

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

EDRS 621 P01: Qualitative Inquiry in Education
3 Credits, Fall 2015

Mondays, 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm Thompson Hall L019Thompson Hall L019

PROFESSOR(S):

Name: Dr. Bernadine P. Futrell

Office hours: By Appointment

Office location: Not Applicable

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A. Prerequisites/Corequisites

EDRS 590 or equivalent experience.

B. University Catalog Course Description

Focuses on basic application of naturalistic research methods. Examines major theoretical frameworks and qualitative research techniques, which include content analysis, coding, and interpretation of data.

C. Expanded Course Description

Not Applicable

LEARNER OUTCOMES or OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to enable students to:

- 1. gain a basic understanding of current qualitative research methods and the theories and epistemologies that have influenced their development;**
- 2. gain experience with data collection techniques including participant observation and qualitative interviewing;**
- 3. 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;**
- 4. find, understand, evaluate, and apply published research that is relevant to their field; thoughtfully consider ethical issues in qualitative research and**
- 5. thoughtfully consider validity issues in qualitative research**

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS (American Psychological Association):

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>

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.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:

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%

BLACKBOARD REQUIREMENTS

Every student registered for any CEHD course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, Article Critique to Blackboard (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 Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Blackboard will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Blackboard 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/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 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:

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	Readings/Assignments Due
August 31, 2015	Introduction to qualitative research Diving Into Participant Observation	Review syllabus.
September 14, 2015	The Logic of Qualitative Research	Bogdan & Biklen, Ch 1 <i>Foundations of Qualitative Research for Education</i> Citi Training in Human Subjects review (see Blackboard)
September 21, 2015	Participant Observation Discussion 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.	Maxwell Ch 1 <i>A Model for Qualitative Research Design</i>
September 28, 2015	Coming to Questions Getting a feel for participant observation	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
October 5, 2015	Qualitative research design: Locating your goals/purposes in a broader conceptual context Diving Into Interviewing	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
October 13, 2015 (TUESDAY)	Qualitative Research Design: Aligning Purposes, Conceptual Context and Questions	Bring in copy of article you would like to use for article critique (can bring in multiple possibilities if you want help selecting). Read Stevens et al. for critique workshop (article

		will be posted on Bb).
October 19, 2015	Dr. Futrell available during class hours for individual check-ins to discuss proposed sites, workshop on informed consent, observation/interview protocols, and cover memos.	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.
October 26, 2015	Reading Qualitative Research from a Design Perspective	
November 2, 2015	Qualitative Research Design: Methods	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.
November 9, 2015	Qualitative Research Design: Data Analysis and Iterative Process (Design→Analysis→Re-Design...)	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> Article Critique Due
November 16, 2015	Validity Strategies	Revisit Maxwell, Ch 6 <i>Validity</i> Memo Due
November 23, 2015	Validity, Reliability and Generalizability	Maxwell, J. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i>, 62(3), 279- 300 (on-line) Participant Observation or Interview Assignment Due.
November 30, 2015	Qualitative Research Design: Data Analysis	Revisit Bogdan & Biklen, ch 5, <i>Data Analysis and Interpretation</i> Maxwell & Miller (2008) (on blackboard) Memo Due
December 7, 2015	Computer-Aided Data Storage and Analysis and Team Research	Complete set of memos due; Identify 2 to be evaluated for content (1 will be randomly selected).
December 14, 2015	Course review and reflection	

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* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd 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.

Riessman, C. (1993). *Narrative Analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications

Stevens, R., Satwicz, T., & McCarthy, L. (2007). In-Game, In-Room, In-World: Reconnecting Video Game Play to the Rest of Kids' Lives. *The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning*, -, 41–66. doi:10.1162/dmal.9780262693646.041

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

Assignment Information

Article Critique

EDRS621: Guidelines for Article critique and share

Analyze the design of the study of your article using Maxwell's Interactive Model. Describe how the design addresses purposes, conceptual context, research questions, methods and validity. Identify the relationships among these elements that you think are particularly important to understanding and evaluating the design of the study. In what ways do you find the connections between the different elements of the study design compelling? Do you notice gaps or weaknesses in the design? Explain and support your judgments with specific references to the text.

