

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
PhD Program
EDRS 812 003
QUALITATIVE METHODS IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Fall 2011

Date/Time: August 30 – December 6 (Tuesday, 7:20 -10:00 pm)

Class Location: Research Hall 202

Blackboard: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>

Dr. Lynne Schrum (703) 993-4047 (o); (703) 865-5712 (h); (301) 332-4203 (m) Office: Robinson A 337 Office Hours: Tues. 5-7pm & by appointment lschrum@gmu.edu	Graduate Student Assistant Mary English 703-862-0329 menglis2@masonlive.gmu.edu
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Course Description

Prerequisite(s): Satisfactory completion of EDUC 810 or equivalent, or permission of instructor. Prerequisite enforced by registration system.

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

Nature of Course Delivery:

Students in this course will participate in a learning environment that will model various teaching strategies, including lecture, discussions, group activities, individual projects, and deep dialogue with the professor about individual aims and research goals.

Course Goals

1. Understand the essential characteristics of qualitative research and the key ways in which this approach differs from other research strategies.
2. Understand the assumptions embodied in the major approaches to qualitative research, and the implications of these for doing and evaluating qualitative studies.
3. Design and carry out a small-scale qualitative study.
4. Communicate (both verbally and in writing) the design, process, and results of such a study.

Learner Outcomes

- Develop and critique a personal philosophy of qualitative research in relation to general perspectives of inquiry.
- Identify appropriate research designs for various forms of qualitative research.
- Identify appropriate methods of data collection and analysis, depending on purpose and design of

a research project.

- Develop a pilot study to practice data collection and analysis techniques.
- Situate your study in an appropriate literature base and field of study.
- Identify appropriate avenues for dissemination of your research.
- Critique your research project and suggest areas for improvement.

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to the following five values: collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

Student Expectations

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].

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/>].

Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].

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.

Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor. Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

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/>].

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/>].

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Required Texts

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication style manual* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: APA.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (4th ed.). New York: Allyn & Bacon/Longman.

Maxwell, J. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wolcott, H. F. (2009). *Writing up qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Other readings as assigned! Some required readings are in supplemental texts; please check Blackboard for additional readings not included in the required texts.

Supplemental Readings

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2007). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schram, T. H. (2006). *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Course Structure

There are four main components of the course:

1. A **class meeting** once a week. The first part of each class will be devoted to mini-lectures on key topics, demonstrations, class exercises, and general discussion. Each class will encourage **discussion** of qualitative research theory and practice. We will use this time to explore the readings more deeply and critically, and we will consider alternative applications. I encourage you to participate thoughtfully and deliberately to this process.
2. **Assigned readings**. These readings are an essential part of the course; they provide necessary preparation for class lectures, activities, and discussions, and in addition they cover important aspects of qualitative research which there simply isn't time to discuss in detail in class.
3. Assignments through the semester to gain experience and practice in conducting and analyzing qualitative data. (See below).
4. An individual qualitative **research project**. General guidelines for this project are provided below; specific guidelines for the project assignments are posted on Blackboard.

General Information

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the fundamental concepts and techniques of qualitative research. Although the emphasis of this course is on qualitative research methods and methodology, there is considerable attention to the philosophy and theory of qualitative inquiry.

This class will be collaborative and interactive—be prepared for discussion! Questions are encouraged and expected, and alternative viewpoints are welcome. I value contributions to our discussions and ask

you to speak up. However, I do expect you to support your assertions. Also, I expect all of us to create an educational climate of open debate that is **respectful and democratic**. Further, be familiar with the [GMU Honor System and Code](#). **Your participation as a class member will be evaluated, not by the *quantity* of your contribution, but by the *quality* and *integrity* of your contribution.**

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I suggest that you keep a **journal** throughout this course to document questions and ideas about the process of qualitative research. Notes about class discussion should be included, but personal memos about methodology and questions for group-work are encouraged. This journal is for personal reflection only and will not be turned in or graded.

Reading assignments are listed for the day on which they will be discussed. Also note assignment due dates. Contact me if you have questions or concerns about this material. I am available via e-mail for scheduled appointments.

