Meeting Day/time:  Tuesdays 4:30 pm-7:10 pm
Location:  Thompson L028

Instructor:  Anastasia P. Samaras, Ph.D.
Email:  asamaras@gmu.edu
University Faculty Page:  http://cehd.gmu.edu/people/faculty/amasaras/
Personal Web page:  http://mason.gmu.edu/~asamaras
Blog:  teaching-insideout.com
Phone:  703-489-1663  (cell)
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.

CEHD Core Values
In 2006, the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) adopted five core values on which to focus: collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. This course supports each of these values by providing multiple learning experiences that necessitate collaboration. Students are afforded opportunities to reflect on their leadership roles in their work and learning contexts; to
design and engage in innovative research-based practice, and to analyze proceedings under the umbrella of a social justice conference theme. These Core Values are aligned with course goals:

**Course Goals and Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to:

- Understand the essential characteristics and purposes of qualitative research and the key ways in which this approach differs from other research strategies.
- Explore one researcher’s identity in relation to the topic selected for research.
- Situate a study in an appropriate beginning literature base and field of study.
- Develop and enact a small-scale study to practice data collection and analysis techniques, and validation measures.
- Communicate publically and in writing and with peer review on the design, process, and results of such a study.
- Critique one’s research project and suggest areas for improvement.
- Be able to use these understandings to evaluate published qualitative research.

**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://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode.]
- 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 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/]
- *The College of Education & Human Development is committed to the following five values: collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based*
practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See http://gse.gmu.edu/]

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 about emergency procedures exists on http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert.

Course Structure
The major purpose of this course is for you to learn and apply qualitative data collection and analysis procedures in educational research. Throughout the course, you are completing a step informally that you later insert into your final formal paper. If you are an active member of our learning community and build your project with commitment all along, and it comes together. Our work together involves:

1. Weekly Class Dialogue ~ Being a good listener and open learner
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 discussing 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 ~ Embracing critique
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 an ongoing collaborative peer review process, designed to be supportive as well as constructive and to give you the opportunity to embrace the value of peer critique for improving the quality of your research. You will provide, and receive, constructive suggestions to assist you in improving your thinking and in looking at something familiar in a new way. Our work will involve mutual support, collaboration, and continuous peer review in a “critical friend team” which will be explained in class. 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 ~ Learning to apply theory**
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**
General guidelines for this project are provided below; specific guidelines for the project assignments are posted on our class [MyMason](#) site.

**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 posted [electronically](#) on the [My Mason Bb](#) discussion thread prior to the beginning of class on the day they are due, unless otherwise announced. 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. Title each assignment with your last name and the name of the project/assignment, e.g., Smith.ResProp.02.16.12. It is required that you save your work in multiple places for safe keeping. Use APA style.

**Exit Folders**
You will be given an Exit Folder. At the end of each class, please take a minute and write the BIG ideas you learned from that class and BURNING questions you have in your folder. 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.

**Required Course Texts**

**Other Required Readings** *Available through My Mason Blackboard (Bb) or E-reserves (ER) password = “methods” EJ = e-journals available on Mason Library*
Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative and arts-informed*
perspectives. Los Angeles: Sage. Chapter 3: Constant comparative inquiry (pp. 24-33) (ER)


**Recommended Books**


**Recommended Readings**


**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>Meets Standard</td>
<td>93 – 100</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

Participation and Class Assignments
1. Attendance, Class Activities, Readings (integrated in assignments) 30%
2. Researcher Log:
   a) Curiosity Memo (5%)
   b) Researcher Identity Memo (5%)
   c) Research Proposal (5%)
   d) Interview or Observation Memo 1 (5%)
   e) Interview or Observation Memo 2 (5%)
3. Research Project Draft (non-graded for formative feedback)
4. Peer Review of Research Project Draft (5%)
5. Research Project (Headings and Rubric posted on Bb) 70%

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, peer view, and supporting each others' efforts.</td>
<td>Outstanding and consistent participation in discussions and class activities. Promotes conversation focused on the topic. Comments demonstrate a high level of understanding from assigned readings. Listens actively to peers. Embraces peer review; 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 contribution from assigned readings. Frequently involves peers in discussion. Conducts peer review; Shares leadership roles in group work.</td>
<td>Does not 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 and peer review. Misses class. Somewhat shares leadership roles in group work.</td>
<td>Few contributions to class discussions. Little evidence of participation and contribution. Shows little concern for peers' learning or input or peer review. Misses many classes and is late often. Does not share leadership roles in group work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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 small-scale 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, 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. There are formative assignments (with less weight) designed to scaffold and build your final research project.
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 gaining 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 cannot 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.

