

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

**EDUC 800
Ways of Knowing
Spring, 2016
Section 002
(3 credit hours)**

PROFESSOR(S)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

- A. **Prerequisites** – Admissions to PhD Program
- B. **Catalog description:** Provides understanding of characteristic ways of knowing in various liberal arts disciplines while examining subject matter, key concepts, principles, methods, and theories. Analyzes philosophical traditions underlying educational practice and research. Required course during the first semester in the program.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

This course meets in a face to face format to examine various “ways of knowing” and explores the psychological and social construction of knowledge. The course is designed to help students become aware of their own ways of knowing, to understand alternative ways of knowing as conceptual tools, to critically reflect on the strengths and limitations of various ways of knowing, and to become aware of the implications of different ways of knowing for research and practice. In addition, the course is designed to introduce students to formal argumentation and academic writing. The course is structured around readings, writing on those readings, and class activities. Using this collection of activities, the methodology of the course seeks to build clear bridges between know how, theoretical/research perspectives, and research strategies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will understand the traditions of inquiry that serve as the underlying foundations for inquiry in education research, including rationalism, empiricism, positivism, logical positivism, and post-positivism.

2. Students will understand how these traditions attract adherents and understand how and why they have changed over the centuries.
3. Students will analyze and explain important personal, sociocultural, professional, political, and other influences on ways of knowing.
4. Students will explore how various ways of knowing affect individual scholars, research, and practice in education and related fields.
5. Students will describe, compare, and contrast the ways of knowing from a variety of perspectives.
6. Students will expand and refine their scholarship abilities including critical and analytic reading, writing, thinking, oral communication, and the use of scholarly resources.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following texts will be used in the course:

1. Movie: *The Name of the Rose* (Available as Streaming Video at Amazon.com)
http://www.amazon.com/The-Name-of-the-Rose/dp/B0051AVJB6/ref=sr_1_1?s=instant-video&ie=UTF8&qid=1325787493&sr=1-1
2. Movie: *Looking for Richard* (Available as Streaming Video from Amazon.com)
http://www.amazon.com/Looking-For-Richard/dp/B001LH1B6S/ref=sr_1_7?ie=UTF8&s=digital-video&qid=1249914819&sr=8-7
3. Movie: *A Matter of Fact* (Episode 4 from James Burke's *The Day the Universe Changed*) Link: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2cjk90_the-day-the-universe-changed-04-10-a-matter-of-fact-printing-transforms-knowledge_shortfilms
4. Johnson, C. (2015). *The Information Diet*, Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.
5. Rose, E. (2013). *On Reflection*, Toronto, Canada: Canadian Scholars Press.
6. Descartes, R. (2015). *Discourse on Method and the Meditations* (D. Cress, translator), Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.
7. Kuhn, T. (2012). *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago Press.
8. Bruner, J. (1987). *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
9. Gleick, J. (2008). *Chaos: Making a New Science*, NY: Penguin Books.
10. Weinberger, D., (2014). *Too Big to Know: Rethinking Knowledge Now That the Facts Aren't the Facts, Experts Are Everywhere, and the Smartest Person in the Room Is the Room*, NY: Basic Books.,
11. Graff, G. & Birkenstein, C. (2014). *They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* (3rd ed.), NY: W. W. Norton & Company.
12. Selected copied resources.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance in class is mandatory, as discussions, lectures, and hands-on activities are important parts of the course.
2. Each student is expected to complete all readings and participate in discussions.
3. Each student is expected to participate in and complete all classroom activities.
4. Students who must miss a class are responsible for notifying the instructor (preferably in advance) and for completing any assignments, readings, etc. before the start of the next class.
5. Assignments are to be turned in at the beginning of class or emailed before the date due. Late assignments will not be accepted without making prior arrangements with the instructor. All papers should be written in a scholarly, typed format.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Argumentation Papers – (35 points/5 points each): As well as exploring ways of knowing, a central goal of this course is to engage students in thinking deeply about and developing expertise in academic writing. Toward this end, students will prepare a series of argumentation papers. Each of these papers will reflect development of a thesis/position related to an aspect of each of the major readings. Students will develop their thesis/position and provide support as well as integrate their own voice. Prior to each paper, students will explore one strategy/move used to promote effective academic writing as explained in Graff and Birkenstein's book, *They Say/I Say*. These papers will also serve as a means to connect course readings to experience and to analyze course readings critically. The course schedule identifies specific assignments and due dates. Papers must be word-processed, double-spaced, and turned in on the assigned week. Although there is no specific length requirement, three or four, well-constructed pages **might** serve to frame the scope of writing. Papers should be thoughtful, organized around presenting and supporting a thesis related to each reading with ideas clearly presented and reflect strategies/ moves in academic writing discussed in class (readings in the book, *They Say/I Say*). Papers should follow APA format. Finally, these papers are also opportunities for the student and the instructor to interact one on one about course ideas and academic writing and should be seen as iterative when appropriate.