NOTE: When printing **non-graded assignments and general course materials**, I encourage you to print front and back and/or use recycled paper. Otherwise, please use APA standards for all papers.

FYI: The GMU administration suggests all University community members be familiar with campus emergency procedures. (An emergency response poster is available in each classroom.) For more information or to register with the Emergency Alert System, visit the following link: <https://alert.gmu.edu/>.

Please Note: Your assignments are only accepted electronically. You must name your file in the following way:

Yourlastname_assignment

For example, for the observation assignment, mine would be: schrum_observation

Assignments

Note Assignments are due on Sunday at 8pm	Points
Research Proposal (Due: 10/23) Components 1. Rationale and research question (Due: 9/11) 2. Beginning Literature review Draft (Due: by 10/23) 3. Context and Site Selection (Due: 9/25) 4. Data Collection Plan (Due 10/2) 5. Data Analysis Plan (Due 10/16)	20
Final Research Paper (Due: 12/9)	50
Researcher Perspective Memo (Due 9/25)	15
Interview Activity (Due 11/6)	05
Chapter Discussion/Class Participation	15
Total	105

1. **Participation 15% of grade.** Note: Attendance does not equal participation.
 - Prepared for discussion and tasks. This includes reading material and attending any team meetings.
 - Maintains balance between speaking and listening roles. I do not expect you to ‘time’ yourself; be aware, though, ‘strong’ personalities overpower a discussion. Monitor your team and classroom interactions!
 - Listens attentively and offers constructive feedback. All contributions should be considered and negotiated.
 - Accepts diversity in viewpoints and negotiates differences. You are not expected to agree with one another at all times! However, we will be respectful and professional.
 - Shares leadership roles. While it is comfortable to let ‘managers’ and ‘organizers’ plan strategy, this will result in a vision defined by one person or group.

2. **Research Proposal (Due: 10/23) (20%)**
Components:
 1. Rationale and research question (Due: 9/11)
 2. Beginning Literature review Draft (Due: 10/23)
 3. Context and Site Selection (Due: 9/25)
 4. Data Collection Plan (Due 10/2)
 5. Data Analysis Plan (Due 10/16)

3. **Researcher Perspective/Identity Memo (Due 9/25)**
Each student will identify her/his own perspectives on the topic selected, background, and possible conflicts

4. **Interview Activity (Due 11/6)**
Individually, students will collect qualitative data on one small research question through two 30 minute interviews, code and interpret the data, and write a short report (2-3 pages maximum). This does not have to be related to the focus of your Research Proposal. We do this for practice; please send Lynne and Mary your short proposal for this with a few interview questions, for approval.

5. **Final Research Paper (Due: 12/9)**

Evaluation Criteria

40% **Reflective Depth and Critical Assessment:** avoids surface presentation and summary of topic; identifies and meets need relevant to discipline; provides neutral presentation of strengths and weaknesses of topic; evaluates strengths and weaknesses; states and supports position.

40% **Integration and Support:** provides comprehensive connections across course material (i.e., readings, discussions, previous learning, and personal experiences); balances theory and practice; provides appropriate and adequate support for ideas, facts, and propositions.

20% **Technical Soundness:** characterizes professionalism and scholarship; attends to audience composition and needs; exhibits drafting and editing appropriate for graduate-level work. Research proposal and final paper should conform to APA 5th edition.

