

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

EDUC 800.004: Ways of Knowing CRN 74734  
Fall, 2011  
Tuesdays, 4:30 – 7:10; Robinson B224

Instructor:

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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:

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Harvard University Press.

Descartes, R. (1637). *Discourse on method and related writings*. Penguin Classics.

Kuhn, T. (1976). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.

Lyons, N. & LaBoskey, V. K. (2002). *Narrative inquiry in practice*. New York: Teachers College Press

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).

1. Belenky, M.F., B. M. Clinchy, N.R. Goldberger, & J.M. Tarule. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice and mind*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN 0-465-099099-0
2. Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Anchor. ISBN-10: 0385058985
3. Broomfield, J. (1997). *Other ways of knowing: Recharting our future with ageless wisdom*. Rochester, VT: Inner Tradition. ISBN 0-89281-614-7
4. Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education*. There are several recent print editions as well as a Kindle edition.
5. Strogatz, Steven. (2004). *Sync: How order emerges from chaos in the universe, nature, and daily life*. New York: Hyperion. ISBN-10: 0786887214

Other Texts:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual (6th Ed.)*. Author: Washington, DC. (Also see APA advice at writing website at Purdue University: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>).

Additional Recommended Readings:

Adams, D. W. (1988). *Fundamental considerations: The deep meaning of Native American Schooling, 1880-1900*. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(1), 1-28.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York, Macmillan.

DuBois, W. E. B. (1903/1996). *The souls of black folk*. New York: Penguin Books.

Hopper, T., & Sanford, K. (2008). Using poetic representation to support the development of teachers' knowledge. *Studying Teaching*, 4(1), 29-45.

Eisner, Eliot. (1991). *Educational criticism*. In E. Eisner (ed.), *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. (pp. 85-105). New York: Macmillan.

Eisner, E. W. (1993). *Forms of understanding and the future of educational research*. *Educational Researcher*, 22 (7), 5-11.

Hofer, B. K., & Pintrich, P. R. (1997). *The Development of Epistemological Theories: Beliefs about Knowledge and Knowing and Their Relation to Learning*. *Review of Educational Research*, 67 (1), 88-140.

- Moen, T., Gudmundsdottir, S. & Flem, A. (2003). Inclusive practice: A biographical approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 19, 359–370.
- Henson, R. (2001). The effects of participation in research on teacher efficacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 17, 819–836.
- Mueller, J. & O'Connor, C. (2007). Telling and retelling about self and “others”: How preservice teacher (re)interpret privilege and disadvantage in one college classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 23, 840–856.
- Phillips, D. C. (1995). The good, the bad, and the ugly: The many faces of constructivism. *Educational Researcher*, 24(7), pp. 5-12
- Tyack, D. B. (1976). *Ways of seeing: An Essay on the history of compulsory schooling*. *Harvard Educational Review*, 46(3), 355-389.

## 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).

1 = Fails to meet standards	2 = Basic/meets standards	3 = Accomplished	Score (partial points may be given in each category)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The focus of the paper and/or its roots are neither clearly identified nor clearly described.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus: the way of knowing is clearly identified and its historical roots are clearly described</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	8 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No attention is given to how this way of knowing is new to you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear and relevant discussion of why this is a new way of knowing for you.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delineations between your way of knowing and that of this “other” perspective are clear and considerable insight is demonstrated</li> </ul>	4 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fundamental assumptions are clearly explained and the key terms are defined.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fundamental assumptions are clearly and expertly explained and relevant key terms are clearly defined and elaborated upon.</li> </ul>	8 points

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neither the research questions are clear nor are the examples clearly presented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrated understanding of the implications for research: the nature of the research questions this way of knowing has been used to explore are included and described clearly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The nature of the research questions is included and significant relevant examples are clearly presented. A high degree of understanding is exhibited</li> </ul>	8 points
The paper is hard to follow as the points are not connected into a coherent whole;	Organization and Clarity: the paper is well-organized; the argument flows easily from point to point	The paper is very well-organized with the logic following from point to point.	8 points
Inattention to grammar, typographical errors and misspelled words; failure to consult APA is evident.	Follows APA writing guidelines in most cases; some errors evident	Follows APA guidelines explicitly; there are no grammatical errors, typos, misspelled words, etc.	4 points
			Total points earned:  (out of 40)

Schedule, Ways of Knowing, Fall 2011

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

	Date	Topic	Assignment Due on this Date
Class 1	Aug 30	Introduction Begin timeline (see Class #2 assignment).	
Class 2	Sept. 6	What is a Way of Knowing?  Shared Experience: Part I, Film, Close Encounters of the Third Kind. Discussion- what types of “knowing” are illustrated in this film?  Intro to Descartes	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.
Class 3	Sept. 13	Part II of Film Descartes	Descartes Part I pages TBA
Class 4	Sept. 20	Descartes  Select “knowing topics”	Descartes Part II pages TBA
Class 5	Sept. 27	Descartes Introduce Kuhn Select books for book groups.	Descartes Part III pages TBA  Journal Entry 2: How does Descartes define “knowing”? What do you think Descartes would say about the film “Close Encounters/”
Class 6	Oct 4	Kuhn	Kuhn, preface and sections I-IV
No Class	Oct 11 Fall break	(Monday classes are held Tuesday this week; no Tuesday classes).	
Class 7	Oct. 18	Kuhn	Kuhn, Sections V-VII 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?



Class 8	Oct. 25	Kuhn Introduce Bruner Book discussion I	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 Book discussion II	Bruner, p. 1-99
Class 10	Nov 8	Culture of education Book discussion III	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 Book discussion IV	Lyons and LaBoskey, pp. vii-130
Class 12	Nov. 22	Narrative ways of knowing Book discussion – begin to prepare presentation (30 minute interactive presentation).	Lyons and LaBoskey, pp. 133-199  Journal Entry 6: What is a narrative way of knowing? How does this relate to your own field of study?
Class 13	Nov. 29	Small group work time. Instructor will be attending National Reading Conference in Florida.	Work with your book group on presentation. Knowing paper is due – submit via Blackboard on or before November 29.
Class 14	Dec 6	Knowing paper presentations – conference poster session format. Bring 20 handouts.	Reflective analysis is due – submit via Blackboard.
Class 15	Dec. 13	Presentations of book group presentations.	Have a great winter break!