

**TE931 – Introduction to Qualitative Methods
in Educational Research
Spring Semester, 2009
Mondays, 4:10 – 7:00 pm, 218 Bessey Hall**

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Office Hours: Mon. 3:00 – 3:45 p.m.
Fri. 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.
By appointment

Course Description and Goals

This course provides an overview of qualitative methodology in educational research and other fields. We will read about and discuss different approaches to qualitative research, examine research studies, and engage in qualitative research. After exploring the characteristics of qualitative research, the course will investigate different approaches to qualitative research: ethnography, case study, phenomenological inquiry and narrative research, critical research and postmodern research. Questions of epistemology, positionality, purpose, and ethics will be addressed, and the tensions surrounding these in each approach will be considered. The course is meant to be an introduction to qualitative research in education. The central goals are a) to enable you to become a critical reader of qualitative research; b) to assist you in developing an understanding of the purposes, tools, assumptions and limitations of qualitative research; and c) to prepare you for further study and engagement in qualitative research.

Working Assumptions for the Course

1. We will respect one another. Our beliefs, values, and ideas often differ from one another because we draw from different life experiences. In this class, we will discuss, question, and challenge ideas, but we need to be careful not to attack individuals or to create an unsafe, unproductive space.
2. We will challenge our own beliefs, values, and ideas. We need to be open to challenging our own prejudices, assumptions, and interpretations. We also need to expect to discuss things we often do not discuss in public, but still feel strongly about. It is alright to feel uncomfortable when we do so.
3. We are here for a positive educational experience. Please ask questions, share your thoughts, and make this class meaningful for yourself.

Course Requirements

Class attendance and participation. The success of this class depends heavily on students completing all reading assignments and written exercises in a thorough, thoughtful, and critical manner. This will require you to a) take notes while reading assignments, b) write questions that arise as you read, and c) note points of contention/disagreement as you prepare to actively participate in class discussions. There will be relatively little lecturing in the traditional sense, as the course is intended to operate more like a seminar. Therefore, it is vital that students a) prepare for class by reading the assignments and b) participate in class discussions and activities. Class attendance and participation will constitute 10% of your grade. Note!! The 10% is not automatic. If you come to class and do not participate on a regular basis, do not expect to receive the full 10%.

Course Requirements

Class facilitation. Each student is expected to co-lead the class's examination of one class reading. This will consist of the following: introducing key topics and issues to the class and leading a discussion centered on questions intended to highlight themes from the reading. Every co-leader is responsible for turning in a typed outline (from their respective reading) that indicates themes, probing questions, and methods designed to engage colleagues. You are encouraged to use creative classroom activities to highlight themes and ideas about the readings. However, your creativity should not overshadow the essence of the readings. I strongly encourage you to think creatively about how to carry out these activities. Class facilitation will constitute 10% of the grade for the course.

Written assignments. Students are expected to prepare all written assignments for the course. All assignments must be typed double space, size 12 font with 1-inch margins all around. Please send your assignment to me via e-mail (pyoungs@msu.edu) on the due date.

The first paper is a **reflective/analytical** piece that demonstrates your understanding of the research process and your grasp of theory as it relates and/or applies to qualitative research. For this paper, you will select a non-required course reading and analyze/critique it in terms of the criteria for "assessing" qualitative research that we discuss in class. The paper should be 5 to 7 pages in length and it constitutes 30% of your grade. **This paper is due via e-mail on Monday, March 16th.**

The final paper is a report of a **mini-qualitative research project**. This assignment is based on a research project that you will be working on throughout the semester. The paper includes the following components:

- an introduction that identifies your purpose and central research questions;
- a brief review of the literature in which you locate the contribution your study makes to the literature;
- a description of and rationale for your methodology/strategy of inquiry;
- a description of your data collection and analysis strategies; and
- a report of the findings

You are expected to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate applications of theory and methods to conducting a qualitative research study. You must use additional resources such as scholarly journal articles and books as well as course materials. You must gain first-hand insight from face-to-face interviews and participant observation. The intent is to provide you, as well as your classmates, with new and interesting insights on your topic. The one to two classes will provide an opportunity to present your key ideas and themes to the class. **The write up of the mini project/study is due via e-mail on Thursday, May 7th.**

Fieldnotes and Interviews. In addition to these graded assignments, throughout the semester you will be required to bring field notes and interview data to class with you. Though I will not grade these materials, they will be the central focus of much of our work together and they form the basis for your mini-research study. I will provide you with feedback periodically on these materials.

Note: I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know if you need any accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments to enable you to fully participate.

