George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
PhD Program

EDRS 812, Section 001 - Qualitative Methods in Educational Research
3 credits, Spring 2023

W, 4:30-7:10
Innovation Hall 203

Faculty
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Prerequisite:
Successful completion (with a grade of B or higher) of EDRS 810, or equivalent coursework or experience.

University Catalog Course Description:
Teaches how to apply qualitative data collection and analysis procedures in educational research, including ethnographic and other field-based methods, and unobtrusive measures.

Course Overview:
This course is an introduction to the field and practice of qualitative inquiry. 'Qualitative research' is an umbrella term that encompasses many methodologies and methods, many of which aim to understand everyday social life as it occurs in its natural environment. In this course, you will be introduced to some of the varied perspectives related to qualitative inquiry, as well as the theoretical and historical foundations of qualitative research. Further, you will have an opportunity learn about and practice some of the research methods that are common to qualitative research. As such, this course is also practical in scope, as you will complete a 'mini-research' study. Finally, this course aims to prepare you for more advanced study of qualitative inquiry.

Course Delivery Method:
Learning activities include the following:
1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

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

1. Articulate the historical and theoretical foundations of qualitative inquiry;
2. Describe the common characteristics of qualitative research;
3. Discuss common practices associated with designing qualitative research studies;
4. Outline ethical considerations common to the qualitative research process;
5. Describe the various types of data collected in qualitative research studies;
6. Create an interview protocol;
7. Carry out interviews;
8. Discuss the basic characteristics commonly associated with case study, participatory action research, grounded theory, and ethnography.
9. Discuss the process of preparing qualitative data for analysis;
10. Describe the qualitative data analysis process (specifically associated with 'coding' and 'thematic analysis');
11. Discuss the ways in which digital tools might support the qualitative research process;
12. Outline the arguments associated with establishing quality in qualitative research studies; and
13. Describe issues related to representation and writing up findings in qualitative research.

Required Texts:
There is one required text for the course:
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2019). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological.* Sage Publications.

Recommended Texts
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.

Supplemental References and Other Resources:
While the following resources are not required, they may be useful as you progress through the course.
- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th edition.). American Psychological Association.

Necessary Equipment:
- You will need access to a qualitative data analysis program for this course. You can access NVivo in the computer labs in Thompson. You can also download free trials of several programs:
- NVivo
- MaxQDA
- Dedoose

Recommended Equipment:
- We recommend you gain access to an audio recorder with software that allows you to listen to a recording from your computer. This will be important for the interview project. There are a variety of ways that you can securely and safely record your interview and subsequently transcribe it. One way would be to use your cell phone. There are several at no or limited cost.

- *However,* Zoom can also transcribe recorded meetings. Ensure the participants know they are being video and audio recorded. There are additional ways to record and transcribe verbal conversations that we will discuss in class.
- InqScribe (https://www.inqscribe.com/) and Otter.ai (https://otter.ai/) are great tools to support the transcription process. There is a free, trial version that will likely suffice for the purposes of the course. Some students have commented that the use of a transcription pedal has been helpful to them. Others suggest using a third-party transcription service. We will talk about the implications of all of these during class so you can make a decision that's best for you and your situation and goals.

Web Resources and Networks:
There are several web resources that you may find useful. Many of these sites have listservs that you can join if you are interested in receiving regular updates and information regarding qualitative research methodologies and methods. I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with these useful resources.

- The International Institute for Qualitative Methodology's Webinar series: http://www.iiqm.ualberta.ca/WebinarSeries/MasterClassWebinarSeries.aspx
- Methodspace (http://www.methodspace.com/)
- The Qualitative Report (http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/index.html
- Top Qualitative Research Blogs (http://www.qualitative360.com/news-and-blogs/11-editor-s-pick-top-qualitative-research-blogs)

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).

As an 800-level course, this course requires a significant time commitment. The final project requires a significant amount of time.

Assignments	Points
1. Two in-class activities	10/each
2. Panel Poster Presentation	20
3. Positionality Statement	10
4. Interview Project Sections (20 points)	
a. Purpose Statement/RQs:	5
b. Interview Protocol:	5
c. Initial Interview Report:	5
d. Initial Analysis Report:	5
5. Final Interview Project	25

Two In-class Activities (10 points each):
Although we will engage in weekly activities, there will be two in-class activities that will count toward your final grade. These activities cannot be made up if you miss class during that session.

