

George Mason University  
College of Education & Human Development (CEHD)  
Graduate School of Education (GSE)

EDUC 815 001 - Research Inquiries in International Education  
3 credits, Spring 2015  
Wednesdays, 7:20-10:10 - Thompson Hall L028

**Professor**

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**Course Description**

- A. *Prerequisites:* EDUC 880 OR permission of instructor and advisor
- B. *University Catalog Course Description:* EDUC 815 focuses on the intersection of international education and research methodologies in educational settings. Students will delve into the construction, implementation, and impact of research in international settings or with an internationally minded perspective. Through critical inquiry into practice, the course offers students the opportunity to develop more sophisticated understandings of the research process in international education settings.
- C. *Expanded Course Description:* As the field of comparative and international education grows, there is a greater need for educators and scholars to understand the role of research in the practice of the field. This course will provide opportunities for advanced students to better understand the structures, procedures, and nuances of international research, while also building knowledge of and expertise in qualitative methodologies in the field of international education. This course serves as an extension of students' foundational experiences with qualitative research methods introduced earlier in their doctoral programs. While a range of qualitative research methods were presented in these earlier courses, this class focuses students on questions related to their identities as researchers who are interested in conducting research studies in and across international settings. As US-based and/or trained scholars working in increasingly global contexts, it is especially important for students to complicate, understand, and articulate their unique cross-contexts roles and positions.

**Learner Outcomes**

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Explore their identities as scholars conducting research in and across international education settings, including explorations of their intercultural competencies and dispositions and capacities necessary to operate successfully as internationally-minded scholars.
2. Develop research questions and methods that are particularly relevant to studies conducted in and across international education settings, focusing on the mentored analysis of existing data sets gathered from international contexts by the course instructor and the development of research questions.
3. Understand the nuances of questions such as: How might US-based researchers and scholars committed to studying educational phenomena and school structures use scholarship for the improvement of educational outcomes in and across international settings? What research questions and methods are most relevant to, responsive to, and ethical in researchers' explorations in and across international settings? And, finally, who are the players involved in educational research conducted in and across international settings and how do we determine the roles these

- players might take on?
4. Support the development of knowledge as it pertains to cultural, regional, and national issues around conducting research and the mechanics of better understanding and developing contingencies in the development of research protocols in international education contexts. Students will be presented with multiple forms of international research publications to better understand the role education stakeholders play in international settings while also working to deconstruct how international research takes place both within and outside the international contexts they are studying.
  5. Learn more about research methods with relevance in and across international education settings, with special attention paid to methods that can be implemented in these settings focusing on visual and sensory methods—those tools that reach beyond traditional language-centered techniques and provide data that can be “translated” without the benefit of language, which can be a primary barrier to interpreting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data related to phenomena in international settings.

### **Professional Standards**

International and comparative education is a growing and important field within education and as a result there are a growing number of organizations that are oriented to specific international education audiences, such as the NAFSA: The Association of International Educators, the Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE), which serves international schools; the Institute of International Education (IIE), The Alliance for International Education (AIE) focused on developing partnerships between higher education institutions and international schools; the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), whose purpose is to promote cross-cultural understanding and social development through international education research, policy and practices, and many others. This course addresses some of the aims and goals of the above international education organizations and is intended for policymakers, practitioners and researchers who are interested in international education. This course is also aligned with the following vision statements: GSE Priorities--Diversity and Equity, and Children, Families and Communities, CEHD's Center for Language and Culture (CLC) and the National Association for Multicultural Education.

### **Course Delivery**

This course includes a variety of learning activities: discussions in seminar format, text-based/multi-media presentation of course materials, experiential learning activities including interactive assignments, cooperative learning group activities, online discussions and activities, and lecture.

### **Required Texts and Readings**

- Alvesson, M. & Sandberg, J. (2013). *Constructing research questions: Doing interesting research*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Vavrus, F. & Bartlett, L. (2009). *Critical approaches to comparative education*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Please see the course schedule for a full list of all journal articles scheduled for each week. Full references listed at the end of the syllabus as well. These readings will also be available on Blackboard.

### ***Class Dispatches***

By each Saturday night you will have posted one of your five dispatches for the class. By Tuesday, you should have read between 3-4 dispatches written by your classmates that will lay the foundation for class discussion.

### Course Assignments/Requirements

All assignments should be turned in on the due date indicated in the schedule below via Blackboard and/or email. Formatting must be consistent with APA (6<sup>th</sup> edition) guidelines. Late papers and projects will not be accepted without penalty, excepting extraordinary circumstances.

