

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
Ph.D. Program in Education**

EDRS 797 002: Document Analysis and Archival Research  
3 Credits, Spring 2016  
Monday, 7:20-10:00pm Thompson L028

**PROFESSOR(S):**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**A. Prerequisites/Corequisites**

Admission into the Ph.D. in Education Program and EDRS 810 & 812, or permission of the instructor.

**B. University Catalog Course Description**

Examines the methodological foundations of and analytical approaches to document-based research.

**C. Expanded Course Description**

In this advanced research seminar, students will learn about and conduct document analysis and archival research. Researchers across the academy employ document analysis and define “documents” in broad terms. Over the semester, students will examine these various approaches, learn about the value of documents, and conduct their own research. During the first part of the semester, students will analyze a variety of documents including newspaper articles, speeches, fiction, and images, among others. Students will simultaneously assemble their own “archive” of documents that pertains to their specific research interests (students should not enroll in this course if they do not yet have a specific topic to explore). Students will also learn about how to use computer-based resources to organize and analyze their data. During the latter portion of the semester, students will conduct their own research supported by peers in a collaborative workshop environment.

**LEARNER OUTCOMES or OBJECTIVES:**

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the value and use of documents in rigorous research.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the various analytical approaches to document-based research.
3. Assemble a coherent and thoughtful collection of documents in an archive.
4. Create and conduct an original research project rooted in document analysis and based on their archival collection.

**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS (N/A):**

Not Applicable

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Altheide, D. (2012). *Qualitative Media Analysis* (Second Edition edition). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc. (\*)

Krippendorff, K. H. (2012). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Third Edition edition). Los Angeles ; London: SAGE Publications, Inc.

McCulloch, G. (2004). *Documentary Research: In Education, History and the Social Sciences* (1 edition). London ; New York: Routledge.

Rapley, T. (2008). *Doing Conversation, Discourse and Document Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.(\*)

\* Available on-line via the GMU Library: <http://library.gmu.edu>

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:**

I expect all students to come to this advanced methods doctoral seminar on-time and prepared to engage in a lively, interactive, and respectful discussion. Coming “prepared” entails a thorough reading of the assigned materials and bringing to class a list of discussion points and questions, the readings (either in e- or hard-copy), and your laptop when asked. I expect that all assignments will be submitted on time. Students should email their completed assignments to me at [ddamico2@gmu.edu](mailto:ddamico2@gmu.edu). If a student foresees a conflict with either a particular class date or deadline, he or she should notify me in advance and make alternate arrangements.

### Essay 1: Topic Proposal and Description of Archival Collection.

In this essay (6-8 pages), students will discuss the topic they wish to study over the course of the semester. Students will describe how the proposed research project fits into their larger research agenda and how and why documents make a valuable contribution. Students must offer a clear research question(s) that motivates the work. Students should engage in a topic that they already have a working familiarity with (particularly in terms of the existing literature). In this brief essay, students do not have to offer a comprehensive literature review, but they must discuss in clear and explicit terms how the specific research questions and the methodological approach contribute to existing scholarship in the field. Be sure to discuss your theoretical framework.

Students will also identify the collection of documents they will work with (their archive). In the essay, students should discuss and describe the collection narratively, highlighting methodological issues including the selection process, reliability, representativeness, and strengths and limitations. Students must also include an appendix (not part of the page limit) that includes a list of all of the archival sources and their locations. (25 points)

### Essay 2: Discussion of Methodology, Analytical Approaches, and Article Critique

In this two-part essay (6-8 pages), students will describe, discuss, and reflect on the methodological and analytical approaches to document analysis, drawing upon assigned readings and class discussions, as well as any other sources. What is document analysis? What is its value? How does one engage in this methodological approach? Avoid jargon and make the discussion particular to your work. Rather than offering a generic textbook account, discuss how you will make use of the method and its value to your broader research interests.

In the second part of the essay, offer a critique of a published, peer-reviewed article that uses document analysis as the primary methodology. Discuss the author's analytical and methodological approach. What are the strengths and limitations? What aspects of the author's approach might you emulate in your own work? What would you do differently? Why? (25 points)

### Essay 3: AERA Memo

Attending and participating in academic conferences is part and parcel of being an education researcher. This year, the AERA conference is in Washington D.C. from April 8-

12, 2016 (<http://www.aera.net/EventsMeetings/tabid/10063/Default.aspx>). Please plan to attend at least one session. You have two choices. (10 points)

- a. You may attend a session that pertains directly to your project but does not employ document analysis. Begin your brief essay (3-5 pages) with a discussion of the panel. What are the key contributions? How might document analysis contribute to what the authors offered? How might document analysis reveal a different story? Connect the work presented to your own study that is underway.
- b. You may attend a session in which the panel (or individual paper) employs document analysis. Begin your brief essay (3-5 pages) with a discussion of the panel. What are the key contributions? Discuss the authors' approaches and findings, as well as strengths and limitations. Connect the work presented to your own study that is underway.

