

**EDPL 788E**  
**Seminar on Case Study Methods**  
**Spring, 2004**

**Instructor:** Betty Malen, 2110C Benjamin Building, Phone 301-405-3587

**Time and Place:** Monday, 4:15-7:00 PM, Benjamin Building, Room 2102.

**Office Hours:** By appointment: call home, call office (301-405-3587), or email malen@wam.umd.edu.

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Conceived as both an overview of case study methods and a laboratory for applying course content to research topics/projects of interest to students, this course addresses a range of conceptual, methodological, ethical, political, and logistical issues embedded in efforts to conduct thoughtful, "disciplined" case study research. Since this course is an introduction to case study research, it may be particularly helpful to students who are exploring various approaches to research or who are contemplating using case study methods in their theses and/or dissertations. This course was developed with substantial assistance from Marcy Leonard, currently an assistant principal in the Howard County Public Schools and a doctoral student in EDPL.

**MAJOR OBJECTIVES:** This course seeks to

- (a) expose students to alternative perspectives on case study research;
- (b) generate insights about the appropriate purposes and uses of case study research as well as the criteria by which to judge the quality and utility of this research;
- (c) enhance understandings about the relationship between case study research and theory development, policy formation and evaluation, and informed action;
- (d) become more cognizant of the challenges embedded in doing "good" case study research, the criticisms that get leveled against case study research, and the potential benefits and limitations of this approach to research;
- (e) provide opportunities to develop "justifications" and appraisals of particular kinds of case study designs and to critique illustrative case studies on topics of special interest to students (hopefully in areas where students are planning to conduct their own research).

**COURSE CONTENT, STRUCTURE AND APPROACH:** The course content is summarized on the attached outline and proposed schedule. Structured around three major units, the course begins with an overview of case study research, revisits key aspects of case study research in greater depth and then focuses on students' application of course content to their unique research interests. The various topics will be addressed through presentations, readings, discussions, written assignments, small group "work sessions," individual conferences and small group conferences where appropriate.

**COURSE ASSUMPTIONS:** This course makes four major assumptions, highlighted on the next page.

(1) This seminar assumes that students have had "uneven" exposure to research designs and methods. While there are no formal pre-requisites, this seminar seeks to build on understandings emphasized in other, more general offerings, notably EDPA 690 and EDPA 700 or equivalent courses. It also seeks to compensate for gaps in students' backgrounds, through readings that address fundamental aspects of research writ large, as well as critical aspects of case study research, per se. The readings should help us develop more common understandings and vocabularies.

(2) This seminar assumes that the knotty design issues that are embedded in case study research should receive more attention than particular data collection strategies. While all aspects of the research process are important, design issues are key. The manner in which those issues are handled often determines whether the research has inevitable limitations (as in any research venture) or "fatal flaws." Data collection strategies are also critical, but those matters can be addressed more readily through independent readings as well as through other, more generic methods courses.

(3) This seminar assumes that case study research, like other research, must be rigorous. That is, case study research must attend to a host of issues regarding the relationship between evidence and inference, and a host of concerns surrounding validity, reliability, causality and generalizability. While some scholars employ alternative terms, such as credibility or transferability, and, while some argue that irrespective of the terms used, such notions do not apply to "qualitative" research, this course takes a stance. It seeks to help students understand how to address, not avoid, these fundamental aspects of research as they conceptualize, conduct, and communicate their case studies.

(4) This seminar assumes that learning about case studies is an interactive process. Thus the course introduces and revisits key aspects of case study research in class sessions. Such an iterative process marks how many case studies are conceptualized and how many write-ups of case studies are constructed. Hopefully, this approach, and the "purposeful redundancy" that is part and parcel of it, will serve as a sensible approach for students in this class.

**COURSE LIMITATIONS:** The course is an introduction to, not an in-depth treatment of a complex, contested terrain. The topics addressed illustrate but they do not exhaust the full range of issues that could (arguably should) be examined. Since the topics included are complicated and controversial, they warrant more attention than can be given in a semester course. This class provides some, but certainly not all of the foundational understandings and literature sources required to develop a research methods section for a major research venture, like a thesis, dissertation or grant-funded project.

Among the many limitations of the course is the modest attention given quantitative data collection and analysis. Though case study research may incorporate, and, in some instances benefit from both quantitative and qualitative data collection/analysis strategies, the emphasis here is on qualitative methods because those are often the major data collection strategies employed in case study research. Another limiting slant relates to the emphasis on case study research and policy development. Case studies can enhance understandings of the conditions to be affected by policy interventions as well as provide data regarding how policy alternatives play out in particular contexts.

The policy bent is important, particularly given the focus of this department. However, that emphasis is not a complete picture of the multiple uses of case study research in education.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** There are 5 major course requirements.

1. **Reading Assignments.** Each student is responsible for all required readings specified on the syllabus and other readings which may be assigned during the semester (when the instructor learns more about students' interests/backgrounds).

