

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
PhD Program

EDRS 836 001 – Narrative Inquiry
3 credits, Spring 2020
Wednesdays, 4:30-7:10pm, Innovation Hall, Room 316 – Fairfax Campus

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

EDRS 812¹

University Catalog Course Description

Teaches theory behind narrative inquiry and application of narrative data collection and analysis procedures in educational research. Builds students' abilities to conduct narrative data collection and analysis.

Course Overview

This advanced qualitative research methods course explores the theory and practice of Narrative Inquiry through readings, discussion, and fieldwork. Narrative Inquiry has become a popular qualitative method in education and this course will help students learn a variety of ways to both collect and analyze the data.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered using lecture, seminar, and fieldwork formats. Some online work will be included.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Articulate the historical and theoretical foundations of narrative inquiry;
2. Describe the common characteristics of narrative inquiry;
3. Discuss common practices associated with designing narrative inquiry studies;
4. Outline ethical considerations common to the narrative inquiry process;
5. Describe the various types of data collected in narrative inquiry studies;
6. Design a narrative inquiry study;
7. Conduct narrative data collection; and
8. Conduct narrative data analysis.

¹ While it is not technically required, the instructor strongly urges students to take EDRS 822 prior to enrolling in this course as it will be expected that students are ready for in depth and complex methodological thinking and writing.

Professional Standards (that are met through this course):

Not applicable

Required Texts

There are four required texts for this course:

- Kim, J. H. (2015). *Understanding narrative inquiry: The crafting and analysis of stories as research*. Sage publications.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. London: Routledge.
- Maynes, M. J., Pierce, J. L., & Laslett, B. (2012). *Telling stories: The use of personal narratives in the social sciences and history*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press..

In addition to these texts, we will be reading some primary pieces in the field of narrative inquiry and exemplary articles. For this semester, I have worked hard to introduce a broad range of readings, from various disciplines as well as inclusive of various theoretical perspectives, including but not limited to critical race theory, indigenous theory, and decolonizing theory.

Finally, you should find some articles of interest to you in the journal Narrative Inquiry. This will help you connect the methodology to your substantive field. One of your assignments will require this kind of additional reading.

Any other required readings will be posted as pdf files on Blackboard.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

You may resubmit fieldwork assignments, given my feedback in order to master the skills taught in the course, as well as to earn the grade you desire. The following weights will be utilized to compose the course grade.

Assignments/Priorities	Points (each point = 1% of final grade)
1. Participation/Attendance	10
2. Narrative Inquiry in Your World	15
a. Statement	5
b. Annotated Bibliography	10
3. Fieldwork	85
a. Data sample	10
b. Data Analyses (3)	20 each x 3 = 60 total
c. <u>Reflection on fieldwork</u>	5
	100

The points/percentages above are intended to reflect the balance of priorities in the learning process.

Your work should be original, thoughtful, rigorous, and thorough. Plagiarism in any form is not acceptable. Please err on the side of documenting and citing sources.

You will notice that your *active and engaged participation*, including *full* attendance is considered as 10% of your course grade. I have found that even one student's lack of full participation can negatively impact everyone's learning; therefore, I require full attendance and participation, except in extreme circumstances in compliance with university policy. If you must miss class, please provide appropriate documentation to me. Any absence not in line with university policy that excuses students' absences will result in a reduction of points in this portion of the course grade.

Assignment Descriptions

Narrative Inquiry In Your World

- *Statement of the potential for narratives with respect to your own research interests.* This assignment will be no more than one page long. You will articulate an interest that seems well-suited to the use of narrative in your field – articulate a well-developed research question and a justification for using narrative inquiry to investigate that question.
- *Annotated Bibliography.* You will review at least 5 research articles in your field (as similar to your topic of interest as possible) that use some form of narrative inquiry to produce an annotated bibliography. You will introduce the group of articles in 2-3 paragraphs and conclude with a 3-4 paragraph summary by noting trends, strengths, and weaknesses across the articles. Each article should be covered by a 2-3 paragraph entry.

