

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

**EDRS 621  
Qualitative Inquiry in Education  
Fall 2013  
Monday 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm  
Thompson L109**

**PROFESSOR**

**Name:** Dr. Bernadine Pearson-Futrell

**Office hours:** By appointment

**Virtual Office hours:** Mondays and Fridays 4:30-6:30

**Email address:** [bpearson@gmu.edu](mailto:bpearson@gmu.edu)

\*email is the best way to contact me

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course focuses on the study of basic application of naturalistic research methods. It examines major theoretical frameworks, and qualitative research techniques, which include participant observation, interviewing, coding, and interpretation of data. (Prerequisite: EDRS 590 or equivalent)

**NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

This course is designed to be highly interactive as students are guided through the process of learning to use, conduct, and write about qualitative research in education. The course will be taught using lectures, class discussions, and individual and group activities. Technologies such as web-based discussion boards and qualitative research software may also serve as a medium for instruction. Students should be prepared to participate and lead discussions during each class meeting.

**VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS:**

I designate 4 hours each week (Mondays and Fridays 4:30-6:30) as times when I will reply to any emailed questions you may have about the course, your projects, the readings, or qualitative research more broadly. If you email me at other times, I may get to them sooner than these times, but these are the times explicitly designated. Please put EDRS621 in the subject heading of all emails so they will safely arrive in my designated filter for this course.

**STUDENT OUTCOMES**

**This course is designed to enable students to:**

- gain a basic understanding of current qualitative research methods and the theories and epistemologies that have influenced their development.
- gain experience with data collection techniques including participant observation and qualitative interviewing.

- gain an understanding of basic approaches to qualitative data analysis and interpretation, including categorization strategies such as coding and matrices, and connecting strategies such as case studies
- find, understand, evaluate, and apply published research that is relevant to their field.
- thoughtfully consider ethical issues in qualitative research
- thoughtfully consider validity issues in qualitative research

## **RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION**

The program goals are consistent with the following Learner-centered psychological principles (APA Division 15) outlined by the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force in Education.

- Principle 1: The Nature of Learning Process
- Principle 2: Goals of the Learning Process
- Principle 3: Construction of Knowledge
- Principle 4: Strategic Thinking
- Principle 5: Thinking about Thinking
- Principle 6: Context of Learning
- Principle 7: Motivational and Emotional Influences on Learning
- Principle 8: Intrinsic Motivation to Learn
- Principle 9: Effects of Motivation on Affect
- Principle 10: Developmental Influences on Learning
- Principle 11: Social Influences on Learning
- Principle 12: Individual Differences on Learning
- Principle 13: Learning and Diversity
- Principle 14: Standards and Assessment

For more information please see:

American Psychological Association (1997). *Learner-centered psychological principles: A framework for school redesign and reform.*

<http://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/learner-centered.pdf>

Retrieved August 25, 2011.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

### ***Required texts:***

Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed).

Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. **OR** Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

**Recommended text:**

Weiss, R. (1994). Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interviewing. New York: Free Press.

Additional required articles will be drawn from the GMU electronic databases or available on Blackboard.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**1. Participation 10%**

During class sessions in this course, we work on learning concepts, practicing the craft of qualitative research, and reflecting and analyzing research. It is essential to your learning that you come prepared to thoughtfully participate. Please complete required readings and participate thoughtfully in class activities and discussions. More than one absence, except under extenuating circumstances, will automatically lower your participation grade.

**2. Article critique 30% \*Performance Based Assessment**

You will write a critical analysis of a qualitative research article on a topic related to your research proposal. Details on the assignment and evaluation criteria will be handed out in class.

**3. Research Memos 30%**

You will be regularly writing memos in response to prompts, both during class and as outside assignments that you will turn as a collection. Details on the assignments and evaluation criteria will be handed out in class.

**4. Participant observation project 30%**

You will propose, conduct, and write field notes and an analytic memo on a 1 -2 hour field observation relevant to your research proposal. Details on the assignment and evaluation criteria will be handed out in class.

