

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
PhD Education**

EDRS 812 001: Qualitative Methods in Educational Research
3.0 Credits, Spring 2014
Mondays, 4:30 -7:00pm Innovation Hall 333

PROFESSOR(S):

Name: Rodney Hopson

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A. Prerequisites/Corequisites

Successful completion (with grade of B or higher) of EDRS 810, or equivalent coursework experience.

B. University Catalog Course Description

EDRS is an introductory course on key concepts and methods of qualitative research for the student of educational research. The course involves reading and discussion of presentations and examples of qualitative research, including development of a semester-long qualitative research project.

C. Expanded Course Description

EDRS is an introductory course on key concepts and methods of qualitative research for the student of educational research. The course locates the development of qualitative research in a distinct place and time in educational and social research. It emphasizes the key theories, paradigms, and methods that surround this mode of inquiry, while simultaneously entering into study about and dialogue with communities we engage to answer key questions. The course involves reading and discussion of presentations and examples of qualitative research, including development of a semester-long qualitative research project. Efforts will be made in the course to develop critical conversations about the nature, challenges, and opportunities of qualitative research in preparation for its use in the class and future research. The opportunity to practice qualitative research is intended to contribute to your dissertation research topic, questions, and various epistemological, methodological, and intellectual considerations in doing social and educational research.

LEARNER OUTCOMES or OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Understand key characteristics of qualitative research, and the key ways in which this approach differ from other research strategies;
2. Understand methods and strategies used in qualitative research and how to use these methods and strategies in doing a qualitative study;
3. Apply understanding of qualitative research to evaluate publishable journal articles and book chapters;
4. Design and carry out a small-scale qualitative study;
5. Communicate effectively the design, process, and results of a small-scale qualitative study.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS (n/a):

The course is a required course of the PhD in Education and is linked to the goals of the Graduate School of Education (GSE). Additionally, student outcomes are both linked to the mission and values of GSE and CEPE. Refer to the GSE website (<http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>) and the CEPE website (<http://cehd.gmu.edu/centers/edpolicy/home>) for more information about their goals, core values, and mission.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996). Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Delamont, S. (2002). Fieldwork in educational settings: Methods, pitfalls, and perspectives. NY: Routledge.

Glesne C. (2011). Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction. 4th ed. Boston: Pearson.

MacLeod, J. (1995). Ain't no makin' it: Aspirations and attainment in a low-income neighborhood. Boulder: Westview Press.

Maxwell, J.A. (2013). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Recommended and additional texts and readings to be provided during course Blackboard site as needed.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:

There will be four requirements for the course: an annotated bibliography, a research notebook, a research project, and participation in class. Each of the following is described briefly below, with more discussion to occur throughout the semester:

- **Methodological annotated bibliography.** You will be expected to prepare seven (7) methodological annotated bibliographies on a relevant and potentially useful qualitative research design of interest (c.f. Miles & Huberman, Ch. 1) or various modes of qualitative research (cf. Glesne, Ch. 1). Ideally, these designs, modes, or approaches will be incorporated in your own fieldwork project and will be useful as you develop your own methodological literature review of your budding dissertation work (and specifically your third chapter). Unlike your content related annotated bibliographies, these write-ups should be primarily focused on a methodology of interest. Your methodological annotated bibliographies will constitute 20% of your course grade.
- **Reflection/fieldwork notebook.** A reflection/fieldwork notebook should be kept for (analytic memo) entries pursuant key questions posed on relevant qualitative thinking pertaining to your grasp of material. Reflection analytic memos (of 3 – 5 double spaced pages) will be due at class and make up (most of) the contents of the reflection notebook. A final reflection analytic memo (of between 5 – 7 double spaced pages) will be due near the end of the course. The notebook can be as creative and visual as you would like though it should contain the minimum expected memos as indicated above. You should use your reflection/fieldwork notebook as an opportunity to dialogue with yourself, such as about comments on readings, remarks during the course, as well as while you are conducting your research. Notes may include but not limited to field interviews, data interpretation, and other relevant materials. The instructor will provide formative feedback on each reflection analytic memo and you will have the opportunity to revise your memos based on feedback for resubmitting later in the course. Your reflection/fieldwork notebook will constitute 20% of your course grade.
- **Research project.** A research project will be expected that demonstrates your understanding of advanced qualitative inquiry, including the important dimensions of qualitative methodology and integrating your reflections on the process as informed by your examination of the readings from the course. You will be expected to spend 20-30 hours of data collection (i.e. a combination of observation, interviews, and document/archive analysis) in a site and on a topic of interest. With these data, you will provide write-ups periodically to be used for the development of your final report. You will be expected to provide updates on your fieldwork project during the course through presentations and write-ups. Topics will be open but may focus on thinking about and developing more critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, globalization, freedom, and/or community. An oral summary/presentation will be expected at the end of the course. Your fieldwork project and presentation will constitute 30% and 10% respectively, or total of 40% of your course grade.

