

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

EDUC 800-003: Ways of Knowing  
Fall, 2013  
Tuesdays, 4:30 – 7:10; Thompson 1018

**Instructor:**

Betty Sturtevant, Ph.D.

Preferred method of communication: Email -- [esturtev@gmu.edu](mailto:esturtev@gmu.edu)

Office: Thompson 1602

Office hours (phone or in-person) by appointment.

Voicemail: 703-993-2052

**Overview**

This course 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 methods of inquiry among the various ways of knowing. Using a seminar approach structured around readings, reflections on those readings, class discussions, and individual research, the course seeks to develop in students an ability to reflect critically on the strengths and limitations of the various ways of knowing and to become aware of the implications of the different ways of knowing for research and practice.

**Prerequisites: Admission to the Ph.D. in Education program**

**Professional Organization: N/A**  
**TaskStream Requirements: NA**

**Catalog 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.

**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 and 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 Core Values**

This introductory course seeks to develop each student's ability to become grounded in the ways we come to know through inquiry and research based practice. 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, research based practice and the nature of knowledge, and to develop a respect for the diversity of thought that characterizes inquiry.

**Required Course Texts:**

Bruner, Jerome. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.  
Descartes, Rene. (1637/2003). *Discourse on method and related writings*. London: Penguin Classics.  
Kuhn, Thomas. (2012). *The structure of scientific revolutions*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
Lyons, N. & LaBoskey, V. (2002). *Narrative inquiry in practice*. New York: Teachers College Press

**Other Required Texts:**

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual* (6th Ed.). Author: Washington, DC. (Recommended for entire doctoral program).

Students will participate in small group discussions using a book or 6-7 related articles selected by the group and approved by the instructor (details later in this document).

Several articles will be provided electronically.

**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 move through the course. 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. You must use your GMU email account.

**Additional Course Requirements**

- Attendance is required, as the discussions that take place in this class are essential to achieving the course objectives.
- Each student is expected to complete all the assignments on time, and participate in the discussions. It is also 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 or come late to class, you are responsible for notifying me (preferably in advance) via email, if possible. Assignment due dates will not change without prior approval and for compelling reasons. Professionalism in making decisions about missing class or coming late is assumed.

## **Assignments (see attached schedule and due dates)**

### **I. Reading and Reflections (30%)**

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 (post to blackboard before class and bring a paper or electronic copy to class for your own use during discussion). The intent of these papers (3 pages-no more-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 both on active participation in class and preparation of a brief but thoughtful paper on the assigned schedule. Each journal is 5% for a total of 30%.

### **II. Topic study group (20%)**

With a group of about 4 others in the class, you will read and discuss an approved book or 6-7 published papers related to a “way of knowing.” You will read material on a schedule you devise together and hold your group discussions on 4 specified occasions in class. You also will share on a specific day in class (leading the class in discussion), and you will provide a section of your reading material (about 10-12 pages) for the class to read a week before the discussion date. You will need to turn in a reflection after your group work and sharing is complete (details will be provided). Grades based on participation, shared leadership in discussion, and reflection.

### **III. Paper on a “new way of knowing” (30%). Course signature assignment.**

Select a WoK for this paper. Explore this 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 (do not try to cover a whole topic—select a focus within it). APA format required. Assignment must submitted to Safe Assign on blackboard on or prior to due date.

\*\*As part of the development of your paper, please submit via blackboard a one-page description of your proposed project so we can agree early in the semester no later than the 8th class. The outline should address the following questions:

1. What is the way of knowing you will explore?
2. How do you propose to study it?
3. What are your tentative sources?

You will have considerable input from other classmates on your topic through class activities and discussions and discussion of their related topics. It is quite appropriate to include readings and materials from class in your paper.

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 at the end of this syllabus*).

#### **IV. Reflective Analysis on Ways of Knowing (20%) -6-7 pages double spaced.**

For this final paper, you will look across the semester and consider its effects on you. The guiding questions for this final paper are:

- a) As you consider your autobiography/personal history, what factors -- personal, experiential, familial, sociocultural, historical, and/or disciplinary -- have influenced your ways of knowing? How do you know?
- b) Has the course affected your ways of knowing as a practitioner and as a researcher? If so, how?
- c) How would you describe your current way of knowing?
- d) What else do you need to know about WoK/how can you include this in your doctoral plan?