**Or**

**Interview project 30%**

You will write an interview protocol, conduct a 1 to 1.5 hour interview, transcribe the interview and write an analytic memo. Details on the assignment and evaluation criteria will be handed out in class.

**Grading Scale**

A+ = 98 – 100%	A = 93 – 97.99%	A- = 90 – 92.99%
B+ = 88 – 89.99%	B = 83 – 87.99%	B- = 80 – 82.99%
C = 70 – 79.99%	F < 70%	

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:**

- GMU Policies and Resources for students
  - a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].

- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- c. 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.
- d. 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/>].
- e. 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/>].
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. 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/>]

## **ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES**

### **Paper Format**

- 1 inch margins on all sides, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font.
- Include the following information: title, name, date, professor, course number.
- All papers should be proofread for spelling, grammar, and clarity errors.
- Citation and references in APA format.

### **Late Assignments**

Assignments are due submitted in Blackboard at or before the start of class on the assigned due date. Late assignments will be marked down by half a letter grade for each day the assignment is late. If there are questions or concerns about a particular situation, please contact me via email in advance of the deadline.

## PERFORMANCE BASED ASSESSMENT

### RUBRIC FOR EDRS 621 ARTICLE CRITIQUE:28 points total

	1 Does not meet standards	2 Approaching Standards	3 Meets Standards	4 Exceeds Standards
Writing and Mechanics	Writing has significant stylistic, grammatical or organizational issues AND there are significant errors in APA usage.	Writing has stylistic, grammatical, or organizational issues OR there are significant errors in APA usage.	Writing is clear and APA style has minor or no errors.	Excellent writing APA style has very minor or no errors
Description of how five components of research design are reflected in the article.	There are many inaccuracies in how components of research design are addressed AND several need further development.	There are some inaccuracies in how components of research design are addressed, OR 3 or more need further development.	Each component of research is addressed accurately. One or two need further development.	Each component of research is treated fully and accurately
Analysis of Relationships Among Design Elements	Does not analyze of relationship among design elements.	Analysis of relationships among design elements is present, but either contains inaccuracies or is not adequately developed.	Accurate account of some key relationships among design elements.	Insightful and accurate account of how key research design elements relate.
Analysis of Presentation of Findings	There is minimal analysis of the presentation of findings.	Strengths and limitations of the presentation of findings are discussed. Claims need further explication or leave key gaps.	Strengths and limitations of the presentation of findings are discussed and claims are reasonable and meaningful.	Insightful accounts of the qualities, strengths and limitations of the presentation of findings. Claims are reasonable and meaningful.
Analysis of Validity	Validity issues are not addressed.	Validity issues are discussed	Validity issues and strategies are	Careful and accurate

Issues		but there are some gaps or inaccuracies.	discussed accurately.	treatment of validity issues and strategies used. Discussion extends beyond author's account.
Use of Evidence to support Explanations and judgments	There is minimal use evidence to support claims.	Uses evidence to support some claims.	Uses evidence to illustrate and support most claims.	Consistently uses evidence well to explicate, support and illustrate claims.
Reflection Component	There is minimal or no reflection section.	Reflective component is present but is under-developed or lacks connections to analysis.	Reflections are developed and have clear connections to analysis.	Reflections are thoughtfully and fully developed with clear and meaningful connections to analysis.