Evaluation

Rubrics will be used to assess written assignments according to the following criteria: consistency with the assignment; development and organization of the argument; clarity of written expression; and use of sources/resources. You will receive the rubrics in class well before the assignments are due.

Class participation will be evaluated on the following criteria: thoughtfulness of contributions (including questions), respectful consideration of and response to others' comments/questions, and demonstrated mastery of the reading.

The assessment of your class facilitation will be based on the comprehensiveness of your presentation, its clarity, and your efforts to invoke student participation when you co-lead the class discussion.

Grades will be based on the following:

Attendance and Participation	10%
Co-leading Discussion (one class)	10%
Reflection Paper	30%
Final Paper	50%

Grade Distribution

93-100	=	4.0
85-92	=	3.5
77-84	=	3.0
69-76	=	2.5

Required Texts:

*Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction, 3rd edition*. Boston: Pearson.

*Ferguson, A. (2000). *Bad boys: Public schools in the making of black masculinity*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. (The paperback version may have a 2001 publication date).

*Available in the Student Bookstore (421 Grand River, E.Lansing; 517-351-4210)

Other course readings will be available in the 5th floor copy center in Erickson Hall (hard copies and CDs) and online as URL links.

Course Schedule

Jan. 12 – Course Introduction and Overview

Discussion of participants' backgrounds and interests
Review of syllabus, objectives of course
Suggestions for identifying research sites and obtaining access

Jan. 19 – No Class: Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Jan. 26 – Characteristics of and Tensions within Qualitative Research, Historical Perspectives

Readings

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. 3rd edition. Boston: Pearson.

Chapters 1 and 2 required.

Denzin, N.K. , & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition (**pp.1-32 required**). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Optional:

Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition (pp. 191-215.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Merriam, S. (2002). Assessing and evaluating qualitative research. In S. Merriam (Ed.) *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis* (pp.18-33). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Research Groups: Thinking about Your Mini-study: What? Where? Whom? Why? How?

Feb. 2 – Subjectivity, Reflexivity, and Positionality in Qualitative Research

Readings

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. 3rd edition. Boston: Pearson.

Chapter 3 required.

Deyhle, D.L., Hess, G.A., & LeCompte, M.D. (1992). Approaching ethical issues for qualitative researchers in education. In M. LeCompte, W. Millroy, & J. Preissle (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education* (**pp.598-632 required**). San Diego: Academic Press.

Geertz, C. (1988). Being there. In *Works and lives: The anthropologist as author*. (**pp.129-149 required**). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Optional:

Thorne, B. (2004). “You still takin’ note?” Fieldwork and problems of informed consent. In S. Hesse-Biber and P. Leavy (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice* (pp. 159-176). New York: Oxford University Press.

Research Groups: Discussion of Research Questions, Sites, and “Entering the Field”

Feb. 9 – Ethnography I

Readings

- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. (pp.1-22 required). London: Routledge.
- Delamont, S. (1992). *Fieldwork in educational settings: Methods, pitfalls, and perspectives*. (Ch.2, pp.10-28 required). London: Falmer Press.
- Ferguson, A. (2000). *Bad boys: Public schools in the making of black masculinity*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press (pp.1-96 required).

Feb. 16 – Ethnography II

Readings

- Ferguson, A. (2000). *Bad boys: Public schools in the making of black masculinity*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press (pp.97-235 required).
- Van Maanen, J. (2004). An end to innocence: The ethnography of ethnography. In S. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice* (pp.427-446 required). New York: Oxford University Press.

Optional:

- Delamont, S. (1992). *Fieldwork in educational settings: Methods, pitfalls, and perspectives*. (Ch. 3, pp.29-49). London: Falmer Press.

Research Groups: First Observation Due – Sharing and Critiquing First Field Notes

Feb. 23 – Ethnography III: The Ethnography of Language

Readings

- Hymes, D. (1964). Introduction: Toward Ethnographies of Communication. *American Anthropologist*, 66(6), pt. 2. pp.1-34 required.
- Heath, S.B. (1983). The townspeople, In *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms* (pp. 236-262 required). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dyson, A.H. (2003). “Welcome to the Jam:” Popular culture, school literacy, and the making of childhoods. *Harvard Educational Review*, 73(3): pp.328–361 required.

March 2 – Case Study I

Readings

- Stake, R. (2004). Qualitative case study. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition (pp.443-466 required). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R. (2003). Designing case studies. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4th edition (Ch.2, pp. 24-65 required). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Anagnostopoulos, D. (2006). “Real students” and “true demotes”: Ending social promotion and the moral ordering of urban high schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43(1): pp. 5-42 required.