Discuss the presentation of findings. Assess reporting of the findings in terms of how well you think the authors balanced using direct data with their analysis and interpretation. Do the authors present enough detail on their methods and direct data for you to assess the validity of their interpretations? Do you think they make a compelling case that their interpretations are supported? Support your opinions with specific examples (or gaps) from the text.

Discuss any questions, insights, criticism, connections to your own work that are raised by your reading of the article.

The length of this paper should be about 5-6 pages (no more than 7 will be accepted so write concisely!) with at least 3 pages (probably more!) devoted to Question 1. Please follow APA style guidelines. While your only citation is likely going to be the article (and perhaps Maxwell's book), but you should use APA format cite the page number references to specific points within your article.

Due Date -

Monday, Nov 4, 2013 11:59:00 PM EDT

Points Possible - 28

EDRS621

Choose EITHER participant observation OR interview assignment

Participant Observation Assignment

You will conduct 1.5-2 hours of observation at a site of your choosing, take fieldnotes during the session, type up completed field observation.

Please include:

1. A signed informed consent letter from the "gatekeeper" of your observation (e.g. a teacher if it's a class, a boss if it is a work site) where you detail out the purpose of your observation and what level of confidentiality you are able to provide.
2. A coversheet detailing information about your observation. For example, site, time, 1 paragraph general description of what was occurring, when the final fieldnotes were written after the observation. Remember to use aliases where needed.

3. Fieldnotes taken during the observation. Please employ some technique for separating out data and observer's comments/questions. These may be handwritten or typed.
4. A more polished account of the observation typed up within 24 hours of the observation, immediately after is ideal. Employ some technique for separating out data and observer's comments on the data. See Appendix B in Bogdan and Biklin for an example (though it doesn't have to be quite as detailed/elaborated if that doesn't fit your purposes).
5. An approximately 2-4 page typed memo on the data collection process addressing issues of your fieldnote process and memory issues (what gaps were there in your memory of the experience, what strategies did you employ to improve your memory), bias issues (how might your biases have influenced what data you focused on and what you might have missed) and reactivity issues (how may people acted differently as a result of your presence, how might this influence the data you gathered).
6. An approximately 5-6 page typed memo doing the very beginning level of data analysis. Read over your fieldnotes, look at your observer comments, identify some important themes of interest and provide concrete examples from the data
Reflect on how your biases may be influencing your interpretation of this data.

Reflect on what your next step in investigating a theme of interest might be (e.g. what observation you would do and how you might structure your observation, if you would do an interview—with who and about what, what documents you might want to collect and analyze, or what literature you might want to review.

Evaluation Criteria for Participant Observation Assignment:

- Informed consent
 - Written clearly and outlines consent issues appropriately.
 - Signed before observation.
- Coversheet
 - Contains needed information.
- Fieldnotes- Fieldnotes taken during the visit
 - show clear separation of data and interpretation
 - show aids for remembering difficult parts of data for future write-up of data (e.g. timeline, sequence, some verbatim phrases)
- Fieldnotes after the visit are:
 - Written promptly
 - Are detailed and thorough, contain ample concrete description of settings, individuals, events, sequences.
 - Give a sense of time and frequency of phenomenon of interest
 - Clearly separate out data and interpretation
 - Interpretive insights are thoughtful and connected to the data
- Data Collection Memo
 - Issues of memory, bias and reactivity are discussed in a way that connects to the actual experience of the observation and show thoughtfulness and insight

- Discussion of memory, bias and reactivity show an awareness of the meaning of these concepts and how they may influence data collection
- Data Analysis Memo
 - Themes or insights generated are thoughtful
 - Concrete examples are used to support any themes including accounts of time/frequency when applicable
 - Negative examples are sought out
 - Account of potential biases and their influence on initial analysis is thoughtful, thorough and specific
- Ideas for next step in investigation are logical given the analytic discussion

Interview Assignment

You will conduct and audio record a 1-1.5 hour interview or set of interviews (no individual interview should be shorter than ½ hour for this assignment).