2. Knowing Research Paper – (35 points): Students will select a way of knowing that is new to them or one in which they would like to delve more deeply. Examples include but are not limited to: multicultural ways of knowing or a particular cultural way of knowing, metaphysical ways of knowing, women's ways of knowing, narrative ways of knowing, hermeneutic ways of knowing, the ways in which technology shapes knowing, the ways in which a particular technology shapes knowing, scientific ways of knowing, chaos/complexity as a way of knowing, reflection as a way of knowing, etc. The research paper should explore this way of knowing and be presented in a scholarly manner. Explore this new way of knowing and demonstrate: 1) your understanding of the basic assumptions of this approach, and 2) what it is that makes this approach a new way of knowing for you. Again, no specific length is required. Although there is no specific length requirement, 2500 words or 10 double-spaced, well-constructed pages **might** serve to frame the scope of writing.

As part of the development of your paper, please submit one page that outlines your proposed paper no later than class on March 22nd. This outline should address the following

questions: What are/is the way of knowing you will explore? How do you propose to go about exploring it? What are some of your sources? The paper is due at the beginning of the fourteenth class (April 26th). Criteria include: clearly defined focus, clear and accurate presentation of assumptions and definitions, well articulated implications for research and inquiry, and sufficient and clear organization and writing. Note: depth and analysis are more important than breadth. APA format required.

Evaluation of the final paper: The main criteria are a clearly defined focus, clear and accurate presentation of its assumptions and definitions about knowing, a demonstrated understanding of the implications for research, and clear organization and writing (*see scoring rubric below*).

Overall Scoring

1 = fails to meet standards	2 = meets standards (basic)	3 = exceeds standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus of the paper and/or its roots are neither clearly identified nor clearly described. • The fundamental assumptions are clearly explained and the key terms are defined. • Neither the research questions are clear nor are the examples clearly presented • The paper is hard to follow as the points are not connected into a coherent whole; inattention to grammar, typographical errors and misspelled words; failure to consult APA is evident. • No attention is given to how this way of knowing is new to you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus: the way of knowing is clearly identified and its historical roots are clearly described • The fundamental assumptions about the nature of knowledge in the “way” are explained clearly and the key terms necessary to understand this way of knowing are defined. • Demonstrated understanding of the implications for research: the nature of the research questions this way of knowing has been used to explore are included and described clearly. • Organization and Clarity: the paper is well-organized; the argument flows easily from point to point; follows APA writing guidelines. • Clear and relevant discussion of why this is a new way of knowing for you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus of the paper is clearly stated and its historical roots are clearly described. A high degree of expertise is evidenced in establishing focus. • The fundamental assumptions are clearly and expertly explained and relevant key terms are clearly defined and elaborated upon. • The nature of the research questions are included and significant relevant examples are clearly presented. A high degree of understanding is exhibited. • The paper is very well-organized with the logic following from point to point; follows APA guidelines explicitly; there are no grammatical errors, typos, misspelled words, etc. • Delineations between your way of knowing and that of this “other” perspective are clear and considerable insight is demonstrated.

3. Reflective Analysis Paper – (35 points): Drawing on readings, class discussions, and other course activities, students will write a scholarly paper that addresses the following

questions: How has the course affected your ways of knowing as a practitioner and as a researcher? How would you describe your current position on suitable way(s) of knowing? What are the implications of your reflections on the above two questions for your personal, professional, and doctoral activities? Criteria for assessment include: evidence of serious reflection and analysis; clear organization and writing; connections with class readings. This paper is due by 5 pm May 10th.

Evaluation of Reflective Analysis Paper - Points will be assigned to the Reflective Analysis and Knowing Papers using a rubric process. Both class participants and the course instructor will be involved in assessment of graded assignments. Prior to the due date for any assignment, the class will participate in the development of an assessment rubric. This rubric will result from a discussion of applicable course objectives and an elaboration of qualities and components associated with excellence in completion of the assignment. In this way, the development of the rubric will inform the final completion of the assignments as well as serve as the instrument for assessment and determination of points awarded.

EVALUATION

Since this is a graduate level course, high quality work is expected on all assignments and in class. Points for all graded assignments will be based on the scope, quality, and creativity of the assignments. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted without making arrangements with the instructor.