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 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. In most cases, a course project based primarily on observation should be limited to a single setting. 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 interview transcripts or rewritten observational notes must be included in the appendix of your report, along with transparency of your data analysis.

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 take time to contemplate and make corrections to your study design and techniques as you proceed.

5. **You will need to share your work for peer review.** Any arrangements that you make with participants in your study must not prevent you from discussing your fieldnotes and interview transcripts (with pseudonyms used) with peers. *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** (insert into Appendix of Report)
   Since the research project is a large-scale endeavor, I have designed a series of professor and peer supported assignments towards your successful project completion. You are required to complete the assignments, POST them on the respective Discussion Thread on MyMason, and include them in final your report appendix. Bring the completed assignments to class for discussion and critique with critical friends. In essence these mini assignments allow you to build 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. Your Researcher Log includes:

   1. Curiosity Memo 5%
   2. Researcher Identity Memo (5%)
   3. Research Proposal (5%)
   4. Interview or Observation Memo 1 (5%)
   5. Interview or Observation Memo 2 (5%)

**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.”
*Web site: http://www.aqr.org.au/*

*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*
Qualitative Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association. *The SIG offers and Outstanding Qualitative Research Dissertation Award.

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**


**Publishing**


**Websites on Publishing**


Tomorrow’s Professors Listserv [http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/postings.html](http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/postings.html)

**Resources for Publishing Your Dissertation**


See Chapter 2: The Dissertation’s Deadly Sins

See Chapter 4: Avoiding the Warmed-Over Dissertation

See Chapter 5: Thesis to Book: What to Get Rid of and What to Do with What is Left

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 1/24</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course and Qualitative Research</td>
<td>(Introductory Notes Emailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical Collaborative Inquiry with Critical Friends</td>
<td>Sharing Research Artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>After Class: Write and POST Your Curiosity Memo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Recommended: Klein et al. (Bb)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 1/31</td>
<td>Types of Qualitative Research</td>
<td>Read Glesne Chapter 1 and pp. 272-275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizing, Cataloguing, and Writing</td>
<td>Read Maxwell Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read Koro-Ljungberg et al. (EJ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Recommended: Overview Yin book</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read Samaras pp. 228-232 in Chapter 12 (Bb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tell us in class about your draft research question and why.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 2/7</td>
<td>Your Research Question: What do you want to understand?</td>
<td>Read Corbin &amp; Strauss: Chapter 2 (ER)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selecting Site and Participants</td>
<td>Read Maxwell Chapters 2 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Recommended: Peshkin (EJ)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tell us in class about your context &amp; participants and why.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 2/14</td>
<td>Conceptualizing and Designing Your Study</td>
<td>Overview projects examples on Bb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Study Considerations of Validity</td>
<td>Read Maxwell Chapter 3 &amp; 5 and overview Ch. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Ethics</td>
<td>Read Kvale &amp; Brinkmann Part I and II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read Glesne Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read Samaras Chapter 7 on Bb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>POST Researcher Identity Memo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Share in class with critical friends.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 2/21</td>
<td>Your Research Proposal</td>
<td>Read Maxwell Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conceptual Framework and Literature Review</td>
<td>Read Glesne Appendix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Recommended: Fink book</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>POST Draft Research Proposal: Written and/or visual. Share in class with critical friends.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity and Instructions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>Conducting Effective Interviews: Read Glesne Chapter 4, Kvale &amp; Brinkmann Chapter 7. Recommended: Mears Chapter 7 (ER)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>Pilot Interview Questions Workshop: <em>Bring your interview questions to pilot with CF critique.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/12-3/18</td>
<td>No Class: Spring Break: Have a wonderful spring break!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/20</td>
<td>Being a Careful Observer: *Bring us your observation notes from hanging around a local bar, coffee house, or other public gathering place. Read Glesne Chapter 3 and 5, Patton Chapter 6 (ER). POST Interview or Observation Memo1 after conducting an interview or observation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/27</td>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis Exemplars, Transparency, and Trustworthiness: Read Glesne Chapter 7, Kvale &amp; Brinkmann Chapters 11-15, Butler-Kisber (ER), Samaras Chapter 10 (Bb).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>Validation Workshop: Re-Read Maxwell Chapter 6, Samaras Chapter 11 (Bb). POST Interview or Observation Memo2 after analyzing an interview or observation. <em>Bring us a piece of your data analysis for critical friend validation.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/24</td>
<td>ONLINE CLASS: Virtual Forum from Critical Friend Feedback POST: CF Written Response on Draft Consider also using Skype or Face Time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>Assessing Your Development as a Qualitative Researcher: POST: Final Research Project BRING printed final copy of research project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>