Research Group: Second Observation Due – Observing Language

March 9 – No Class: MSU Spring Break

March 16 – Case Study II: Grounded Theory

Readings

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. 3rd edition. Boston: Pearson.

Chapter 4 required.

Charmaz, K. (2004). Grounded theory. In S. Hesse-Biber and P. Leavy (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice* (pp. 496-521 required). New York: Oxford University Press.

Jones, S.R., & McKewn, M.K. (2002). A conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity. In S. Merriam (Ed.) *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis* (pp. 163-177 required). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Reflective/Analytic Paper Due

March 23 – Case Study III

Readings

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*, 3rd edition. (Chapter 2, pp. 15-27 required; Chapter 6, pp.78-94 required). New York: Teachers College Press.

Coburn, C.E. (2001). Collective sensemaking about reading: How teachers mediate reading policy in their professional communities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 23(2), pp. 145-170 required.

Newmann, F.M., King, M.B., & Youngs, P. (2000). Professional development that addresses school capacity: Lessons from urban elementary schools. *American Journal of Education*, 108(4), pp. 259-299 required.

Optional:

Metz, M.H. (1990), Real school: A universal drama amid disparate experience. In D.E. Mitchell & M.E. Goertz (Eds.), *Education Politics for the New Century*, (pp. 75-91), (London: Falmer Press).

March 30 – Phenomenological Inquiry, Narrative Research

Readings

Barritt, L., Beekman, T., Bleeker, H., & Mulderij, K. (1983). The world through children's eyes: Hide and seek and peekaboo. *Phenomenology and Pedagogy*, 1(2), required.

Greenwalt, K. (2008). Through the camera's eye: A phenomenological analysis of teacher subjectivity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(2), pp.387-399 required.

Connelly, F. & Clandinin, D.J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5): pp. 2-14 required.

Juzwik, M.M. (2004). What rhetoric can contribute to an ethnopoetics of narrative performance in teaching: The significance of parallelism in one teacher's narrative. *Linguistics and education*, 15: pp. 359-386 required.

Optional:

Dunbar, C. (2001). From alternative school to incarceration. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7 (2): 158-170.

Research Groups: Interviews Due

April 6 – Critical Research, Critical Race Theory

Readings

- Dunbar, C. (2008). Critical race theory and indigenous methodologies. In N. Denzin, Y. Lincoln, & L.T. Smith (Eds.), *The handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies* (pp. 85-99 required). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Alexander, B.K. (2008). Queer(y)ing the post-colonial through the West(ern). In N. Denzin, Y. Lincoln, & L.T. Smith (Eds.), *The handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies* (101-133 required). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dillard, C. P. (2008). When the ground is black, the ground is fertile: Exploring endarkened feminist epistemology and healing methodologies of the spirit. In N. Denzin, Y. Lincoln, & L.T. Smith (Eds.), *The handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies* (pp. 277-292 required). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

April 13 – Postmodern/Poststructuralist Research

Readings

- St. Pierre, E.A. (2002). Methodology in the fold and the irruption of transgressive data. In S. Merriam (Ed.) *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis* (pp. 399-419 required). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Prior, L. (2004). Following in Foucault's footsteps: Text and context in qualitative research. In S. Hesse-Biber and P. Leavy (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice* (pp. 317-333 required). New York: Oxford University Press.

Optional:

- Gore, J.M. (1994). Enticing challenges: An introduction to Foucault and educational discourses. In R.A. Martusewicz & W.M. Reynolds (Eds.), *Inside/Out: Contemporary Critical Perspectives in Education*, pp. 109-118. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Research Groups: Interviews Due

April 20 – Data Analysis, Presentations of Preliminary Findings

Readings

- Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. 3rd edition. Boston: Pearson.
Chapter 7 required.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. (pp.193-204 required). London: Routledge.
- Delamont, S. (1992). *Fieldwork in educational settings: Methods, pitfalls, and perspectives*. (Ch.11, pp.149-162 required). London: Falmer Press.

Optional:

- Deyhle, D.L., Hess, G.A., & LeCompte, M.D. (1992). Approaching ethical issues for qualitative researchers in education. In M. LeCompte, W. Millroy, & J. Preissle (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education* (pp.632-639). San Diego: Academic Press.

Research Groups: Data Analysis – Bring in Field Data

April 27 – Reporting Qualitative Research

Readings:

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. 3rd edition. Boston: Pearson.

Chapter 8 required.

Merriam, S. (1988). Writing the case study report. In *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach* (pp. 185-206 required). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Course Evaluations

May 4 – Potluck

May 7 – Final Papers Due