#### Final Essay: Conference Proposal

In this final written assignment, you will submit a conference proposal that adheres to AERA guidelines:

<http://www.aera.net/EventsMeetings/AnnualMeeting/2016AnnualMeetingCallforPaperandSessionSubmissions/tabid/15964/Default.aspx>

In 2,000 words (not including references, charts, tables, and appendices) you must discuss in clear, explicit, and compelling terms the objective, theoretical framework, methods, data, results, conclusions, and scholarly significance of your study. You should include tables and appendices that further explicate your findings and substantiate the rigor and significance of the project. Please refer to the rubric on the last page of the syllabus for more information. (30 points)

#### Conference Presentation

In the last two classes of the semester, students will present their work as they would at an academic conference such as AERA. Students will have 15 minutes to speak and should prepare an accompanying PowerPoint presentation. Students should be prepared to field questions for another 5-10 minutes. (10 points)

All papers must be typed, formatted according to the *APA Manual of Style, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.*, and emailed to me on the date stated in the syllabus.

A = 96-100	A- = 92-95	B+ = 89-91
B = 80-88	C = 75-79	F = 74 and below

## **TK20 PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT**

Every student registered for any N/A course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, N/A to Tk20 through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in Tk20 through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Tk20 (through 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 Tk20 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 George Mason University Disability Services and inform their instructor, in writing, as soon as possible. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (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:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings &amp; Assignments</b>
January 25	Course Introduction	
February 1	What are Documents; What Can We Learn from Them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Altheide, Ch 3&amp;4</li> <li>• Krippendorff, Part 1</li> <li>• McCulloch, Ch. 1</li> <li>• Rapley, Ch. 9</li> </ul>
February 8	Creating an Archive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Krippendorff, Ch. 5&amp;6</li> <li>• McCulloch, Ch. 4</li> <li>• Rapley, Ch. 2</li> </ul>
February 15	Computer-Based Resources to Organize and Analyze your Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop with University librarian.</li> <li>• Please bring your laptops to class</li> </ul>	<b>Essay 1: Topic Proposal and Description of Archival Collection Due</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kippendorff, Ch. 11</li> <li>• Please install Zotero on your laptop.</li> </ul>
February 22	Analytical and Methodological Approaches, 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical Underpinnings</li> <li>• Historical and Social Sciences Approaches</li> <li>• Content Analysis</li> <li>• Ethnographic Content Analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Altheide, Ch. 2&amp;3</li> <li>• Bowen, G. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. <i>Qualitative Research Journal</i>, 9(2), 27–40. <a href="http://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027">http://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027</a></li> <li>• Kippendorff, Ch. 4&amp;9</li> <li>• McCollough, Ch. 3</li> </ul>
February 29	Analytical and Methodological Approaches, 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of Context</li> <li>• Discourse and Conversation Analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Altheide, Ch. 6</li> <li>• McCollough, Ch. 5&amp;6</li> <li>• Rapley, Ch. 1, 6-8</li> </ul>
<i>March 3</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>No Class</i>
March 14	Critiques of Existing Scholarship	<b>Essay 2: Discussion of Methodology, Analytical Approaches, and Article Critique Due</b>
March 21	Work Night	TBD
March 28	Individual Meetings	TBD Exchange with critical peer #1

April 4	Individual Meetings	TBD Exchange with critical peer #2
<i>April 11</i>	<i>No Class</i>	<i>Attend AERA</i>
April 18	Work Night	<b>Essay 3: AERA Memo Due</b> Exchange with critical peer #3
April 25	Presentations	
May 2	Presentations	<b>Final Essay Due</b>



## ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S):

### Final Essay: Conference Proposal

<i>Criteria</i>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>Objective or purposes</b>	The author states in explicit terms the objective of the research project. The author provides a clear rationale for the study and offers succinct research questions.	The objective of the study is unclear or unstated. The author does not provide a rationale for the study or research questions.
<b>Theoretical Framework</b>	The author highlights and explains the theoretical framework that grounds the work. The connections between the theoretical framework and the research question are clear and compelling.	The author does not discuss or does not adequately explain the motivating theoretical framework. The connections between the framework and proposed study are unclear.
<b>Methods</b>	The author provides a precise and detailed discussion of document analysis, citing relevant sources. The author discusses the methodology with specific details that pertain to the study and avoids jargon.	The discussion of the methodology is absent, unclear, or jargon-laden.
<b>Data Sources</b>	The author discusses his or her archival collection and matters pertaining to the selection process, reliability, and representativeness. The author provides an appendix with the complete list of documents.	The author does not discuss his or her data sources with specificity. The discussion of selection process, reliability, and representativeness is vague or absent.
<b>Results and Conclusions</b>	The author discusses the results with clarity. The author provides tables and/or charts to highlight the primary findings. The author moves well beyond summary and offers an analysis of the data. The author uses this analysis to frame an argument. The author discusses the significance of these findings. This is the largest section of the proposal.	The results are presented partially or in vague terms. The author provides a summary but offers no substantive analysis. The author neither crafts an argument nor offers conclusions.
<b>Scholarly Significance</b>	The author places his or her study within the context of existing scholarship on the topic and is explicit and precise about the ways in which the study and findings contribute to existing work.	The author does not place his or her study within the context of existing scholarship. He or she does not consider how the findings contribute to existing scholarship.
<b>Writing</b>	The essay is 2,000 words long. The writing is clear, error-free, and adheres to proper APA guidelines.	The essay exceeds or falls far below the 2,000 word requirement. The writing is sloppy and/or grammatically incorrect. The author does not use correct proper APA guidelines.