Summary of Points

Argumentation Papers (5 points each)	35
Knowing Research Paper	35
Reflective Analysis Paper	30
Total	100

Grading Scale

Grade	Point Range
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	86-89
B	80-85
C	70-79
F	69-below

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-2/>].
- 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 [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]

Class Topics and Schedule

Meetings	In Class Activities	Out of Class Activities
Week 1 1/19	The Name Game Introduction to Ways of Knowing Introduction to Syllabus Introduction to Instructor Introduction to Academic Writing Possible Answers to Questions on Your Mind	Watch Pacino movie, <i>Looking for Richard</i> Read <i>The Information Diet</i> ; Identify 10 Quotable Quotes; print and bring to next class Read both Prefaces, Introduction, and Chapters 5 and 11 in <i>They Say/I Say</i>
Week 2 1/26	Happy Hour: <i>Looking for Richard</i> Quotable Quotes Round Robin Top Ten Diet Guidelines	Read Chapter 7 in <i>They Say/I Say</i> Write short paper on a thesis about <i>The Information Diet</i> paying particular attention to Ch. 7 Read <i>On Reflection</i> Read <i>Is Google Making Us Stupid?</i> (Distributed in class)
Week 3 2/2	Due – Paper on <i>The Information Diet</i> Discuss Information Diet papers Two Lessons for Ways of Knowing Lesson 1: A Scholar’s Oath Lesson 2: Choose Your Tools	Read Chapter 2 in <i>They Say/I Say</i> Write short paper on a thesis about <i>On Reflection</i> paying particular attention to Ch. 2 Watch the movie, <i>The Name of the Rose</i> Read Descartes’ <i>Discourse on Methods and Meditations</i>
Week 4 2/9	Due – Paper on <i>On Reflection</i> Discuss <i>On Reflection</i> papers Discuss <i>The Name of the Rose</i> Discuss Descartes’ <i>Discourse on . . .</i> Two More Lessons for Ways of Knowing Lesson 1: The Big 4 Lesson 2: The Right Question	Read Chapter 6 in <i>They Say/I Say</i> Write short paper on a thesis about <i>Discourse on Methods</i> paying particular attention to Ch. 6 Open your web browser and explore rationalism, empiricism, and positivism. What are the basic tenets of each? What is their historical context? What are examples of each in your discipline, job, and/or life? Wikipedia is a good starting point as is www.britannica.com ? How do they impact and/or are reflected in your own ways of knowing? Find important quotable quotes. Take notes and bring to class.

Week 5 2/16	DUE – Paper on Descartes Discussion: Rationalism, Empiricism, Positivism Acrostics: Rationalist, Empiricist, Positivist Lesson for Ways of Knowing: Evidence Writing a Dissertation	Read Chapters 3 and 8 in <i>They Say/I Say</i> Write short paper on a thesis about the -isms paying particular attention to Ch. 3 and 8 Read first half <i>The Structure of Scientific Revolutions</i>
Week 6 2/23	DUE – Paper on the -isms Thomas Kuhn Turns Poetic	Finish reading <i>The Structure of Scientific Revolutions</i>
Week 7 3/1	A Concept Map: The Revolutionary Cycle Two Ways of /Knowing Lessons Lesson 1 – Truth Lesson 2 – The Scholarly Community <i>60 Minutes</i> on television	Read Chapter 1 in <i>They Say/I Say</i> Write short paper on a thesis about Kuhn paying particular attention to Ch. 1 Read first half of Bruner’s <i>Actual Worlds, Possible Minds</i>
Week 8 3/8	DUE – Paper on Kuhn A Kahoot, A Kahoot Illustrative Short Stories Writing a Way of Knowing Paper	Finish reading Bruner’s <i>Actual Worlds, Possible Minds</i> Write a 1 page short story that illustrates an insight, lesson, concept in your own disciplines; print and bring to class Begin working on Way of Knowing Paper Proposal
Week 9 3/15	Analyzing Short Stories – Concept Lessons The Qualitative Researcher Chaos Video	1 st half Chaos Prepare Ways of Knowing Paper Proposal
3/22	DUE – Ways of Knowing Paper Proposal Spring Break – No Meeting	Finish Chaos Work on Way of Knowing Paper
Week 10 3/29	Conway’s Game of Life A Brief Logo Exercise – The Recursive Universe Lessons on Becoming a Tycoon	Read Chapter 10 in <i>They Say/I Say</i> Write short paper on a thesis about <i>Chaos</i> paying particular attention to Ch. 10 Read first Half of <i>Too Big to Know</i> Work on Way of Knowing Paper

Week 11 4/5	DUE – Paper on Chaos Episode 4 – A Matter of Fact from <i>The Day the Universe Changed</i>	Finish reading <i>Too Big to Know</i> Work on Way of Knowing Paper
Week 12 4/12	On the Scholarly Road – Burma Shaves	Read Chapter 9 in <i>They Say/I Say</i> Write short paper on a thesis about <i>Too Big to Know</i> paying particular attention to Ch. 9 Work on Way of Knowing Paper
Week 13 4/19	DUE – Paper on TBTK TBD	Work on Way of Knowing Paper
Week 14 4/26	DUE – Ways of Knowing Paper Course Reflection Activities – Everything I Need to Know . . . Six Word Stories	Work on Course Reflection Paper
Week 15 5/3	Course Evaluations Optional Happy Hour	Work on Course Reflection Paper
Finals Week 5/10	DUE – Course Reflection Paper No Meeting	