Interdisciplinary Qualitative Poster Panel Presentation (20 points)

You will create a poster to present to the class on a minimum of three qualitative articles related to a topic or qualitative research design of your interest. See Blackboard for rubric and template.

Positionality Statement (10 points):
A central aspect of the qualitative research process is awareness of your own position as a researcher and the ways in which your position shapes and informs the research process (often referred to as 'researcher positionality'). See Blackboard for assignment guidelines.

Interview Project Sections (20 points):
This semester you will not simply read about qualitative research, but you will also carry out a semester-long research study. Throughout the semester you will submit sections of your project on which I will provide feedback. Use this as an opportunity to inform your practice and enhance your final submission.

You will conduct a minimum of **three** in-person or remote interviews.

IRB approval is not required when data is being collected and analyzed for the purposes of a class.

a. Purpose Statement and Research Question: You will develop a purpose statement and research question for your field work project. See Blackboard for assignment guidelines.
b. Interview Protocol: You will: (1) briefly describe who you will be interviewing, and (2) create a list of the questions that you will pose according to the protocol work we do in class. See Blackboard for assignment guidelines.
c. Initial Interview Report: This report will focus on your first interview. See Blackboard for assignment guidelines.
d. Initial Analysis Report: You will carry out analysis of the data you collected through your both observations and interviews. You will be required to engage in multiple analysis approaches across all of your data sources, including your observations and interview transcripts. See Blackboard for assignment guidelines.

Final Interview Project (25 points):
You will use feedback provided throughout the semester to submit a final version of your interview project that includes (a) title of project, (b) purpose statement and research questions, (c) interview protocol, (d) interview report, (e) analysis, and (f) limitations and future research. See Blackboard for assignment guidelines.

Grading Policy
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% - 92.9%
B+   87% - 89.9%
B   83% - 86.9%

B-   80% - 82.9%
C+   77% - 79.9%
C   74% - 76.9%

Professional Dispositions
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Course Policies and Expectations
    Attendance/Participation: Students are expected to attend and participate in all scheduled classes. In-class activities cannot be made up for points.

    Late Work: <u>There will be a 10% deduction in grade per day for work submitted late</u>. Students may submit work early if they would like to receive instructor feedback. At the instructor's discretion, students may be given the opportunity to resubmit an assignment, assuming the assignment is submitted on time. Resubmitted assignments are not eligible for full credit.

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/**

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies
- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see http://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 http://ods.gmu.edu/).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced 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 http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

DATE	TOPIC/FOCUS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1 Jan 25	Introducing the course and qualitative research	• Syllabus • See BB	
Week 2 Feb 1	Design: Basic Interpretative Building the conceptual framework	• R & C 1, 2, 4 • See BB	
Week 3 Feb 8	Design: Phenomenology Sampling	• R & C 3	**Positionality Statement**
Week 4 Feb 15	Design: Grounded theory Creating interview protocols	• R & C 5 • See BB	**Purpose Statement/Research question(s)**
Week 5 Feb 22 ****online**	Design: Ethnography Ethical considerations in qualitative research	• R & C 7 • See BB	**Interview Protocol**
Week 6 March 1 ****online**	Design: Case study Data collection	• See BB	
Week 7 March 8	Panel sessions	Morgan and Sascha facilitate time and take notes	**Panel Session**
Week 8 March 15	No Class/Break!		
Week 9 March 22	Design: Narrative Data preparation		**Initial Interview Report**
Week 10 March 29	Design: Critical Data Analysis	• R & C 8 • See BB	
Week 11 April 5	Making Design Decisions Data Analysis	• R & C 9 • See BB	
Week 12 April 12	Writing week: 1:1 Meetings, by appointment, as needed		
Week 13 April 19	Doing a qualitative dissertation	• R & C 11	
Week 14 April 26	Making Design Decisions Disseminating information	• R & C 10	**Initial Analysis Report**
Week 15 May 3	No Class/Optional Office Hours		
Week 16 May 10			**Final Project Due**