#### *Attendance and Participation (15 points)*

Class participation is important not only for each individual student's learning, but for the learning and success of our class as a whole. Class participation is a factor in grading; instructors may use absences, tardiness, or early departure in both on-line and campus class sessions as de facto evidence of non-participation and as a result lower a student's grade (Mason Catalog 2011-12).

Please note the following attendance and participation policies:

1. Two tardies are equal to one absence, and missing 30% or more of class sessions will result in automatic course failure. For each unexcused absence (a determination made by the instructor) one point will be deducted from your attendance and class participation points up to a total of 15 points.
2. Participants are expected to read the assigned materials, complete on-line activities including pre-session Blackboard assignments, arrive promptly, attend all class meetings for the entire session, and participate in on-line and face-to-face class discussions.
3. If, due to an emergency, you will not be able to participate during a given week of class, please contact the professor as soon as possible. Students are responsible for obtaining information given during class discussions/sessions despite attendance from a classmate.

#### *Critical Dialogue Dispatches (25 points)*

Over the course of the semester, students will submit five brief critical dispatches of the JOURNAL readings for that week (please note that chapters from the Alvesson & Sandberg book are not to be included as central facets of these dispatches). Each dispatch is to be between 500-750 words. These dispatches will offer a critical perspective on the readings for that week. Please note critical does not mean to CRITICIZE. It means that important underlying issues will be raised (1 point), connections across curriculum in this course and others will be drawn (1 points), and nuances of perspective, relationships and content will be highlighted (1 points). Further connections to the student's own interests and queries that this raises for the student can be addressed (1 point). This will be the foundation from which the dialogue in class is initiated. Please note that grammar, punctuation, and APA will be used to grade these papers (1 point) and no partial points will be given for papers with more than two errors. ABSOLUTELY NO LATE DISPATCHES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

#### *Constructing Research Questions Project (CRQP) (30 Points)*

The CRQP is an exercise driven project that depends on two important qualities for doctoral students to develop – curiosity and self-direction. The project is made up of four parts, which will be due at different times during the semester. This project is driven by the understanding that as doctoral students you are reading topics related to your research interests above and beyond what is assigned to you in classes. The project aims to help you understand the iterative process of scholarship, the necessity of embedding your question in literature, grounding your interests in theory and developing the skills to ask a researchable question.

1. *Part I (5 points)* - CRQP Neighborhood – On one page, please provide a clear understanding of the topic in which you are interested in situating your research questions. You can use words, images, graphics or tables to present your ideas.

2. *Part II (5 points)* - CRQP Reading List – Prepare a 1-2 page reading list of articles that are helping you or will help you better understand your “neighborhood”. (Please note –this list must follow APA guidelines and some of these must be read to gather a clear and effective list).
3. *Part III (10 points)* - CRQP Synthesis – Prepare a 4-6 page paper that synthesizes the ideas that are emerging from your literature review. Please do not summarize any article –rather, present the ideas that are emerging from your reading and cite the authors, but no paragraph should be devoted to solely one reading.
4. *Part IV (10 points)* - CRQP Final – Prepare a 4-6 page paper that presents 4-6 potential research questions that emerge from the literature and might be considered “researchable” and why and supported by literature.

***Final Exam (30 points)***

This course will require a final exam to be held on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Details will be provided in class. Students must bring an examination blue book for the exam. One index (4x6) card with notes will be allowed.

**Assessment and Mastery Grading**

Attendance and Participation	15 points
Critical Dialogue Dispatches	25 points
CRQP Project	30 points
Final Exam	30 points

**Total** **100 points**

All assignments will be evaluated holistically using a mastery grading system; the general rubric is described below. A student must demonstrate “mastery” of each requirement of an assignment; doing so will result in a “B” level score. Only if a student additionally exceeds the expectations for that requirement—through quality, quantity, or the creativity of her/his work—will she/he be assessed with an “A” level score. With a mastery grading system, students must *choose* to “go above and beyond” in order to earn “A” level scores.