- Participation. Important parts of the course include being responsible for assigned readings and taking part in class discussions. Class participation accounts for 15% of your course grade and is important in maintaining an informed and critical analysis of issues that arise in the course. Early in the semester, your input will be needed to identify appropriate criteria (i.e. rubric) for a class participation grade.

- Extra Credit. Opportunity to present your exploratory work at a professional conference will be a bonus (i.e. an additional 5% extra credit added to your grade at the end of the semester if an abstract is accepted). The instructor is open to similar extra credit possibilities should they be agreed on in advance.

The following grading scale will be used for all class assignments:

A	93 - 100
A-	90 - 92
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	70 - 76
F	Below 70

TASKSTREAM REQUIREMENTS

Every student registered for any {Note that no task requirements are needed for this} course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, {Note that no assessment is required for this course} to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code (See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>).
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- 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 <http://gse.gmu.edu/>.

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE:

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
January 27	Class Introduction, Organization, Course Requirements, and Community Building Orientation to Qualitative Methods & Developing Appropriate Inquiry Questions	
February 3	Designing a Qualitative Study	Read: Delamont, Ch. 1 Glesne, Ch.1 Maxwell, Ch. 1 <i>HW: Prompt 1</i>
February 10	Developing and Maintaining Relations with People/Phenomena Being Studied	Read: Delamont, Ch. 2-4 Glesne, Ch.2 Maxwell , Ch. 2 <i>HW: Methodological annotated bibliography topic and example</i>
February 17		Read: Glesne, Ch. 3-4 Maxwell , Ch. 3 <i>HW: Prompt 2</i>
February 24	Generating Data Via Interviews, Observations, Document Analyses	Read: Delamont, Ch. 5-6 Glesne, Ch. 5 Maxwell , Ch. 4-5
March 3		Read: Coffey&Atkinson Ch. 1 Delamont, Ch. 7-9 Glesne, Ch. 6-7 <i>HW: Prompt 3</i>
March 17	Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Data	Read: Coffey &Atkinson, Ch. 2-3 Delamont, Ch. 10-13 Glesne, Ch. 7-8
March 24		Read: Coffey &Atkinson, Ch. 4 Glesne, Ch. 9-10 Maxwell, Ch. 5 <i>HW: Prompt 4</i>
March 31	Judging the Quality of Qualitative Inquiry	Read: Coffey &Atkinson, Ch. 5-6 Glesne, Ch. 6 Maxwell, Ch. 6-7

		<i>HW: Methodological literature reviews due</i>
April 7		Read: Coffey & Atkinson, Ch. 7 MacLeod, Ch. 1-2 <i>HW: Prompt 5</i>
April 14	Representing and Reporting Qualitative Data	Read: MacLeod, Ch. 3-5
April 21		Read: MacLeod, Ch. 6-8 Maxwell, Ch. 7
April 28	Addressing Researcher Reflexivity, Decision-making, and Representation	<i>HW: Paper Presentations and Evaluations</i>
May 5		<i>HW: Paper Presentations/ Final Papers Due</i>

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S):

Rubric for Prompts/Discussion Responses

	Levels of Performance			
	(D) Unsatisfactory	(C) Basic	(B) Proficient	(A) Distinguished
Attention to Question/Prompt	The paper misses the focus of the questions/prompts.	The paper addresses the questions/prompts in a general and vague manner.	The paper addresses nicely and clearly the questions/prompts provided.	In addition to proficient, the paper illustrates how the prompt/question is tied to the course topic and objectives.
Relevance to Course Materials and Readings	The paper does not make relevance to course materials and readings.	The paper provides vague relevance to course materials and readings.	The paper provides clear and poignant relevance to course materials and readings.	In addition to the Proficient criteria, there is clear reference and relevance to course materials and readings in and beyond class.
Quality of Writing	Writing contains many grammar and syntax errors. Repeated patterns of mechanical and usage errors seriously interfere with writer's purpose. Vocabulary is not on a professional, formal level; may be inappropriate, vague, or used incorrectly.	Grammar and syntax are correct. Professional vocabulary is limited but appropriately used. Most thoughts are expressed formally. APA format is used correctly.	Writing is on a formal and professional level. Communication of ideas is clear and accurate. Language reflects correct usage of a professional vocabulary. APA format is used correctly in the text and reference page.	The language used reflects a careful choice of words and a vocabulary that documents a growing professional knowledge base. APA format is used correctly in the text and reference page.

