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, synthesize that knowledge through the construction of a research proposal, and apply that knowledge to a research study that Dr. Espino is coordinating. 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 with particular attention to the development of theoretical and conceptual frameworks
3. Develop a working knowledge about 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 proposal

Caveat: This course is intended to be a survey of and introduction to qualitative research. Each methodology and component of qualitative inquiry could be discussed for an entire semester. The primary goal of this course is to provide a breadth of understanding about qualitative research and the nascent understandings of a particular methodology employed through the construction of a research proposal. This course is not designed to develop specialization in a specific qualitative methodology—it is only designed to spark interest, curiosity, and future research goals.

Required Readings


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).
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. **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 class session. The reading assignments will consist of writings about qualitative research, specific methodological practices, and qualitative data analysis, as well as qualitative research about undocumented students as a backdrop to applying our knowledge to practice. Additional readings will focus on your specific research interests. *Articles assigned for the course are available on Canvas.*

   - **“Starters”**—Every week, each student will submit a notecard with at least one question or comment regarding the assigned readings. These questions/comments will start our conversation.
   - **“Closers”**—Every week, one student will be responsible for sharing his/her thoughts, questions, and lessons learned from that class session.

2. **Analytical Frameworks**—The class will be split into 2 teams, which will rotate the responsibility of completing an analytical framework via Canvas for the research article assigned for that week. The analytical frameworks must be posted to Canvas no later than **Wednesdays at 4pm** to ensure that the class has time to review the framework. Members of the team will also be responsible for facilitating a discussion of the article analyzed.

   **Team 1**
   - Tykea
   - Becca
   - Melissa
   - Kai Kai
   - Carlos

   **Team 2**
   - Mark
   - Neal
   - Domonic
   - Julius
   - Nina

3. **Research Proposal**—**Due May 15th.** You (alone or with a partner) will formulate a qualitative research proposal pertaining to a current issue of interest. You will submit a 30-40 page proposal (**inclusive** of title page, abstract, and references; **exclusive** of appendices), with aspects of the proposal submitted throughout the semester. You are expected to complete the CITI training modules ([http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/RCOciti.html](http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/RCOciti.html)) no later than **Jan. 30th**. The process of developing a research proposal is as follows:

   *The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*
Part I: Introduction of Proposal—You will submit an introduction to your peer review team that discusses the significance of the research problem you want to address as well a discussion of what you believe is the potential contribution your research will have to what we currently know within the literature. DUE May 1st.

Part II: Literature Review

a. Annotated Bibliography of Research Interests—You will submit via Canvas an annotated bibliography of at least 10 references pertaining to your research interests. DUE February 13th.

b. Annotated Bibliography of Theoretical/Conceptual Framework—After developing an annotated bibliography of the literature you have gathered, you will submit via Canvas an annotated bibliography of at least 5 references that utilize the particular theory set of theories, or set of concepts that help(s) center your research question(s) in the literature. The theoretical/conceptual framework is the lens through which you will analyze the data you gather. DUE February 20th.

Part III: Research Proposal Defense—You will prepare a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation with no more than 5 total slides (including title page and references) on your proposed research study. Your colleagues will determine whether the research study is viable, makes a significant contribution to the literature, and is well-constructed. Additional information will be provided in class. DUE March 27th.

Part IV: Methodology—As part of the final research proposal, you will submit a discussion of the methodology you are employing that indicates the key aspects of that methodology, including descriptions of the sample, the research instrument, positionality statement, data analysis procedures, and findings from interviews/observations/discourse analysis.

Positionality Statement—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 via Canvas a 3-5 page statement reflecting your epistemological perspective and your position within a research topic. DUE February 27th. Specific questions to address include the following:

- What are your researcher assumptions?
- 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?

Research Instrument—You will submit to your peer review team a qualitative instrument that will help you collect data to answer your research question(s). You will include the final iteration of the research instrument as an appendix in the final proposal. DUE April 10th.

Interview Report—DUE April 24th. You will test the research instrument and analyze its effectiveness in addressing your research question(s). You will interview at least one person from the sample population for your proposed research study whom 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?).

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• 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 research instrument (not included in the page numbers).

Observation Report—DUE April 17th. You will test your observation skills as part of understanding your research topic. You will conduct an observation of the sample population for your proposed study and submit via Canvas 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.

Part VI: Preliminary Findings—As part of the final research proposal, you will include a discussion of the preliminary findings gathered through the interview and observation (or discourse analysis). The findings should be consistent with the research question(s) and data analysis approach embedded within a particular qualitative methodology. On May 8th, you will have an opportunity to discuss your findings in class.

Part VII: Conclusion and Potential Implications—As part of the final research proposal, you will include a conclusion that includes potential implications for research, policy (if applicable), and practice.

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 13th) and at the end of the semester (due May 15th).

Team 1
Mark
Domonic
Tykeia

Team 2
Kai Kai
Neal
Melissa

Team 3
Carlos
Nina
Julius
Becca

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.

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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. 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 via email at the end of the class session in the event that there is time to peer review a graded assignment.

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:

- Do not use any contractions in your writing (e.g., can’t, didn’t, wasn’t).
- Do not use the abbreviation “etc.” when listing examples. In accordance with APA format, the reader does not necessarily know what the “etc.” means.
- Do not use passive language—forms of “be.” Use active voice.
- Do not capitalize words that should not be capitalized such as “University” or “Student Affairs” or “Higher Education”
- Know the difference between “effect” and “affect.”
- Do not put extra spacing between paragraphs.

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>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Frameworks per team (3 points x 5 articles)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography of Research Interests</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography of Theoretical/Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positionality Statement</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Research Proposal Defense</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Report</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Report</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Semester Peer Review Evaluation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Peer Review Evaluation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Proposal</td>
<td>25</td>
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</table>

**Total**

100

Your final grade will be calculated using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>98-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
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**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

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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.

The pledge is a reminder that at the University of Maryland students carry primary responsibility for academic integrity because the meaningfulness of their degrees depends on it. Faculty are urged to emphasize the importance of academic honesty and of the pledge as its symbol.

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

| Action Research International | Human Development |
| American Ethnologist | International Journal of Qualitative Methods |
| American Sociologist | International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE) |
| Annual Review of Anthropology | |
| Anthropology and Education Quarterly | |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Topics, Weekly Readings, and Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Date</td>
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4 **February 20**  Ways of Knowing
   *Team 2 Framework*
   *Annotated Bibliography of Theoretical/Conceptual Framework Due*


5 **February 27**  Methodological Approaches: Introduction, Phenomenology and Grounded Theory
   *Positionality Statement Due*
   *Team 1 Framework*


6 **March 6**  Methodological Approaches: Narrative Inquiry and Ethnography
   *Team 2 Framework*


Espino, M.M., Muñoz, S., & Marquez Kiyama, J. (2010). Transitioning from doctoral study to the academy:

*The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*
Theorizing trenzas of identity for Latina sister scholars. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 804-818.


7 March 13  Methodological Approaches: Case Study and Discourse Analysis
*Mid-term Peer Review Team Feedback Due*
*Team 1 Framework*


8 March 20  No Class—Spring Break

9 March 27  Qualitative Research Design
*Research Proposal Defense*
*Team 2 Framework*


10 April 3  ACPA/AERA Conferences—No Class

11 April 10  Methods: Interviewing, Observation, Writing
*Research Instrument Due*
*Team 1 Framework*

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**12 April 17**  
**Qualitative Analysis**  
*Observation Report Due*  
*Team 2 Framework*


**13 April 24**  
**Validity in Qualitative Research**  
*Interview Report Due*  
*Team 1 Framework*


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14 May 1  (Re)Presentation of Lived Experience
   *Team 2 Framework*
   *Introduction Due for Peer Review*


15 May 8  Research Proposal Discussion

16 May 15 Research Proposal Due by 4pm via Canvas
   *Final Peer Review Feedback Due*

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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 under gird the problem addressed by the author and are often philosophical, ideological, or world view 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?

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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