Criteria for assessment include: evidence of serious reflection and analysis, clear organization and clear writing. This paper is the culminating activity of the course and is due at the beginning of the last class meeting. It should be about 6 double spaced pages (no more than 7).

---

#### **GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- 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.
- 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/>].
- 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 stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- 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/>].
- Professional Dispositions  
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.
- Core Values Commitment  
The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]

**Tentative Schedule, Ways of Knowing, Fall 2013 (any changes will be provided in writing)**

	Date	Topic	Assignment Due on this Date
Class 1	Aug 27	Introduction- Goals of course	In class group task: How do you define 'way of knowing?' Why is your first doctoral course on this topic?
Class 2	Sept. 3	<p>What is a Way of Knowing? How do you know what you know?</p> <p>Shared Experience: Part I, <b>Film, Close Encounters of the Third Kind.</b></p> <p>Discussion- what types of "knowing" are illustrated in this film?</p> <p>Intro to Descartes- why was he controversial?</p>	<p><b>Journal entry 1:</b>  <b>Think about your experiences as a child and as an adult:</b>  <b>At this point in your life, (1) how do you learn best? Why do you think so? (2) What are some examples of knowledge that are personally important to you? How do you know this 'knowledge' is 'true' (or is it?).</b></p> <p>Read web info on Aristotle:  <a href="http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/aristotle.html">http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/aristotle.html</a></p>
Class 3	Sept. 10	<p>Part II of Film/debrief- relation of film to WoK</p> <p>More on Descartes- what is his Method?</p>	<p><b>Descartes- Introduction (xi-xxxiii) and Discourse on Method (1-54)</b>  Write 2 questions about this reading you wish to discuss in class (do this for all readings that follow - bring questions to class each week).</p>
Class 4	Sept. 17	<p>Even more on Descartes – what is he saying in The World?</p>	<p><b>Read Descartes. 'The World' (81-112)</b> Write 2 questions about this reading you wish to discuss in class (do this for all readings that follow - bring questions to class each week)</p> <p><b>Journal Entry 2: How does Descartes define "knowing"? What do you think Descartes would say about the film "Close Encounters"?</b></p>
Class 5	Sept. 24	<p>Kuhn</p> <p>Sign up for topic group in class- meet briefly to plan.</p>	<p><b>Kuhn, preface and sections I-IV</b>  Write 2 questions about this reading you wish to discuss in class (do this for all readings that follow - bring questions to class each week)</p>

Class 6	Oct 1	Kuhn  Topic group meeting #1	<b>Kuhn, Sections V-VIII</b> Write 2 questions about this reading you wish to discuss in class (do this for all readings that follow - bring questions to class each week)  <b>Journal Entry 3:</b> Imagine a conversation between Kuhn and Descartes: what would Kuhn say to Descartes about his <i>Discourse</i> ? Many have argued that Descartes created a scientific revolution. Does it meet Kuhn's attributes? Why or why not?  Topic group reading (1)
Class 7	Oct 7	Kuhn - end  Topic group meeting #2  In class - Video - Bruner	<b>Kuhn, Sections IX through p. 210</b> Write 2 questions about this reading you wish to discuss in class (do this for all readings that follow - bring questions to class each week)  <b>Journal Entry 4:</b> 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?  Topic group reading (2)
No class	Oct. 14 Fall break	Monday classes meet on Tuesday (university-wide)	
Class 8	Oct. 22	Bruner- Culture of Education  Topic group discussion #3	<b>Bruner , pp. ix-99</b> Write 2 questions about this reading you wish to discuss in class (do this for all readings that follow - bring questions to class each week)  Outline for knowing paper due to BB  Topic group reading (3)
Class 9	Oct 29	Bruner- Culture of Education  Topic group discussion #4	Bruner, pages 100-185 Write 2 questions about this reading you wish to discuss in class (do this for all readings that follow - bring questions to class each week)  Topic group reading (4)
Class 10	Nov 5	Sharing Groups 1, 2, & 3	Read material provided by groups 1, 2, 3  <b>Journal Entry 5:</b> How does Bruner's work fit into your

