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

EDRS 812 01: Qualitative Methods in Educational Research
3.0 Credits, Spring 2015
Mondays, 4:30 -7:00pm Thompson Hall 2022

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PROFESSOR(S):
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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 emphases 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:

Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. (2011). Writing ethnographic fieldnotes. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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, reflection/idea memoes, 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 bibliographies. 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 or idea memoes. Reflection or idea memos (of 3 – 5 double spaced pages) will be will be based on readings, class topics, and key aspects of your research project. You should use reflection or idea memoes as an opportunity to use as preliminary drafts of sections of your final research project. The reflection or idea memoes help you to think through the research process and inform your research project. The instructor will provide formative feedback on each reflection or idea 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 qualitative research and inquiry, including the assumptions, methods, strengths, and limitations of this approach to research. You will be expected to spend a minimum of a) 3 hours of interviews or b) 3 hours of observations of a single setting, plus at least one hour of interview data with one or more participants in that setting. Additionally, updates on your research project during the course through consultations and presentations. You are welcome to choose from a variety of settings or topics with which you have prior involvement or affiliation. An oral summary/presentation will be expected at the end of the course. Your research 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 20% 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   94 - 100
A-   90 - 93
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 <u>with a required performance-based assessment</u> 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 (Required) and Assignments
January 26	Class Introduction, Organization, Course Requirements, and Community Building Orientation to Qualitative Methods & Developing Appropriate Inquiry Questions	
February 2	Designing a Qualitative Study	**Read:** Glesne, Ch.1-2 Maxwell, Ch. 1-2 *HW: Idea memo due*
February 9	Developing and Maintaining Relations with People/Phenomena Being Studied I	**Read:** Emerson, et.al, Ch. 1-3 *HW: Methodological annotated bibliography topic and example*
February 16	Developing and Maintaining Relations with People/Phenomena Being Studied II	**Read:** Glesne, Ch. 3-4 Maxwell , Ch. 3 *HW: IRB approval form due*
February 23	Generating Data Via Interviews, Observations, Document Analyses I	**Read:** Glesne, Ch. 5-6 Maxwell , Ch. 4-5
March 2	Generating Data Via Interviews, Observations, Document Analyses II	**Read:** Emerson, et.al, Ch. 4 *HW: IRB approval form due*
March 16	Developing Theory I	**Read:** MacLeod, Ch. 1-2 Glesne, Ch. 7-8
March 23	Developing Theory II	**Read:** Glesne, Ch. 9-10 Maxwell, Ch. 5 *HW: Research Identity memo due*
March 30	Judging the Quality of Qualitative Inquiry I	**Read:** Glesne, Ch. 6 Emerson, et.al, Ch. 5 *HW: Research Relationship and Data Collection memo due*
April 6	Judging the Quality of Qualitative Inquiry II	**Read:** MacLeod, Ch. 3-4 *HW: Data Analysis and Conclusions memo due*
April 13	Representing and Reporting Qualitative Data	**Read:** MacLeod, Ch. 5-6 Emerson, et.al, Ch. 7

April 20	Critiquing and Revising Qualitative Reports	**Read:** MacLeod, Ch. 7-8 Maxwell , Ch. 6-7 Emerson, et.al, Conclusion
April 27	Final Feedback and Consultations	*HW: Methodological annotated bibliographies due*
May 4	Research Project Presentations	*HW: Paper Presentations/ Final Papers Due*

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	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.	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.	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.	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.

Rubric for Research Paper/Project and Methodological Annotated Bibliographies

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

				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.