DATE, Topics, Assignments	Readings
08/30 Introduction to the Course and to Qualitative Research Introduction to Observations	We will overview the syllabus and course requirements and discuss general philosophical and conceptual components of qualitative inquiry. Adler & Adler (1998) Observational techniques (Blackboard)
09/06 The Nature of Qualitative Research; Observations in JC 7:20-8:20; Alignment of RQ, Data Sources, etc.	Assigned: Creswell Chap 1 & 2; Glesne (2006) Introduction and Chaps. 1 & 2 Maxwell (2005) Chaps. 1 & 2; Strauss & Corbin (1990) Getting started and Theoretical sensitivity (Blackboard) Recommended: Smith & Pell (2003) Parachute science (Blackboard)
09/13 Choosing a Design Framework DUE: 9/11 Research Project rationale and Research Questions (suggested length: 2-3pp.) (non-graded)	Assigned: Creswell Chap 3; Maxwell (2005) Chaps. 3 & 4; Agee (2010) Developing qualitative research questions (Blackboard) Reinharz (1997) Who am I? (Blackboard);
09/20 Site and Participant Selection	Assigned: Creswell Chap 4; Maxwell (2005); Chap. 5; Bogden & Biklen (2007) Fieldwork (Blackboard) LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch (1993) Selecting and sampling in qualitative research (Blackboard) Patton (2002) Purposeful sampling (Blackboard)
09/27 Research Relationships and Ethics DUE: 9/25- Research Project Context/Site Selection (suggested length: 2-3pp.) (non-graded)	Assigned: Creswell Chap 5; Glesne (2006) Chaps. 5 & 6; Reybold (2003-2004) Faculty socialization and the emergence of research ethos in Education (Blackboard) Recommended: Eckert (1989) Field work in the high school (Blackboard); Fine (1998). Working the hyphens (Blackboard)
10/04 Discussion and Review DUE: 10/2 Research Project data collection plan) (non-graded)	Presentations from Creswell book in teams;
10/11 No Class	
10/18 Interviewing DUE: 10/16 Data analysis plan (non-graded)	Assigned: Creswell Chap 6; Glesne (2006) Chap. 4; Maxwell (2005) Chap. 5; Fontana & Frey (1998). Interviewing (Blackboard) Recommended: Eder & Fingerson (2001) Interviewing children (Blackboard) Johnson (2001) In-depth interviewing (Blackboard) Seidman (1998) Transcribing interviews (Blackboard)
10/25 Observations, Documents, & Technological Tools DUE: 10/23 Research Proposal (including HSRB Approval Form) due (max length for proposal narrative: 5 pp.)	Assigned: Creswell Chap 7; Glesne (2006) Chap. 3; Wolcott Chapter 1; Hodder, Chap. 4 (Blackboard)
11/1 Initial Analysis & Interpretation DUE: 10/30 Draft Beginning Literature review (non-graded)	Assigned: Creswell Chap 8; Becker (1998) Strange talk (Blackboard) Corbin & Strauss (1990) Grounded theory research (Blackboard) Glesne (2006) Chap. 7 Maxwell (2005) Chap. 5; Recommended: Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (1995) Chap. 6
11/8 Interpretive, Narrative, and Case Analysis DUE: 11/6 Interview Activity Report	Assigned: Creswell Chap 10; Wolcott, Chaps 2 & 3; Alexander (2003) Interpretive ethnography of Black Barbershop (Blackboard) Maxwell & Miller (2008) Categorizing and connecting strategies (Blackboard) Wolcott (1994) Interpretation (Blackboard);
11/15 Discussion and Review (Data Collection/Analysis)	Creswell Chap 9; Wolcott Chaps 4; We will continue our discussion of data collection and analysis techniques and applications,

	particularly in relation to your questions and projects.
11/22 DUE: Data Collection and Analysis Memo due (suggested length: 5-7 pp.) (non-graded)	Assigned: Wolcott Chap 5; Flyvberg (2006) Five misunderstandings (Blackboard) Glesne (2006) Chap. 7 Maxwell (2005) Chap. 6; Recommended: Polkinghorne (2007) (Blackboard)
11/29 Writing Up a Qualitative Study Due: Deliver draft project report to your partner (non-graded) electronically	Assigned: Glesne (2006) Chaps. 8-10; Wolcott Chap 6; Phelan, Davidson, & Yu (1998) Donna Carlyle (Blackboard) Phelan, Yu, & Davidson (1998) Navigating the psychosocial pressures of adolescence (Blackboard)
12/6 Evaluating and Revising a Qualitative Study DUE 12/4: Return draft project report to your partner with feedback (non-graded) Your final paper is due to me by Friday, December 9 at midnight	Wrapping up, questions, etc. plus pot luck!