<b>Course Schedule*</b>		
*This is a tentative course schedule which may change. The most current schedule will be available on the Blackboard site.		
Date	Class Topics	Readings/Assignments Due
Week 1 Aug 26	<b>Introduction to qualitative research</b>  <b>Diving Into Participant Observation</b>	Review syllabus.
Week 2 Sept 2	Labor Day: University Closed	
Week 3 Sept 9	<b>The Logic of Qualitative Research</b>  <b>Participant Observation Discussion</b>	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 1 <i>Foundations of Qualitative Research for Education</i>  Maxwell 2005, Ch 1 <i>A Model for Qualitative Research Design</i>  Create a concept map/visual representation that helps you understand and remember Bogdan & Biklen's 5 key characteristics of Qualitative Research what you see as the key ideas in the 11 common questions.
Week 4 Sept 16	<b>Coming to Questions</b>  <b>Getting a feel for participant observation</b>	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 4 p. 117-129 Bogdan & Biklen Appendix B  Read Maxwell, Ch 2 <i>Goals</i>  1 page memo on goals/purposes due
Week 5 Sept 23	<b>Qualitative research design: Locating your goals/purposes in a broader conceptual context</b>  <b>Diving Into Interviewing</b>	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 2 <i>Research Design</i>  Maxwell, Chapter Ch 3 <i>Conceptual Framework, Ch 4, Research Questions</i>  Memo due on Studio Thinking Ch 1 p 1-4 (available on-line) Identify goals/purposes, conceptual context, and research questions
Week 6 Sept 30	<b>Qualitative Research Design: Aligning Purposes,</b>	Bring in copy of article you would like to use for article critique (can bring in multiple

	<b>Conceptual Context and Questions</b>	possibilities if you want help selecting).  Read Stevens et al. for critique workshop (article will be posted on Bb).
Week 7 Oct 7	<b>Reading Qualitative Research from a Design Perspective</b>	Review Maxwell, Ch 1 and Read Maxwell, Ch 6 <i>Validity</i>  Bring in your qualitative research article and initial memo on it for the article critique assignment for workshop session.
Week 8 <b>Tuesday</b> Oct 15	<b>No meeting on campus.</b> Dr. Futrell available during class hours for individual check-ins to discuss proposed sites, workshop on informed consent, observation/interview protocols, and cover memos.	Citi Training in Human Subjects review (see Blackboard)
Week 9 Oct 21	<b>Qualitative Research Design: Methods</b>	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 3 <i>Fieldwork</i> , Ch 4, <i>Qualitative Data</i>  Maxwell, Ch 5, <i>Methods</i>  Memo describing the site or participant you plan to use for your observation/interview assignment and explaining why you made that choice.
Week 10 Oct 28	<b>Qualitative Research Design: Data Analysis and Iterative Process (Design→Analysis→Re-Design...)</b>	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 5 <i>Data Analysis and Interpretation</i>  Revisit section on Data Analysis (p. 95-103) in Maxwell, Ch 5 <i>Methods</i>  <b>Article Critique Due</b>
Week 11 Nov 4	<b>Validity Strategies</b>	Revisit Maxwell, Ch 6 <i>Validity</i>

		Memo Due
Week 12 Nov 11	<b>Validity, Reliability and Generalizability</b>	Maxwell, J. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i> , 62(3), 279- 300 (on-line) <b>Participant Observation or Interview Assignment Due.</b>
Week 13 Nov 18	<b>Qualitative Research Design: Data Analysis</b>	Revisit Bogdan & Biklen, ch 5, <i>Data Analysis and Interpretation</i>  Maxwell & Miller (2008) (on blackboard)  Memo Due
Week 14 Nov 25	<b>Computer-Aided Data Storage and Analysis and Team Research</b>	<b>Complete set of memos due; Identify 2 to be evaluated for content (1 will be randomly selected).</b>
Week 15 Dec 2	<b>Course review and Reflection</b>	

References:

- Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Daiute, C., & Lightfoot, C. (2004). *Narrative analysis: Studying the development of individuals in society*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage Publications, Incorporated.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory; strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co.
- Hetland, L., Winner, E., Veenema, S., & Sheridan, K.M. (2007). *Studio thinking: The real benefits of visual arts education*. Teachers College Press: New York.
- Maxwell, J. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62(3), 279- 300 (on-line)
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Maxwell, J. A. & Miller, B.A. (2008). Categorizing and connecting strategies in qualitative data analysis. In P. Leavy & S. Hesse-Biber (Eds.). *Handbook of emergent methods*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (Vol. 2nd). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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Reconnecting Video Game Play to the Rest of Kids' Lives. *The John D. and Catherine T.  
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Weiss, R. S. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative  
interview studies*. New York: Free Press.