

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

**EDRS 621
Qualitative Inquiry in Education
Fall 2014
Monday 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm
Innovation 318**

PROFESSOR

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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.

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* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. **OR** Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd 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%

You will write a critical analysis of a qualitative research article on a topic you choose to pursue for the duration of the semester. 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. 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, but it must be related to your chosen topic for the 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://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-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 GSE Syllabi:

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>] For RHT Syllabi:

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://rht.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 Issues	Validity issues are not addressed.	Validity issues are discussed but there are some gaps or inaccuracies.	Validity issues and strategies are discussed accurately.	Careful and accurate 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.

Course Schedule*

*This is a tentative course schedule which may change. The most current schedule will be available on the Blackboard site.

Date	Class Topics/Activities	Readings/Assignments Due
Week 1 Aug 25	<p>Introduction to qualitative research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create concept map • Introduction to qualitative research. • Overview of course and syllabus • Discussion of texts, assignments • Discussion of major goals for the class <p>Diving Into Participant Observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are field notes? • Participant observation activity • Assign informed concept map activity 	Review syllabus. *BEFORE October 14 th 's class session you will need to have completed the CITI tutorial and submit the certificate of completion to me—so plan accordingly.
Week 2 Sept 1	Labor Day: University Closed	
Week 3 Sept 8	<p>The Logic of Qualitative Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative vs. quantitative research • Concept map discussion <p>Participant Observation Discussion</p>	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 1 <i>Foundations of Qualitative Research for Education</i> Maxwell, Ch 1 <i>A Model for Qualitative Research Design</i> Memo due: Create a concept map/visual representation that helps you understand and remember Bogdan & Biklen's 5 key characteristics of Qualitative Research and what you see as the key ideas in the 11 common questions.
Week 4 Sept 15	<p>Coming to Questions Discuss research goals Pair swap of memo, discuss</p> <p>Getting a feel for participant observation In-class observation and memos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GED interviews • Maker interviews (open and with framework) • Formulation of research questions 	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 4 p. 117-129 Bogdan & Biklen, Appendix B Maxwell, Ch 2 <i>Goals</i> Memo due: 1 page on goals/purposes due

<p>Week 5 Sept 22</p>	<p>Qualitative research design: Locating your goals/purposes in a broader conceptual context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of qualitative research designs • Establishing conceptual context. • Designing research questions • Discuss GED example • Discuss sources for finding qualitative research articles. 	<p>Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 2 <i>Research Design</i></p> <p>Maxwell, Ch 3 <i>Conceptual Framework</i>, Ch 4, <i>Research Questions</i></p> <p>Memo due: on GED paper (<u>available on Bb</u>); identify goals/purposes, conceptual context, and research questions</p>
<p>Week 6 Sept. 29</p>	<p>Diving Into Interviewing Educational history pilot interview</p> <p>*Note: people who have laptops it would be helpful to bring them in for this session so we can have recorders of interviews.</p>	<p>Weiss, Ch 4 <i>Interviewing</i> (<u>On Bb</u>)</p> <p>Memo due: based on Weiss reading, identify what you think will be your struggles with taking on the interviewer role</p>
<p>Week 7 Oct 6</p>	<p>Qualitative Research Design: Aligning Purposes, Conceptual Context and Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Konopasky review articles • Discuss choice of interview participant(s), review guidelines • Workshop conceptual framework and research questions 	<p>Bring in copies of at least 2 articles you are thinking of using for the critique.</p> <p>Read Stevens et al. for critique workshop (<u>article on Bb</u>).</p> <p>Memo due: reflect on your conceptual framework and come up with at least 3 research questions you are thinking about for your interview(s)</p>
<p>Week 8 TUE, Oct 14</p>	<p>Reading Qualitative Research from a Design Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial discussion of validity • Workshop and discussion on articles for <i>article critique</i> assignment: Focus on validity threats • Discussion on key factors in understanding and evaluating qualitative studies 	<p>Review Maxwell, Ch 1 and Read Maxwell, Ch 6 <i>Validity</i></p> <p>Memo due: Bring in your qualitative research article and initial memo on it for the article critique assignment for workshop session.</p>

<p>Week 9 Oct 20</p>	<p>Qualitative Research Design: Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical issues (Informed consent, confidentiality, CITI course) • Data Collection techniques: Interviews • Connecting Questions and Methods • Discussion of proposed sites, workshop on informed consent, interview protocols, cover memos. • Discuss assignment guidelines 	<p>Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 3 <i>Fieldwork</i>, Ch 4, <i>Qualitative Data</i></p> <p>Maxwell, Ch 5, <i>Methods</i></p> <p>Johnson-Bailey's <i>Dancing Between the Swords</i> (on Bb)</p> <p>Memo due: describe the participant(s) you plan to interview and explain why you made that choice.</p> <p>*Bring in certification of completion of CITI course (see Blackboard for information)</p>
<p>Week 10 Oct 27</p>	<p>Qualitative Research Design: Data Analysis and Iterative Process (Design→Analysis→Re-Design...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of article critique assignments—critique from a design perspective • Writing Informed Consent • Designing Interview Protocol <p>(If time, begin this)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisiting research questions guiding educational background pilot interviews • Open-coding of pilot educational interviews • Discussion of key ideas, revisiting and reframing research questions. • Development of a code list. 	<p>Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 5 <i>Data Analysis and Interpretation</i></p> <p>Miles, Huberman, & Saldana's coding manual from <i>Qualitative Data Analysis</i> (on Bb)</p> <p>Revisit section on Data Analysis (p. 95-103) in Maxwell, Ch 5 <i>Methods</i></p> <p>ARTICLE CRITIQUE DUE</p>
<p>Week 11 Nov 3</p>	<p>Qualitative Research Design: Data Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing the analysis in data collection/documentation • Further discussion of data analysis techniques. • Comparing methods • Connecting methods 	<p>Revisit Bogdan & Biklen, ch 5, <i>Data Analysis and Interpretation</i></p> <p>Maxwell's Comparing and connecting methods (on Bb)</p> <p>Memo due: bring your completed transcripts and at least 2 questions you have about them</p>

<p>Week 12 Nov 10</p>	<p>Validity Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the “validity threats” specific to your research study • Proposing strategies to address validity issues. • Carrying out, assessing the effectiveness and revising validity strategies. 	<p>Maxwell’s “Understanding and validity in qualitative research” (<u>on Bb</u>)</p> <p>Memo Due: initial ideas about using comparing and connecting methods with your interview transcripts</p>
<p>Week 13 Nov 17</p>	<p>Data Analysis (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop on interview analysis <p>Validity Strategies (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might you be wrong? • Anticipating and planning for potential <i>specific</i> validity threats 	<p>Memo due: what are some validity issues in your interview study?</p>
<p>Week 14 Nov 24</p>	<p>Computer-Aided Data Storage And Analysis and Team Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using qualitative data analysis software (NVIVO, ATLAS.ti). • Tutorial and sample project. <p>Mixing Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and conceptual framework • Validity 	<p>Read</p> <p>Read Willis’ “how-to” on cognitive interviewing: http://www.hkr.se/pagefiles/35002/gordonwillis.pdf</p> <p>Complete set of memos due; Identify 2 to be evaluated for content (1 will be randomly selected).</p>
<p>Week 15 Dec 1</p>	<p>Course review and Reflection Discussion of Memos, Moving forward in qualitative research</p>	<p>INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT DUE</p>