky et al., Introduction, Chapters 1-2  
2) Goldberger et al., Chapters 5-6


2/16 Week 5 Reading: 1) Belenky et al., Chapters 9, 10  
2) Goldberger et al., Chapters 9, 11

**Final Project 2-3 page outlines**

**Unit Three: Is Science Multi-cultural? (Weeks 6-7)**
*Text: Harding, S., Is Science Multicultural?*

> “We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language. Language is not simply a reporting device for experience but a defining framework for it.” Benjamin Whorf

2/23 Week 6 Reading: Chapters 1 & 2 from Harding

3/2 Week 7 Reading: Chapters 4 & 8 from Harding  
**Journals Due.**

3/9 Spring Break (3/8-3/14)

**Unit Four: Critical Race Theory (Weeks 8-10)**
*Text: Critical Race Theory*
“Cowardice asks the question, 'Is it safe?' Expediency asks the question, 'Is it politic?' But conscience asks the question, 'Is it right?' And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but because conscience tells one it is right."
Martin Luther King, Jr.


2) Group select additional chapter from text

3/23 Week 9 TESOL CONVENTION Boston, Massachusetts

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”
Mahatma Gandhi

“The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.”
Maya Angelou


**Unit Five: Post-Colonialism (Weeks 11-12)**  
**Text: Ashcroft, B. The Post Colonial Studies Reader**


2) Amerasia Journal, Leong, R. Before and after Orientalism, 31(1) 2005 V-XX.  
http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aascpress/voxpop/ajv31n1tor.pdf
4/13  Week 12  Reading: Group selects at least two readings from text. Have readings available to class at least one week in advance.

Unit Six: Cultural and Symbolic Capital (Weeks 13-15)

Presenters:

“If we spoke a different language, we would perceive a somewhat different world.” Ludwig Wittgenstein


Journals Due.


5/4  Week 15  Final Projects Due.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENDED READING)

Language, Anthropology and Cultural Psychology – How we make sense of the world


Feminism/Post Structural Social Theory

Pavlenko, A. (2001). "In the world of the tradition I was unimagined": Negotiation of identities in cross-cultural autobiographies. The International Journal of Bilingualism, 5, 317-344.

**Critical Race Theory**


**Post-Colonialism**


Cultural and Symbolic Capital


Madood, T. Capitals, Ethnic Identity and educational qualifications, Cultural Trends 13(2), June 2004


Websites

Jerome Bruner http://web.lemoine.edu/~hevern/nr-theorists/bruner_jerome_s.html

Sandra Harding http://www.uah.edu/colleges/liberal/womensstudies/harding.htm


Benjamin L. Whorf http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Whorf
http://mtsu32.mtsu.edu:11072/Whorf/mindblw.html

Pierre Bourdieu http://www.jahsonic.com/PierreBourdieu.html

Feminist Theory Website: Feminist Epistemology:

http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/epi.html

Carol Gilligan http://www.stolaf.edu/people/huff/cclasses/handbook/Gilligan.html

Vygotsky and Education:

Norma Gonzalez http://coe.web.arizona.edu/pages/fac_lrc/Gonzalez.php
Luis C. Moll http://www.edu.arizona.edu/moll
Michael Cole http://chc.ucsd.edu/People/ncole_bio.html
James V. Wertsch http://news-info.wustl.edu/sb/page/normal/18.html

Ronald Gallimore http://portal.ctrl.ucla.edu/npi/institution/personnel?personnel_id=46882

Post-colonialism:

Post-colonialism http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postcolonialism
Postcolonial/decolonial theories http://www.wsu.edu/~amerstu/tm/poco.html
Contemporary postcolonial literature http://www.postcolonialweb.org/

Critical Race: