Instructor:
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Director, ELMS Division
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Office (Fairfax Campus): Robinson A 451C
Office hours: after class and by appointment.
Voicemail: 703-993-2052

Catalog Course Description:
Provides understanding of characteristic ways of knowing in various liberal arts disciplines while examining subject matter, scope, key concepts, principles, methods, and theories. Analyzes philosophical traditions underlying educational practice and research.

Course Objectives:
1. Students will describe, compare, and contrast ways of knowing from a variety of perspectives.
2. Students will describe ways of knowing of individuals or groups and will analyze and explain personal, sociocultural, professional, political, and other influences on ways of knowing.
3. Students will explore how various ways of knowing affect individual scholars, research, and practice in education and related fields.
4. 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 readings, the classroom conversations, discussions, and presentations, it is intended that each student will become more analytic about the conduct of inquiry and one’s own perspectives on inquiry and the nature of knowledge, and to develop a respect for the diversity of thought that characterizes inquiry.
Required Course Texts:


Read ONE of the following and participate in small group discussions and a presentation. (You will make your selection in class where samples will be shown).

4. Dewey, J. (1916). Democracy and Education. There are several recent print editions as well as a Kindle edition.

Other Texts:


Additional Recommended Readings:


COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/].

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/].

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html].

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University 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 must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].
The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/].

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See http://gse.gmu.edu/].

Additional Course Requirements

- Attendance is mandatory, as the discussions that take place in this class are essential to achieving the course objectives.

- Each student is expected to complete all the assigned readings and participate in the discussions. It is expected that each student will be attuned to group dynamics in order to ensure the active participation of all in the class.

- If you must miss a class, you are responsible for notifying me (preferably in advance) and for completing any assignments, readings, etc. before the start of the next class.

Course Delivery

This course is a doctoral seminar, and my teaching style revolves around the concept of “learning via conversation.” As such 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 of one study to the next. In addition to classroom attendance and participation, I expect you 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. We will use GMU’s web-accessible Blackboard course framework throughout the course.

Assignments (see attached schedule, reading list, and due dates)

1. **Reading and Reflections (20%)**
   Reading assignments and due dates are noted on the chart in this syllabus. In addition, you will prepare 6 brief reflection papers during the semester. These are due at the beginning of particular classes. The intent of these papers (2 – 3 pages, double-spaced) is to provide a means for engagement and analysis related to some rather conceptual, and sometimes complex, course content. They also will serve as a springboard for discussion. Evaluation will be based on active participation in class and preparation of a thoughtful paper on the assigned schedule.

2. **Book study group (10%)**
   With a group of 3-5 others in the class, you will read and discuss a book related to the themes of the course (booklist provided in this syllabus) and share it with the class. Evaluation will be based on active participation in the group (both in class and on Blackboard) and in the group’s presentation.

3. **Paper on a “new way of knowing” and presentation (40%).**
   See description later in this syllabus with scoring guide.

4. **Reflective Analysis on Ways of Knowing (30%)**
   For this final paper, you will look across the semester and consider its effects on you. The guiding questions for this final paper are below:
a) How would you have described your way(s) of knowing, learning, and thinking when you began this class?
b) As you consider your autobiography/personal history, what factors -- personal, experiential, familial, sociocultural, historical, and/or disciplinary -- have influenced your ways of knowing?
c) How has the course affected your ways of knowing as a practitioner and as a researcher?
d) How would you describe your current way of knowing?
e) What are some “ways of knowing” that are predominant in your field? (It is suggested you talk to a faculty member in your area about this -- you can cite this as a “personal communication”).
f) What are the implications of your reflections on questions 3 and 4 above for your personal and professional growth during your doctoral study?

Criteria for assessment include: evidence of serious reflection and analysis, clear organization and clear writing. The paper should be about 6 double spaced pages (no more than 7). This paper is the culminating activity of the course and will be discussed in small groups in the last class.

Vocabulary List – terms you may find helpful to explore

1. Behaviorism
2. Chaos theory
3. Constructivism
4. Critical Theory
5. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
6. Hermeneutics
7. Phenomenology
8. Positivism
9. Postmodernism
10. Post-Colonialism
11. Post Positivism
12. Pragmatism
13. Reconstructionism
14. Schema Theory
15. Social Constructionism
EDUC 800: Paper on a New Way of Knowing (Signature Assignment) (40%)

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.

Evaluation of the final paper: The main criteria are a clearly defined focus, clear and accurate presentation of its assumptions and definitions about knowing, a demonstrated understanding of the implications for research, and clear organization and writing (see scoring rubric below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 = Fails to meet standards</th>
<th>2 = Basic/meets standards</th>
<th>3 = Accomplished</th>
<th>Score (partial points may be given in each category)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The focus of the paper and/or its roots are neither clearly identified nor clearly described.</td>
<td>• Focus: the way of knowing is clearly identified and its historical roots are clearly described</td>
<td>• The focus of the paper is clearly stated and its historical roots are clearly described. A high degree of expertise is evidenced in establishing focus.</td>
<td>8 points</td>
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<td>• No attention is given to how this way of knowing is new to you</td>
<td>• Clear and relevant discussion of why this is a new way of knowing for you.</td>
<td>• Delineations between your way of knowing and that of this “other” perspective are clear and considerable insight is demonstrated</td>
<td>4 points</td>
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<td>• The fundamental assumptions are clearly explained and the key terms are defined.</td>
<td>• The fundamental assumptions about the nature of knowledge in the “way” are explained clearly and the key terms necessary to understand this way of knowing are defined.</td>
<td>• The fundamental assumptions are clearly and expertly explained and relevant key terms are clearly defined and elaborated upon.</td>
<td>8 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Points</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>Neither the research questions are clear nor are the examples clearly presented</td>
<td>8 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrated understanding of the implications for research</td>
<td>Demonstrated understanding of the implications for research: the nature of the research questions this way of knowing has been used to explore and described clearly</td>
<td>8 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the research questions</td>
<td>The nature of the research questions is included and significant relevant examples are clearly presented. A high degree of understanding is exhibited</td>
<td>8 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization and Clarity</td>
<td>The paper is hard to follow as the points are not clearly connected into a coherent whole;</td>
<td>8 points</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organization and Clarity: the paper is well-organized; the argument flows easily from point to point</td>
<td>8 points</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The paper is very well-organized with the logic following from point to point.</td>
<td>8 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inattention to Grammar</td>
<td>Inattention to grammar, typographical errors and misspelled words; failure to consult APA is evident.</td>
<td>4 points</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Follows APA writing guidelines in most cases; some errors evident</td>
<td>4 points</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follows APA guidelines explicitly; there are no grammatical errors, typos, misspelled words, etc.</td>
<td>4 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Points Earned</td>
<td>Total points earned:</td>
<td>4 points</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(out of 40)</td>
<td>4 points</td>
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Schedule, Ways of Knowing, Fall 2011

As of August 30, 2011 (any changes will be provided in writing)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due on this Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Assignment Due on this Date</td>
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<td>Begin timeline (see Class #2 assignment).</td>
<td>Starting with the year of your birth, create a (simple) timeline showing some events in your own learning – include your school entry, significant school-related events, diploma and degree dates. Also add some (at least 4) non-school experiences in which you believe you learned a lot – as a child or as an adult. Journal entry 1: How do you learn best? Why do you think so? (Turn in your timeline with this journal entry) Submit via Blackboard and also bring a copy to class for your use during discussions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>What is a Way of Knowing?</td>
<td>Intro to Descartes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shared Experience: Part I, Film, Close Encounters of the Third Kind.</td>
<td>Intro to Descartes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion - what types of “knowing” are illustrated in this film?</td>
<td>Intro to Descartes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>Sept. 13</td>
<td>Part II of Film</td>
<td>Descartes Part I pages TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td>Sept. 20</td>
<td>Descartes</td>
<td>Descartes Part II pages TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 5</td>
<td>Sept. 27</td>
<td>Descartes</td>
<td>Descartes Part III pages TBA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce Kuhn</td>
<td>Journal Entry 2: How does Descartes define “knowing”? What do you think Descartes would say about the film “Close Encounters”?</td>
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<td>Select books for book groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 6</td>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Kuhn</td>
<td>Kuhn, preface and sections I-IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Fall break</td>
<td>(Monday classes are held Tuesday this week; no Tuesday classes).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 7</td>
<td>Oct. 18</td>
<td>Kuhn</td>
<td>Kuhn, Sections V-VII</td>
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<td>Journal Entry 3: Imagine a conversation between Kuhn and Descartes: what would Kuhn say to Descartes about his Discourse? Many have argued that Descartes created a scientific revolution. Does it meet Kuhn’s attributes? Why or why not?</td>
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8
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Assignment</th>
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</table>
| Class 8| Oct. 25 | Kuhn                          | Kuhn, Sections IX through p. 210  
Journal Entry 4: How does the second half of Kuhn’s perspective appeal to you?  
Why? What is it specifically about his perspective that helps you understand how  
we come to know? Did you find any weaknesses in his argument, i.e., things you  
just could not accept? What were they and why? |
| Class 9| Nov. 1  | Culture of education          | Bruner, p. 1-99                                                                   |
| Class 10| Nov 8   | Culture of education          | Bruner. p. 100-185.  
Journal Entry 5: What is the essence of Bruner’s argument about culture? How does it fit into your own way of knowing? How does Bruner compare to Descartes and Kuhn? |
| Class 11| Nov. 15 | Narrative ways of knowing     | Lyons and LaBoskey, pp. vii-130                                                   |
| Class 12| Nov. 22 | Narrative ways of knowing     | Lyons and LaBoskey, pp. 133-199                                                   |
|         |         | Book discussion – begin to    | Journal Entry 6: What is a narrative way of knowing? How does this relate to your own  
prepare presentation (30 minute interactive  
field of study?                                             |
|         |         | presentation).                |                                                                                   |
| Class 13| Nov. 29 | Small group work time.        | Work with your book group on presentation.  
Instructor will be attending National Reading Conference in Florida.  
Knowing paper is due – submit via Blackboard on or before November 29. |
| Class 14| Dec 6   | Knowing paper presentations  | Reflective analysis is due – submit via Blackboard.                                |
|         |         | – conference poster session  |                                                                                   |
|         |         | format. Bring 20 handouts.    |                                                                                   |
| Class 15| Dec. 13 | Presentations of book group  | Have a great winter break!                                                        |
|         |         | presentations.                |                                                                                   |