

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
PhD Program

EDRS 836 001 – Narrative Inquiry
3 credits, Spring 2022
Thursdays, 4:30-7:10pm, Thompson Hall, Room L018 – Fairfax Campus

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

(EDRS 810^{B-} or 810^{XS}) and (EDRS 812^{B-} or 812^{XS}).

^{B-} Requires minimum grade of B-.

^{XS} Requires minimum grade of XS.

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.

Professional Standards (that are met through this course):

Not applicable

Required Texts

There are three 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.
- Mertova, P. & Webster, L.(2019). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to critical event narrative analysis in research, teaching, and professional practice*. London: Routledge.

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.

My Approach/Commitment

In this course, my primary goal is to establish a safe and inclusive environment that will support your learning. Throughout the semester, I invite your questions and critiques, desiring thoughtful dialogue to be central to our learning experience. In this course, we will work to understand a variety of positions and practices associated with the narrative inquiry process, pushing one another to question taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions. In order to facilitate our learning environment, we will each work to cultivate a classroom space that generates respectful, thoughtful, and empathetic understanding. What we come to learn is a shared experience; thus, we will all work to cultivate a community of learners.

In our learning community, I will position myself as a co-learner, as well as a teacher. Hence, if I am teaching and you are not learning, then I am not teaching. Please let me know! Throughout the semester, I welcome your feedback and will encourage your participation in an informal mid-semester evaluation. In addition, throughout the semester, you can expect feedback from me, with this feedback designed to support your growth as a qualitative researcher.

Anti-Racism Statement

I affirm that in this class, faculty and students will work together to cultivate a more equitable, inclusive, and just learning environment for all participants, regardless of racial background. We will actively seek ways to

- Make constant, conscious decisions to interrupt racism and cultivate equity, inclusion, and justice for people of all racial backgrounds, and in particular those from Black communities, indigenous communities, and other communities of color, who are most likely to bear the direct and indirect costs of systems of white supremacy;

- Interrogate histories of white supremacy and white-dominant culture, and to examine the ways in which these histories have impacted our individual beliefs, our interpersonal relationships, our institutional and structural policies and processes, and our entire society;
- Make a commitment to being responsible for our own relationships to, and actions within, systems of white supremacy; and
- Cultivate a practice of self-awareness and self-reflection that allows us to critically evaluate our own role in upholding white supremacy and identify the ways we can interrupt cycles of racism at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

The College of Education and Human Development, an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and ability status.

- We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.
- We commit to supporting students, faculty and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.
- We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.
- We believe that faculty, staff and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.
- We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking and global understanding, and become aware of their biases and how they affect their interactions with others and the world.

Names and Pronouns Use Statement

If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with me and how best to address you in class and via email. I use she/her/hers for myself and you may address me as “Dr. Call-Cummings” in email and verbally. Additionally, I invite students to approach me before or after class and during office hours. I recognize that a student’s name and pronoun(s) can change during a semester if they are in transition. I encourage students to use the tools Mason provides to change your name and pronouns on Mason records if you so choose:

<https://registrar.gmu.edu/updatingchosen-name-pronouns/>

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, 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. Statement	5
3. Mentoring visit with Dr. Call-Cummings	5
4. Data sample	10
5. Data Analyses (3)	20 each x 3 = 60 total
6. <u>Reflection on fieldwork</u>	10
	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

- *Statement of the potential for narrative inquiry 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.
- *Mentoring visit with Dr. Call-Cummings.* You will be required to meet with me at least one time during the first month of class. You will need to contact me to set a time to meet to discuss your plans for data collection and preliminary plans for analysis so that you will be on a solid path to complete the work required during the semester. No significant planning is required for the meeting. We can discuss whatever is important to you: research questions, research site, participants, approach to data collection, representation of data, plans for publication, IRB approval, etc. Please note: the fieldwork completed during this course cannot be used for presentations or publications unless IRB approval is acquired. If you are at all interested in getting IRB approval, please meet with me sooner rather than later.
- *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/policies-procedures/>

Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings and Learning Tasks	Assignments Due
Jan 27	Introduction What are “narratives”? How are they different from other data?	Kim, Ch. 1 W&M 1 R1 https://www.methodspace.com/telling-story-narrative-inquiry-value/	
Feb 3	Narrative Theory and Validity and Ethics in Narrative Inquiry	Kim Ch. 2 W&M 3, 6 R7 Berry & Cook, 2019 Byrne 2017 Crimmins 2015 <i>Foundational Piece:</i> Pinnegar & Daynes	
Feb 10	Narrative Research Design	Kim Ch. 3-4 Bruce Fraser & Macdougall 2017 Keith Ch 3 2019	Statement of the potential for narratives with respect to your own research interests
Feb 17	Collecting Narrative Data (1) <i>Guest speaker: Becca Brusseau</i>	Kim, Ch. 5 Guenette & Marshall Causton-Theoharris et al Huber 2009 Rosenthal 2006	
Feb 24	Collecting Narrative Data (2) <i>Guest speaker: Steph Dean</i>	W&M 4 R2 McKnight Bullock Todd 2017 Goldston and Nichols 2009	
Mar 3	Collecting Narrative Data (3) <i>Guest speaker: Khaseem Davis</i>	Bessarab & Ng’andu 2010 Sonn, Stevens, and Duncan 2013 Iseke 2013 Kovach 2010/2019	
Mar 10	Narrative Analysis: Critical Events Analysis	Kim, Ch. 6 W&M 5	
<i>No Classes: Spring Break</i>			
Mar 24	Narrative Analysis: Critical Race Analysis, Intersectional Analysis, Resistance Analysis	Solorzano & Yosso 2002 Anders 2011 Rainey Ch. 3	Data Sample
Mar 31	Narrative Analysis: Approaches to Structural Analysis	R4 Knight & Sweeney Cruz & Kellam	Critical Events Analysis

		Dennis 2013	
Apr 7	Narrative Analysis: Performance Analysis and Visual Analysis <i>Guest speaker: Giovanni Dazzo</i>	R5, R6 Norton Marais Sava and Nuutinen 2003 Review: Goldston & Nichols	Critical Race Analysis
Apr 14	Theorizing Narrative Meaning and Critical Issues in Narrative Inquiry <i>(class held on Zoom)</i> <i>Visit from Dr. Jeong-Hee Kim</i>	Kim, Ch. 7-8	Structural Analysis
Apr 21	<i>No Class Meeting: AERA</i>		
April 28	Writing Narrative(ly) and Issues of Representation	Dean & Call-Cummings, 2021 Other readings TBD	Performance Analysis Visual Analysis
May 5	Roundtable discussion with recent Mason grads who completed narrative dissertations	Choose 1-2: Cox dissertation Dean dissertation proposal* Graham dissertation* Galanti dissertation Hauber-Özer dissertation* Rainey dissertation	Reflection on Fieldwork due no later than May 7, 2022.

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 VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments..> 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, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 or support measures 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/> .