- “A” level score = Student work is well-organized, exceptionally thorough and thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines, as well as including additional relevant component. Student supports assertions with multiple concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified and extended to other contexts. Student work is exceptionally creative, includes additional artifacts, and/or intentionally supports peers’ efforts.
- “B” level score = Student work is well organized, thorough, thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines. Student supports assertions with concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified.
- “C” level score = Student provides cursory responses to assignment requirements. Student followed all format and component guidelines. Development of ideas is somewhat vague, incomplete, or rudimentary. Compelling support for assertions is typically not provided.
- “F” level score = Student work is so brief that any reasonably accurate assessment is impossible

**Grading Scale:**

At George Mason University, course work is measured in terms of quantity and quality. A credit normally represents one hour per week of lecture or recitation or not fewer than two hours per week of laboratory

work throughout a semester. The number of credits is a measure of quantity. The grade is a measure of quality. The system for grading graduate courses is as follows:

Grade	GRADING	Graduate Courses
A+	100	Satisfactory / Passing
A	94-99	Satisfactory / Passing
A-	90-93	Satisfactory / Passing
B+	85-89	Satisfactory / Passing
B	80-84	Satisfactory / Passing
C	70-79	Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education
F	<69	Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education

### 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/>]

## Proposed Class Schedule

January 21 Week 1	Learning about inquiry	1. Introductions 2. Syllabus	No readings for this class.
January 28 Week 2	Research in International Comparative Education – tracing a history	Carey, R. D. (1966). Conceptual tools for research in comparative education. <i>Comparative Education Review</i> , 10(3), 418-425.  Hawkins, J. N., & Rust, V. D. (2001). Shifting perspectives on comparative research: A view from the USA. <i>Comparative Education</i> , 37(4), 501-506.	Dispatch 1 (Carey and Hawkins) due by SATURDAY NIGHT – January 25 <sup>th</sup> on BB.
February 4 Week 3	IDENTITY– BRINGING AWARENESS TO OUR NATURE AND THE NATURE AROUND Who am I as a researcher? What do I want to know about international research? How does one “do” international research? Roots of social science in international educational research	Nóvoa, A., & Yariv-Mashal, T. (2003). Comparative research in education: A mode of governance or a historical journey? <i>Comparative Education</i> , 39(4), 423-439.  Hayhoe, R. (2007). The use of ideal types in comparative education: A personal reflection. <i>Comparative Education</i> , 43(2), 189-207.	Dispatch 2 (Nóvoa and Hayhoe), due by February 1 <sup>st</sup>
February 11 Week 4	IDENTITY, CONTINUED – BRINGING AWARENESS TO OUR NATURE AND THE NATURE AROUND Our identities as researchers and scholars in and across international settings The complexity, nuances and challenges of comparison – fighting our inclination to make judgments across setting	Smyth, J., Shacklock, G., & Hattam, R. (1999). Doing critical cultural studies: An antidote to being done to. <i>Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education</i> , 20(1), 73-89.  Berstecher, D., & Dieckmann, B. (1969). On the role of comparisons in educational research. <i>Comparative Education Review</i> , 13(1), 96-103	CRQP Part 1 - due
February 18 Week 5	Constructing research questions – in the international context.	Alvesson & Sandberg – Chapters 1-4.	
February 25 Week 6	PERPECTIVES AND CONCERNS (CONT) - LEARNING TO HONE	Alvesson & Sandberg – Chapters 4-8. <b>CLASS WILL BE ONLINE THIS WEEK. DETAILS TBD</b>	

	<p><b>OUR SKILLS</b> Bringing theory to our practice</p>		
<p>March 4 Week 7</p>	<p><b>PERPECTIVES AND CONCERNS - LEARNING TO HONE OUR SKILLS</b> Trends, ideologies and alternate perspectives</p>	<p>Alexander, R. J. (2001). Border crossings: Towards a comparative pedagogy. <i>Comparative Education</i>, 37(4), 507–523.</p> <p>Troman, G., &amp; Jeffrey, B. (2007). Qualitative data analysis in cross-cultural projects. <i>Comparative Education</i>, 43(4), 511–527.</p> <p>Introduction Vavrus and Bartlett</p>	<p>CRQP Part II Due</p>
<p><b>SPRING BREAK – MARCH 10-15</b></p>			
<p>March 18 Week 8</p>	<p><b>LEARNING TO SEE HOW IT IS DONE</b> Exploring, critiquing and understanding the style and substance of international education research Case studies from the field</p>	<p>Part 1 – Vavrus and Bartlett – Chapters 1-3</p> <p>Andrews, P. (2007). Negotiating meaning in cross-national studies of mathematics teaching: Kissing frogs to find princes. <i>Comparative Education</i>, 43(4), 489–511.</p> <p>Canen, A. (1999). The challenges of conducting an ethnographic case study of a United Kingdom Teacher Education Institution. <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i>, 50(1), 50-57.</p> <p>Francis, D. (1998). A voice in the wilderness: Meetings as ritual in a cross-cultural context. <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i>, 11(4), 583-603.</p>	<p>Dispatch 3 due by March 22<sup>nd</sup>.</p>
<p>March 25<sup>th</sup> Week 9</p>	<p><b>LEARNING TO SEE HOW IT IS DONE (CONT)</b> Exploring, critiquing and understanding the style and substance of international education research Case studies from the field</p>	<p>Part 2 – Vavrus and Bartlett – Chapters 4-6</p> <p>Baily, S. (2011). Speaking Up: Contextualizing women’s voices and gatekeepers’ reactions in promoting women’s empowerment in rural India. <i>Research in Comparative and International Education</i>, 6(1), 107-118.</p> <p>Cain, T., &amp; Milovic, S. (2010). Action research as a tool of professional development of advisers and teachers in Croatia. <i>European Journal of Teacher Education</i> 33(1), 19–30.</p>	