		Discuss Journal 5	own way of knowing? How does Bruner compare to Descartes and Kuhn?
Class 11	Nov. 12	Lyons & Boskey  Sharing group 4	Read material provided by group 4  <b>Lyons and LaBoskey, pp. vii-130</b> Write 2 questions about this reading you wish to discuss in class (do this for all readings that follow - bring questions to class each week)
Class 12	Nov. 19	Historical Inquiry and Ethnography	Chapters on BB: <i>Our Past and Present: Historical Inquiry in Education</i> (Edson) And  <i>Educational Ethnography in Britain</i> (Woods, P.)  <b>Journal Entry 6:</b> How are the narrative way of knowing, historical inquiry, and ethnography similar and different?  Turn in reflection on your Topic group work (instructions will be provided).
Class 13	Nov. 26	In class, share informally what we learned from our Knowing papers.	Knowing Paper due (30%)– post to BB and bring a copy to class (for your own use during class – electronic OK),
Class 14	Dec 3	Online Discussion/Literacy Research Association in Dallas, TX	Check instructions on Blackboard – this discussion will help you prepare for your reflective paper.
Class 15	Dec. 10	Final discussion and creation of visuals for portfolios. Bring \$3 if you wish to share pizza.	Reflective analysis is due (20%) - post to BB and bring a copy to class.

**Additional Recommended Readings:** (Those in bold are appropriate for the book group)

- Adams, D. W. (1988). Fundamental considerations: The deep meaning of Native American Schooling, 1880-1900. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(1), 1-28.
- 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**
- Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Doubleday.**
- Broomfield, J. (1997). *Other ways of knowing: Recharting our future with ageless wisdom*. Rochester, VT: Inner Tradition.**
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York, Macmillan. (All works by Dewey)**
- 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
- Sherman, R., & Webb, R., Ed. (1988). *Qualitative research in education: Focus and methods*. New York: Falmer Press.**
- Strogatz, Steven. (2004). *Sync: How order emerges from chaos in the universe, nature, and daily life*. New York: Hyperion.**
- Tyack, D. B. (1976). Ways of seeing: An essay on the history of compulsory schooling. Harvard Educational Review, 46(3), 355-389.
- Randy Pausch: *The Last Lecture* Video

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5\\_MqicxSo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5_MqicxSo)

**Vocabulary List - terms you may find helpful. You may also write your Knowing Paper on one of these topics, or another topic approved by the instructor.**

- **Chaos theory**
- **Constructivism**
- **Critical Theory**
- **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**
- **Hermeneutics**
- **Phenomenology**
- **Positivism**
- **Postmodernism**
- **Post-Colonialism**
- **Post Positivism**
- **Pragmatism**
- **Reconstructionism**
- **Schema Theory**
- **Social Constructionism**

## Scoring Rubric for the “knowing” paper

1. Focus: the way of knowing is clearly identified and its historical roots are clearly described.
  - Accomplished:** the focus of the paper is clearly stated and its historical roots are clearly described.
  - Basic:** the focus of the paper is either clearly identified and its historical roots are not clearly described or vice versa.
  - Unsatisfactory:** the focus of the paper and/or its roots are neither clearly identified nor clearly described.
2. Presentation of Assumptions: 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.
  - Accomplished:** the fundamental assumptions are clearly explained and the key terms are defined.
  - Basic:** the fundamental assumptions are explained and some key terms are defined.
  - Unsatisfactory:** neither are the assumptions made clear, nor are the key terms defined.
3. 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.
  - Accomplished:** the nature of the research questions are included and relevant examples presented
  - Basic:** either the nature of the research questions or the examples are not included or are not clearly presented
  - Unsatisfactory:** neither the research questions are clear nor are the examples clearly presented
4. Organization and Clarity: the paper is well-organized; the argument flows easily from point to point; follows APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition writing guidelines.
  - Accomplished:** the paper is well-organized with the logic following from point to point follows APA guidelines; there are no grammatical errors, typos, misspelled words, etc.
  - Basic:** the paper jumps from topic to topic; there are grammatical errors, typos, misspelled words, etc.; APA guidelines used inconsistently.
  - Unsatisfactory:** the paper is hard to follow as the points are not connected into a coherent whole; inattention to grammar, typographical errors and misspelled words; failure to consult APA is evident.
5. Discussion of why this is a new or expanded way of knowing for you
  - Accomplished:** Delineations between your way of knowing and that of this “other” perspective are clear.
  - Basic:** Distinctions are drawn, but not developed in enough depth to see what you learned from the exercise.
  - Unsatisfactory:** No attention is given to how this way of knowing is new to or expanded for you.