Required readings include three books (available through the UMCP bookstore and the UMCP library) and various articles and papers (available through the instructor and on reserve in the Benjamin Building's Curriculum Lab.) The books are Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education by Sharan Merriam; The Art of Case Study Research by Robert Stake, and Case Study Research: Design and Methods by Robert Yin. The course packet contains "classic" and "contemporary" readings that illustrate and augment concepts presented and discussed in class sessions. It also includes sample case studies and sample research proposals.

This "menu" of readings is used to provide a common information base, to accommodate different academic backgrounds, to accommodate different learning styles, and to help students get a sense of the range of work that falls under the rubric of "case study methods." Again, the required readings may be adjusted or supplemented, as the instructor gets a clearer understanding of students' backgrounds and interests.

2. **Class Participation.** Each student is expected to make contributions to the issues being addressed in class sessions. Participation is weighted at 10% of the course grade. Participation grades will be based on the quality rather than the number of comments or questions; on evidence of informed/insightful contributions to the issues being addressed.

3. **Written Analysis of Alternative Perspectives on Case Study Research.** This paper is a critical, comparative analysis of three authors' (Merriam, Stake & Yin) perspectives on key aspects of case study research. This paper is more fully described on the Assignment Attachment that follows the course calendar. The first four class sessions should provide much of the groundwork for this assignment. It counts for 30% of the course grade.

4. **Written Critique of a Case Study/Studies.** This paper is a critical review of a student-selected, instructor-approved case study (or case studies). This assignment is more fully described on the Assignment Attachment. It will be discussed in class as well. It counts for 20% of the course grade.

5. **Written, "Mini" Research Proposal or "Mini" Case Study or Individualized Paper.** Students, in consultation with the instructor, will select one of the two options or develop an alternative with the instructor. The "mini" research proposal requires students to develop "A Case for A Case Study." This paper lays out a case study research design and the lines of argument required to justify this design as an appropriate, potentially fruitful way to investigate a particular topic/phenomenon. The "mini" case study requires students to carry out a case study. This paper defines the type of case study being conducted, explains the methods used, reports the findings and

discusses the implications of the study. Like other written assignments, these options are more fully described on the Assignment Attachment. If students wish to propose other options, they are encouraged to do so. This assignment counts for 40% of the course grade. In order to adapt this assignment to students' academic experiences and their "stage" in their graduate program, students are encouraged to meet with the professor on the particulars of this paper.

**STUDENT ASSESSMENTS, GRADES:** As the preceding paragraphs make clear, course grades will be based on instructor assessments of class participation and written assignments, weighted as follows:

- Participation: 10%
- Alternative Perspectives on Case Study Research: 30%
- Critique of A Case Study or Case Studies: 20%
- Final Paper: 40%

As previously noted, participation grades will be based on the quality rather than the number of comments or questions; on evidence of informed/insightful contributions to the issues being addressed. Paper assessments will be based on the following criteria: clear purpose and preview of ideas, coherent organization, cogent reasoning, capacity to "tether" the paper to readings; ability to use relevant information to support interpretations, and appropriate use of the English language. "Re-writes" are permitted and encouraged. In some cases, rewrites may be required.

If students have any concerns about the grades they receive, they should speak with the instructor, directly. Per university policy, students may also appeal grades. The procedures for doing so are contained in the graduate studies handbook. The department has an academic appeal's committee that students may contact for information and assistance.

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND HONOR PLEDGE:** *The University of Maryland has an official honor pledge that reads: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination." William Destler, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost has requested that we include the following information on course syllabi: "Unless you are specifically advised to the contrary, the Pledge statement should be handwritten and signed on the front cover of all papers, projects, or other academic assignments submitted for evaluation in this course. Students who fail to write and sign the Pledge will be asked to confer with the instructor." While students in this course are not required to write these words on their assignments, they are expected to carry out their work in accordance with the broadly recognized standards of academic honesty and integrity. If students have any questions about what those standards entail, they should contact the instructor.*

**DISABILITY-BASED ACCOMMODATIONS:** *Any class member who has a documented disability and wishes to discuss academic accommodations should contact the instructor as soon as possible.*

**RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES:** *Absences for religious holidays and events will be accommodated. Students affected should contact the instructor for assistance in securing*

*information about class sessions they have missed or assignment due dates that need to be adjusted.*

### **INVITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:**

*(1) Conversations and conferences about the written assignments or other course-related matters can be initiated at any time throughout the semester, in class sessions or at other times.*

*(2) In preparing for class, students are encouraged to "map" the readings, to make notes regarding the purpose, thesis, central lines of argument and nature and quality of the evidence used to develop the ideas. Following each class, students are encouraged to re-read or review these materials to clarify ideas and "clinch" insights.*

*(3) In developing written assignments, consider keeping a "jot journal;" working from outlines; sharing ideas with others in order to clarify what you are trying to convey; drafting "analytic notes" to yourself; including [ ] information to let the reader know what you are thinking; inviting candid reactions; weighing the feedback received and rewriting and refining main ideas and supporting lines of argument.*

*(4) