EDCP 773 – Designing Qualitative Research in Counseling and Student Affairs Contexts
Spring Semester 2013
Thursdays 4:15pm-7pm
Benjamin 3236

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Course Introduction and Objectives
This course provides an introduction to the philosophical and epistemological foundations that guide qualitative inquiry, as well as to the methodologies and methods associated with qualitative research design in student affairs and counseling contexts. In this course, students will have an opportunity to learn about qualitative methodologies and synthesize that knowledge through the construction of a research proposal. The objectives for this course are as follows:

1. Understand the role of research in guiding one’s practice, particularly within ethical, historical, and political contexts
2. Critically analyze the components of qualitative research studies
3. Develop a working knowledge and evaluate the effectiveness of various qualitative research methodologies
4. Critically reflect on one’s own positionality and standpoint in relation to qualitative inquiry (e.g., power differentials, researching within or outside one’s own identities, framing questions, and interpreting findings)
5. Provide substantive and constructive feedback through a peer review process
6. Formulate a qualitative research study

Required Readings


Please bring a notebook or 3 sheets of paper for every class session.

All other readings available on Canvas.

Methods of Instruction and Course Expectations
The course will employ a variety of approaches to instruction and relies heavily on student participation and discussion. Course requirements include written and oral assignments that involve individual and group work, as well as class presentations.

1 Please Note: Dr. Espino generally responds to email with 72 hours. Email sent after 9pm will not be answered until the next day(s).
1. **Class participation**—You are expected to be actively engaged in this course by ensuring the following: (1) your participation in class discussions demonstrates thoughtful reflection and understanding of the subject matter; (2) the level of respect you offer to your colleagues and to Dr. Espino; and (3) your submission of assignments on the deadlines noted in this syllabus.

Use of cell phones and PDA devices, including text messaging and on-line chatting, is unacceptable. Do not use the vibrate option as it can be equally disruptive. In the rare occasion when work or personal needs requires you to be on call, please keep the ringer off and let Dr. Espino know that you may need to leave the room to take a call.

2. **Readings**—You are expected to complete the readings that are assigned for each session of the class prior to attending that class session. The reading assignments will consist of writings about qualitative research, specific methodological practices and how researchers analyze qualitative data. Additional readings will focus on your research interests. *Articles assigned for the course are available on Canvas.*
   - **“Starters”**—One student per week will be responsible for providing 3 questions for the day regarding the readings. These questions will start our conversation.
   - **“Closers”**—One student per week will be responsible for providing 3 questions/comments that have piqued his/her interest based on the conversation we had that day. These questions will bring closure to our conversation.

3. **The Artist’s Way**—Because this course is writing-intensive and highly reflective, we will use at least one approach to enhancing our positions as researchers-interpreters. During the class session, we will participate in the “Artist’s Way,” a technique that assists the researcher in working through writer’s block. Please bring 3 sheets of paper for each class session. If you use a particular writing practice and would like to share with the class, please let Dr. Espino know.

4. **Analytical Frameworks**—You will submit 2 (5-page) analytical framework papers for two articles that focus on 2 qualitative methodologies. The papers should draw from the analytical framework located at the end of this syllabus. The deadline to submit these papers is by **May 2nd**.

5. **Interview Report— Due April 4th.** You will test an interview protocol and analyze its effectiveness in addressing your research question(s). You will interview at least two people you have never interviewed and submit a 3-5 page report that includes the following:
   - A brief description of the context of the interview, the participant, and the topic of your questions (who did you interview and why did you choose this person? What were you interested in learning? What was the interview about?)
   - A brief overview of what you learned about the interview method (i.e., what you learned about interviewing, not about what the person said.)
   - Personal learnings from this experience in terms of self-as-researcher—are you a good interviewer? What did you do well? What do you need to work on?
   - The transcript of the interview (not included in the page numbers)
   - The interview protocol (not included in the page numbers)

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6. **Observation Report**—Due April 11th. You will test your observation skills as part of understanding your research topic. You will conduct at least two observations with groups/organizations/departments and submit a 3-5 page report that includes the following:

- A brief description of the context of the observation, the participants, and the strategy you employed in conducting your observations (who did you observe and why did you choose this group/organization/department? What were you interested in learning? What did the observation consist of?)
- A brief overview of what you learned about the observation method (i.e., what you learned about conducting an observation, not about what actually occurred during your observations.)
- Personal learnings from this experience in terms of self-as-researcher (Are you a good observer? What did you do well? What do you need to work on?)
- The research notes from the observation (not included in the page numbers)

**Please Note:** If you would prefer to enhance your skills in discourse analysis, please contact Dr. Espino to augment this assignment.

7. **Research Project**—Due May 14th. You will formulate a qualitative research study pertaining to a current issue of interest. You will submit a 20-30 page report (inclusive of title, references and appendices), with aspects of the report submitted throughout the semester. You are expected to complete the CITI training modules (http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/RCOciti.html). The printout indicating your completion of CITI training is DUE Feb. 7th. The final draft of the research report will consist of the following:

- A researchable question that is connected to an epistemological perspective.
- A methodological approach or strategy of inquiry that aligns with your research questions (e.g., phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative analysis, case study). What guides your decision to select one methodology over another?
- Specific methods of data collection. Why have you selected these methods? What are the benefits and limitations of the methods chosen?
- Appropriate strategies for analyzing data and developing themes and warrants for those themes. What guides your decisions regarding data analysis? How are your data analysis strategies connected to your methodological approach?
- A discussion of the possible ethical dilemmas faced when engaged in such a project. What ethical issues emerged? How did you resolve these ethical issues? Why does thinking through ethical issues matter?
- Commentary on the significance of this project and implications for future research. Is there a larger purpose your research serves?

The following are assignments that will help build your research project:

a. **Positionality Statement**—Due Feb. 14th. One of the primary ways to become a good qualitative researcher is to have a strong understanding of your assumptions about and views of research. It is important to identify the questions that are compelling to you and the experiences that led to your interest in certain questions and research topics. You will submit a 3-5 page statement, reflecting your epistemological perspective and your position within a research topic. Specific questions to address include the following:

- What are your researcher assumptions?

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- What questions are compelling to you and from where do your questions come?
- What are your beliefs about how we come to know and understand?
- What challenges do you face in determining your epistemological perspective?

b. **Research Instrument**—You will bring copies of a draft of an interview protocol that will help answer your research question(s). You will share the protocol with your peers and with Dr. Espino. **Please Note:** Crafting an appropriate research instrument can take several iterations. Please be prepared to revise this instrument several times. **DUE March 28**

c. **Research Presentation**— **Due May 9**. You will prepare a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation with no more than 8 total slides (including title page and references) on your research study. Your colleagues will analyze the research design and provide feedback on the study’s potential contribution to the literature. You are encouraged to incorporate the feedback into the final draft of the research project paper.

8. **Peer Review Teams**—You will be assigned to a peer review team that will provide research support throughout the semester. Providing constructive feedback is an important skill to gain and hone. You will be evaluated on the quality of the feedback you provide to your peers at the mid-point of the semester (**due March 14**) and at the end of the semester (**due May 9**).

**Please Note:** All assignments should be submitted via Canvas by the beginning of class unless other arrangements are made well in advance of deadlines (i.e., at least 72 hours prior to deadline). Only half credit will be given to work submitted after class. Because Dr. Espino is invested in your success in this course, she is happy to review any assignments prior to their due dates via email (no later than Tuesdays at noon) or during a scheduled appointment.

During the dates assigned for peer review, you are encouraged to submit your assignment to your peer review team 24 hours in advance so that your peers will have an opportunity to review your work prior to class. You are also welcomed to bring your laptops on the dates assigned for peer review in order to make edits and corrections by the end of the class period. If you do not own a laptop, please contact Dr. Espino so accommodations can be made. Because our writing evolves, you may find that the peer review process will (hopefully) positively affect your assignments. As a result, you are welcomed to resubmit corrected assignments at the end of the peer review class session.

Because this course is writing-intensive, you are encouraged to utilize the Learning Assistance Service (http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/?t=print.php) and the Writing Center (http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter/resources) for assistance with study strategies, grammar, sentence structure, and organization. Based on her experiences with grading written work, Dr. Espino has several “pet peeves” that you should try to avoid:

1. Do not use any contractions in your writing (e.g., can’t, didn’t, wasn’t).
2. Do not use the abbreviation “etc.” when listing examples. In accordance with APA format, the reader does not necessarily know what the etc. means.
3. Do not use passive language—forms of “be.” Use active voice.
4. Do not capitalize words that should not be capitalized such as “University” or “Student Affairs.”
5. When “student” is singular, use “he/she” not “they.”
6. Know the difference between “effect” and “affect.”
7. Do not put extra spacing between paragraphs.

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Written assignments will be formatted in Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. Citations are in APA Format. For this course, the acceptable citation format is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition). Wikipedia is not an appropriate venue from which to cite your work. Please do not cite from this website!

**Grading**

Your final grade for this class will be based upon the following points system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Frameworks (2 x 10 points)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positionality Statement</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Report</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Semester Peer Review Evaluation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Report</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Peer Review Evaluation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Report</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Your final grade will be calculated using the following scale:

- A+  100-99
- B+  90-89
- C+  80-79
- A   98-93
- B   88-83
- C   78-73
- A-  92-91
- B-  82-81

**Academic Integrity**

The University is an intellectual community. Its fundamental purpose is the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Like all other communities, the University can function properly only if its members adhere to clearly established goals and values. Essential to the fundamental purpose of the University is the commitment to the principles of truth and academic honesty. The Code of Academic Integrity is designed to ensure that the principle of academic honesty is upheld. While all members of the University community share this responsibility, The Code of Academic Integrity is designed so that special responsibility for upholding the principle of academic honesty lies with students.

**Honor Pledge**

On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, the student will write by hand and sign the following pledge:

*I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination.*

Failure to sign the pledge is not an honors offense, but neither is it a defense in case of violation of this Code. Students who do not sign the pledge will be given the opportunity to do so. Refusal to sign must be explained to the instructor. Signing or non-signing of the pledge will not be considered in grading or judicial procedures. Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

On examinations, no assistance is authorized unless given by or expressly allowed by the instructor. On other assignments, the pledge means that the assignment has been done without academic dishonesty, as defined in the Code of Academic Integrity, available at http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html.

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**Penalties for Violations of Academic Integrity**

Students who are found to have falsified, fabricated, or plagiarized in any context, such as course work, laboratory research, archival research, or thesis / dissertation writing--will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. The Office of Student Conduct has some discretion in determining penalties for violations of the University's standards of academic integrity, but the normal sanction for a graduate student found responsible for a violation of academic integrity will be dismissal (suspension or expulsion) from the University.

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Students with a documented disability or in need of an academic accommodation that is registered through the Disability Resource Center should contact Dr. Espino as soon as possible.

**Religious Beliefs and Practices**

You will not be penalized because of observances of your religious beliefs. Whenever possible, you will be given reasonable time to make up any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in a religious observance. It is your responsibility to inform Dr. Espino as soon as possible of any intended absences for religious observances.

**Journals in which Qualitative Studies Often are Found**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Research International</th>
<th>Human Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Ethnologist</td>
<td>International Journal of Qualitative Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Sociologist</td>
<td>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Review of Anthropology</td>
<td>Journal for Education of Students Placed At-Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology and Education Quarterly</td>
<td>Journal of Anthropological Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthropological Quarterly</td>
<td>Journal of College Student Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology</td>
<td>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Inquiry</td>
<td>Journal of Curriculum Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Inquiry</td>
<td>Journal of Hispanic Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Anthropology</td>
<td>Journal of Latinos in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Studies &lt;= Critical Methodologies</td>
<td>Journal of Negro Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Studies in Education</td>
<td>Latino Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Researcher</td>
<td>Pedagogies: An International Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equity &amp; Excellence in Education</td>
<td>Qualitative Inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>Qualitative Sociology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnography &amp; Education</td>
<td>Radical Pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and Society</td>
<td>Reading Research Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harvard Educational Review</td>
<td>Sociological Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>Teachers College Record</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of Higher Education</td>
<td>Urban Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Problems</td>
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<td>Studies in Symbolic Interaction</td>
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**Course Topics, Weekly Readings, and Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 24</td>
<td><strong>Introduction and Overview</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 31</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Qualitative Research Design</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>February 7</td>
<td><strong>Ways of Knowing</strong></td>
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<td><em>CITI Training Certificate Due</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February 14</td>
<td><strong>Social Philosophical Foundations</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td><em>Positionality Statement Due</em></td>
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March 7  No Class—ACPA Conference

March 14  Methodological Approaches: Case Study, Discourse Analysis, and Mixed Methods
*Mid-term Peer Review Team Feedback Due*


March 21  Spring Break

March 28  Methods: Interviewing, Observation, Writing
*Research Instrument Due*


April 4  Qualitative Analysis
*Interview Report Due*


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12 April 11  Validity in Qualitative Research
*Observation Report Due*


13 April 18  (Re)Presentation of Lived Experience


14 April 25  Contemporary Issues in Conducting Qualitative Research


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presented at the Workshop on Qualitative Methods in Social Science, National Science Foundation, Washington, DC.


15 May 2  No Class—AERA Conference
*Analytical Frameworks Due*

16 May 9  Research Proposal Presentations
*Final Peer Review Feedback Due*

17 May 14  Research Proposal Due by 4pm via Canvas

**ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK** (as designed by Dr. Sheila Slaughter)

1. What is the problem the scholar addresses?
   a. Why is the problem important or significant—or is it?
   b. How does the scholar turn the general problem into concrete research questions?
   c. What are the research questions?

2. What is the theory or conceptual framework used by the scholar?
   a. Is the theory articulated?
   b. If the theory is not articulated, can you nonetheless understand the conceptual framework the scholar is working from?
   c. What alternative theories address or would address the scholar’s data?
   d. If theories are not used, does the scholar context the problem in specific scholarly literatures? How does she use these literatures to frame her study?

3. What are the assumptions made by the scholar?
   a. Assumptions are usually ideas that are not tested or proven—they are the ideas that undergird the problem addressed by the author and are often philosophical, ideological, or worldview type ideas that are difficult to test. Why is it important to identify assumptions? How do we identify assumptions?
   b. What is the scholar’s vision of higher education as it is? What is the scholar’s vision of how higher education should be? These are questions that help to identify the scholar’s assumptions. Answering these questions will bring you closer to understanding the scholar’s assumptions.

4. What data are used?
   a. What is the data source used? Is it appropriate for answering the research questions the scholar is addressing? What other data sources are available? Why did the scholar make the choices she did?
   b. What is the unit of analysis? Is it appropriate for the questions asked?

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5. What is the method used by the scholar?
   a. Does the scholar use quantitative or qualitative methods? How detailed is she with regard to methods—for example, if quantitative methods are used, do the authors tell us the questions/items on which the variables are based? Do these make sense for answering the problem posed? If she is using qualitative methods, does she explain her coding scheme, or can you understand it?
   b. How would the problem look if addressed by different methods? Would the answers change?

6. How does the scholar deploy her data in a line of argument?
   a. If data do not speak for themselves, how does the scholar make them speak?
   b. What scholarly conventions and rhetorical strategies does the author use?
      i. For example, does the scholar use “reasoned” argument, and rely heavily on tables?
      ii. How does the scholar deal with ambiguities and contradictions in the data?
      iii. What parts of her data does the scholar not include or pay less attention to?
   c. Is the line of argument convincing, and, if so, why? If not, why not?

7. Do the conclusions drawn by the scholar answer the research questions? Do they illuminate, refine, expand or contradict the theories and literature used?

8. What are the strengths of the article? What are the weaknesses?

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