Rubric for Course Participation

					Levels of Performance											
					(F) Unsatisfactory	(C) Basic	(B) Proficient	(A) Distinguished								
Attendance & Participation	<p>Rarely takes an active role in their own learning and learning of their classmates. Participates and asks questions infrequently. Hesitates to share ideas and may not always listen to or respect the opinions of others. Usually participates only when called upon. As a result of assignments being sometimes incomplete or missing, may not be prepared to answer thoughtfully with detail or substance.</p>				<p>Sometimes takes an active role in own learning and learning of classmates, sharing relevant ideas and asking appropriate questions. Contributes regularly to class discussions. Listens to classmates and respects their opinions. As a result of having completed assignments, student is prepared to answer questions and help others master concepts when called upon.</p>				<p>Usually takes an active role in their own learning and the learning of others in the class. Participates regularly in class and Blackboard work (if applicable), asks thoughtful questions, and defends opinions. Listens respectfully to classmates and is willing to share ideas as a result of having completed readings and assignments. Demonstrates a consistent commitment to make the most out of class time each and every day.</p>				<p>Consistently takes a voluntary, thoughtful, and active role in their own learning and the learning of their classmates. Through participation and inquiry, consistently demonstrates a genuine desire to learn and share ideas with the class. Initiates discussions, asks significant questions, and acts as leader within the group, including participation in Blackboard work. Willing to assert an opinion and support it, and to listen actively to others. Consistently well-prepared to contribute to the class as a result of having thoughtfully completed readings and assignments. Thoroughness of the work demonstrates a high regard for learning.</p>			

Rubric for Research Paper/Project and Methodological Annotated Bibliographies

					Levels of Performance											
					(F) Unsatisfactory	(C) Basic	(B) Proficient	(A) Distinguished								
Introduction	<p>The Introduction is unorganized and unclear.</p>				<p>The Introduction is organized and clear.</p>				<p>The introduction is well written and organized and clearly articulates the purposes of the essay.</p>				<p>In addition to proficient, the introduction provides detail about the essay.</p>			
Problem Statement	<p>The problem statement included is vague and unorganized.</p>				<p>The problem statement included is general and organized.</p>				<p>The problem statement included is clearly articulated and include specific examples.</p>				<p>In addition to the Proficient criteria, there is a sufficient reference and application of the problem statement to the theoretical underpinnings of</p>			

				the paper.
Purpose Statement and Research Questions	The purpose statement and research questions included are vague and unorganized.	The purpose statement and research questions included are general and organized.	The purpose statement and research questions included are clearly articulated and include specific examples.	In addition to the Proficient criteria, there is a sufficient reference and application of the purpose statement and research questions included are aligned to the theoretical underpinnings of the paper.
Theoretical Framework	The theoretical framework is vague and unorganized.	The theoretical framework is general and organized.	The theoretical framework is clearly articulated and includes specific examples.	In addition to the Proficient criteria, there is a sufficient reference and application of the theoretical framework to relevant literature in the field.
Data Collection, Use, and Analysis	There is limited to no clear use and application of data collection and analysis.	There is clear use and application of data collection and analysis.	The data collection and analysis section is clearly articulated and includes specific examples.	In addition to the Proficient criteria, the data collection and analysis section provides ample discussion of how the data align to the previous sections of the paper.
Quality of Writing	Writing contains many grammar and syntax errors. Repeated patterns of mechanical and usage errors seriously interfere with writer's purpose. Vocabulary is not on a professional, formal level; may be inappropriate, vague, or used incorrectly.	Grammar and syntax are correct. Professional vocabulary is limited but appropriately used. Most thoughts are expressed formally. APA format is used correctly.	Writing is on a formal and professional level. Communication of ideas is clear and accurate. Language reflects correct usage of a professional vocabulary. APA format is used correctly in the text and reference page.	The language used reflects a careful choice of words and a vocabulary that documents a growing professional knowledge base. APA format is used correctly in the text and reference page.