April 1 Week 10  ONLINE	LEARNING TO SEE HOW IT IS DONE (CONT). Exploring, critiquing and understanding the style and substance of international education research Case studies from the field	Part 3 – Vavrus and Bartlett – Chapters 7-9  Diallo, M. (2007). People from different backgrounds write different histories: An essay on historiography (Britain and India). <i>African and Asian Studies</i> , 6(1/2), 155–172.  Martin, T. J. (2003). Divergent ontologies with converging conclusions: A case study comparison of comparative methodologies. <i>Comparative Education</i> , 39(1), 105-119.	
April 8 Week 11	LEARNING TO SEE HOW IT IS DONE (CONT). Exploring, critiquing and understanding the style and substance of international education research Case studies from the field	Part 4 – Vavrus and Bartlett – Chapters 10- 12  Pérez, Á., Soto, E., & Serván, M. J. (2010). Participatory action research and the reconstruction of teachers’ practical thinking: Lesson studies and core reflection; An experience in Spain. <i>Educational Action Research</i> , 18(1), 73–87.  Tseng, Y. (2002). From ‘us’ to ‘them’: Diasporic linkages and identity politics. <i>Identities: Global Studies in Power and Culture</i> , 9(3), 383–405.	Dispatch 4 is due by April 5 <sup>th</sup> .
April 15 <sup>th</sup> Week 12	IDEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH Understanding the ramifications of ideological and ethical dilemmas in research	Ghaffar-Kucher, A. (2014). Writing Culture; inscribing lives: a reflective treatise on the burden of representation in native research. <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i> .  Ghaffar-Kuchar, A. (2014). ‘Narrow- minded and oppressive’ or a ‘superior culture’? Implications of divergent representations of Islam for Pakistani- American youth. <i>Race, Ethnicity and Education</i> .  Niranjana, T. (2000). Alternative frames? Questions for comparative research in the third world. <i>Inter-Asia Cultural Studies</i> , 1(1). 97-109.  Merriam, S. B., Johnson - Bailey, J., Lee, M., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G., & Muhamad, M.	CRQP Part III – Due



		(2001). Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. <i>International Journal of Lifelong Education</i> , 20(5), 405–416.	
April 22 Week 13	<p>IDEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH (CONT)</p> <p>Quandaries and conundrums facing international researchers</p>	<p>Pryor, J., Kuupole, A., Kutor, N., Dunne, M., &amp; Adu-Yeboah, C. (2009). Exploring the fault lines of cross-cultural collaborative research. <i>Compare: Journal of Comparative and International Education</i>, 39(6), 769–782.</p> <p>Sweeting, A. (1999). Doing comparative historical education research: Problems and issues from and about Hong Kong. <i>Compare</i>, 29(3), 269-285.</p>	Dispatch 5 due by April 26 <sup>th</sup> .
April 29 Week 14	<p>SHARING OUR EXPERTISE - BECOMING CRITICAL COLLABORATORS AND PARTNERS. SETTING OUR SIGHTS ON THE FUTURE - WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH</p> <p>Wrap up End of semester evaluations</p>	<p>Ferguson D. L., &amp; Meyer, G. (1998). Talking across borders and languages: Encouraging international research discussions and collaboration. <i>International Journal of Educational Research</i> 29(2), 89-93.</p> <p>White, M. T. (2007). A right to benefit from international research: A new approach to capacity building in less-developed countries. <i>Accountability in Research: Policies and Quality Assurance</i>, 14(2), 73–93.</p> <p>Kennedy, J. (2007). International education and developing countries: Research and educational collaboration in the field. <i>Journal of Political Science Education</i>, 3(3), 223–237.</p> <p>Ebbutt, D. (1998). Evaluation of projects in the developing world: Some cultural and methodological issues. <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i>, 18(1), 415-424</p>	CRQP Part IV Due
May 6 Week 15	Final Exam		