Fieldwork Assignments

- *Data Sample.* You will collect and prepare one piece of narrative data for analysis using one of the techniques taught in class, such as personal narrative interviews, stories or myths, images, or critical events. You will submit the data (transcribed if interview, original image if appropriate, etc.) and a 1-2 page written reflection on the data collection process, describing how you collected data, your participant(s), any challenges or surprises, ethical concerns, questions about the process, etc.
- *Data Analyses.* You will submit three examples of the types of analyses we will cover in class. You will learn several ways to do each type of analysis which will give you a choice in terms of ways to do each of the above types. You will select the three analyses based on what would work best for your data and research interests. Each type of analysis has at least one example provided on Blackboard.
- *Reflection on Fieldwork.* You will submit a two-page reflection on the analyses and data collection procedures, including questions, ethical concerns, challenges, surprises, etc.

Grading

The following is the grading scale. As noted above, your final grade is based on the number of points you earn throughout the semester.

Grading Scale

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	88-89%
B	83-87%
B-	80-82%
C	70-79%
F	below 70%

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings and Learning Tasks	Assignments Due
Jan 22	Introduction What are “narratives”? How are they different from other data?	Kim, Ch. 1 https://www.methodspace.com/telling-story-narrative-inquiry-value/ Skim: W&M 1 R 1 MP&L Introduction	
Jan 29	Narrative Theory: An Introduction; a visit from Dr. Jeong Hee Kim	Kim Ch. 2 Berry & Cook, 2019 Choose one: Pinnegar & Daynes Stirling & Green 2016 Skim: W&M 3 MP&L 1	
Feb 5; class held online asynchronously	Narrative Research Design	Kim Ch. 3-4 Bruce Sonn, Stevens, and Duncan 2013 Skim: W&M 2 MP&L 2 ***Because this class will be held online asynchronously, please participate in the discussion board for this week. Post an initial response to my forum posting no later than Tuesday, 11:59pm EST of this week. Respond to at least three of your peers’ posts no later than Thursday, 11:59pm EST. Respond on your original post no later than Saturday, 11:59pm EST.	Statement of the potential for narratives with respect to your own research interests
Feb 12	Collecting Narrative Data – Starting with Personal Narrative Interviews	Kim, Ch. 5 MP&L 4 Guenette & Marshall Causton-Theoharris et al Huber 2009	
Feb 19	Collecting Narrative Data – A Spectrum of Approaches	W&M 4 MP&L 3 R2	Annotated Bibliography

		Choose one: McKnight Bullock Todd 2017 Byrne 2015	
Feb 26	Critical, Feminist, Indigenous, and Decolonizing approaches to narrative data collection; considering intersectionality	Bessarab & Ng'andu 2010 Briggs 2019 Fraser & Macdougall 2017 Iseke 2013 Kovach 2010/2019	
Mar 4	Critical Events Analysis	Kim, Ch. 6 W&M 5	Data Sample
<i>No Classes: Spring Break</i>			
Mar 18	Critical Race Methodology/Analysis – Counter Storytelling, Counter Narrative, and theoretical, methodological, and epistemological congruence	Solorzano & Yosso 2002 Other readings TBD	Critical Events Analysis
Mar 25	Structural Analysis	R4 Knight & Sweeney Cruz & Kellam Dennis 2013	Critical Race Analysis
Apr 1	Performance Analysis	R5 Norton Marais	Structural Analysis
Apr 8	Visual Analysis	R6 Goldston & Nichols	Performance Analysis
Apr 15	Theorizing Narrative Meaning and Critical Issues in Narrative Inquiry	Kim, Ch. 7-8	Visual Analysis
April 22	Validity and Ethics in Narrative Inquiry	R7 W&M 6 M,P&L 5 Byrne 2017 Crimmins 2015	
April 29	Narrative Inquiry Frameworks	Kim, Ch. 9 W&M 7 Choose one: Ochs & Capps Mishler Smith and Sparkes	Reflection on Fieldwork

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and 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/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially,

please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>.