1. Signed informed consent
2. Coversheet with information on who, where, when the interview was conducted, and the general purpose focus of the interview. Remember to use aliases for names/places. You can decide if you want to include summary substantive information, and how much to include.
3. Interview protocol (semi-structured)
4. Notes taken during interview—good to take directly on the interview protocol sheet so you can tie answers to questions asked/topics discussed.
5. Verbatim transcription of at least 30 minutes of interview (full is ideal, you're your assignment only requires 30 minutes) with detailed typed notes about interview before and after the transcribed time. (The best way to get this is to listen to the portions of the interview you transcribed and stop every 5-10 minutes or so and summarize what has been said. If there are portions of the interview you don't have recorded, summarize what you can based on notes/memory-but note that this is the case.)
6. Interview self-assessment form (available on blackboard) completed immediately after interview (1 for each interview if you conduct more than one)—no longer than 24 hours if immediate is not possible.
7. A 5-6 page memo discussing the effectiveness of the protocol/interview at gaining insight/understanding into your research questions, reactivity/reflexivity issues and their potential specific influence on the data. Identify interesting themes using supporting evidence from the interview text. You may also build connections to relevant conceptual context (e.g., literature on your topic) but that is not required of this assignment. Reflect on what you might ask in a follow-up interview/or observation to gain further insight into identified themes.

Evaluation Criteria for Interview assignment

- Informed consent
 - Written clearly and outlines consent issues appropriately.
 - Signed before observation.

- If interviewing a minor (under age 18), informed consent for minor and parent/guardian needed. Minor informed consent form needs to be written in an appropriately leveled language and be read aloud to the minor.
- Coversheet
 - Contains needed information.
- Interview protocol
 - Questions are open-ended and not leading
 - Questions seem organized around a set of research questions but not a direct translation of those questions.
 - Questions show insight into ways of getting at research questions that may be difficult for participant to articulate.
- Notes during interview
 - Identify which questions were asked/topics discussed
 - Notes on anything that was not recorded.
- Interview self-assessment
 - Completed promptly
 - Thorough and insightful reflection on all the categories
- Transcribed Interview
 - Notes put transcribed portion into context
 - Verbatim transcription for at least full half hour included, with Interviewer talk italicized and separate from Interviewee
 - Interview shows thoughtful listening and questioning in response to interviewee's responses, not just plodding through protocol
- Analytic Memo
 - Issues of reactivity/reflexivity are discussed thoughtfully and in ways specific to the interview
- Thoughtful reflections supported by examples on the strengths/weaknesses of the interview protocol
 - Themes generated are insightful and well explicated and supported.
 - Next steps in research are discussed and are thoughtful.

***Note—you could also opt to do a combination of participant observation and interview. In this case you should have a total data collection time of at least 1.5 hours. Please see me for more specifics on how to break up memo assignments/data analysis for your proposed example.**

Memos

Select the two memos you have written over the course of the term in your Blackboard journal that you think are the most thoughtful and cut and paste them to include here. I will look over your full set of memos (minimum of 6 memos for full credit) and randomly select one more and your content grade will be based on these. If you have written more than 6 memos you can designate ones that you don't want to be included in the random selection.

The grading criteria are:

1. You have completed 6 or more memos over the course.
2. These memos represent relatively consistent thoughtful engagement with course material over the semester.
3. The three memos graded for content will be graded purely on thoughtful engagement with course material, your research interests etc.--there's no need for APA formatting or other formal writing issues (except insofar the writing quality reflects thoughtfulness).

Memos are a critical part of qualitative research so I'm looking that you're building up the habit.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S):

PERFORMANCE BASED ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR EDRS 621 ARTICLE CRITIQUE: 28 points total

	1	2	3	4
	Does not meet standards	Approaching Standards	Meets Standards	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	Strengths and limitations of the presentation of findings are discussed and claims are	Insightful accounts of the qualities, strengths and limitations of the presentation of

		further explication or leave key gaps.	reasonable and meaningful.	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.