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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Office Phone: 703-993-2015
Office hours: By Appointment
Email address: pnorton@gmu.edu

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.

REQUED TEXTS

The following texts will be used in the course:

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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Scoring</th>
<th>1 = fails to meet standards</th>
<th>2 = meets standards (basic)</th>
<th>3 = exceeds standards</th>
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<tr>
<td>Focus: the way of knowing is clearly identified and its historical roots are clearly described.</td>
<td>- The focus of the paper and/or its roots are neither clearly identified nor clearly described.</td>
<td>- Focus: the way of knowing is clearly identified and its historical roots are clearly described.</td>
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<td>The fundamental assumptions are clearly explained and the key terms are defined.</td>
<td>- 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.</td>
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<td>Neither the research questions are clear nor are the examples clearly presented.</td>
<td>- 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.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
<td>- Organization and Clarity: the paper is well-organized; the argument flows easily from point to point; follows APA writing guidelines.</td>
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<td>No attention is given to how this way of knowing is new to you.</td>
<td>- Clear and relevant discussion of why this is a new way of knowing for you.</td>
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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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argumentation Papers (5 points each)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowing Research Paper</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective Analysis Paper</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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**Grading Scale**

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Point Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-85</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>69-below</td>
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**GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**


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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Meetings</th>
<th>In Class Activities</th>
<th>Out of Class Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>The Name Game&lt;br&gt;Introduction to Ways of Knowing&lt;br&gt;Introduction to Syllabus&lt;br&gt;Introduction to Instructor&lt;br&gt;Introduction to Academic Writing&lt;br&gt;Possible Answers to Questions on Your Mind</td>
<td>Watch Pacino movie, <em>Looking for Richard</em>&lt;br&gt;Read <em>The Information Diet</em>; Identify 10 Quotable Quotes; print and bring to next class&lt;br&gt;Read both Prefaces, Introduction, and Chapters 5 and 11 in <em>They Say/I Say</em></td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Happy Hour: <em>Looking for Richard</em>&lt;br&gt;Quotable Quotes Round Robin&lt;br&gt;Top Ten Diet Guidelines</td>
<td>Read Chapter 7 in <em>They Say/I Say</em>&lt;br&gt;Write short paper on a thesis about <em>The Information Diet</em> paying particular attention to Ch. 7&lt;br&gt;Read <em>On Reflection</em>&lt;br&gt;Read <em>Is Google Making Us Stupid?</em> (Distributed in class)</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td><strong>Due – Paper on The Information Diet</strong>&lt;br&gt;Discuss Information Diet papers&lt;br&gt;Two Lessons for Ways of Knowing&lt;br&gt;Lesson 1: A Scholar’s Oath&lt;br&gt;Lesson 2: Choose Your Tools</td>
<td>Read Chapter 2 in <em>They Say/I Say</em>&lt;br&gt;Write short paper on a thesis about <em>On Reflection</em> paying particular attention to Ch. 2&lt;br&gt;Watch the movie, <em>The Name of the Rose</em>&lt;br&gt;Read Descartes’ <em>Discourse on Methods and Meditations</em></td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td><strong>Due – Paper on On Reflection</strong>&lt;br&gt;Discuss On Reflection papers&lt;br&gt;Discuss <em>The Name of the Rose</em>&lt;br&gt;Discuss Descartes’ <em>Discourse on</em> . . .&lt;br&gt;Two More Lessons for Ways of Knowing&lt;br&gt;Lesson 1: The Big 4&lt;br&gt;Lesson 2: The Right Question</td>
<td>Read Chapter 6 in <em>They Say/I Say</em>&lt;br&gt;Write short paper on a thesis about <em>Discourse on Methods</em> paying particular attention to Ch. 6&lt;br&gt;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 <a href="http://www.britannica.com">www.britannica.com</a>. How do they impact and/or are reflected in your own ways of knowing? Find important quotable quotes. Take notes and bring to class.</td>
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| 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 *They Say/I Say*  
Write short paper on a thesis about the -isms paying particular attention to Ch. 3 and 8  
Read first half *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* |
| Week 6  
2/23 | **DUE – Paper on the -isms**  
Thomas Kuhn Turns Poetic | Finish reading *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* |
| Week 7  
3/1 | A Concept Map: The Revolutionary Cycle  
Two Ways of Knowing Lessons  
Lesson 1 – Truth  
Lesson 2 – The Scholarly Community  
60 Minutes on television | Read Chapter 1 in *They Say/I Say*  
Write short paper on a thesis about Kuhn paying particular attention to Ch. 1  
Read first half of Bruner’s *Actual Worlds, Possible Minds* |
| 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 *Actual Worlds, Possible Minds*  
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 | 1st 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 *They Say/I Say*  
Write short paper on a thesis about Chaos paying particular attention to Ch. 10  
Read first Half of *Too Big to Know*  
Work on Way of Knowing Paper |
| Week 11 | **DUE – Paper on Chaos**  
Episode 4 – A Matter of Fact from *The Day the Universe Changed* | Finish reading *Too Big to Know*  
Work on Way of Knowing Paper |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 12 | On the Scholarly Road – Burma Shaves | Read Chapter 9 in *They Say/I Say*  
Write short paper on a thesis about *Too Big to Know* paying particular attention to Ch. 9  
Work on Way of Knowing Paper |
| Week 13 | **DUE – Paper on TBTK**  
TBD | Work on Way of Knowing Paper |
| Week 14 | **DUE – Ways of Knowing Paper**  
Course Reflection Activities – Everything I Need to Know . . .  
Six Word Stories | Work on Course Reflection Paper |
| Week 15 | Course Evaluations  
Optional Happy Hour | Work on Course Reflection Paper |
| Finals | **DUE – Course Reflection Paper**  
No Meeting | |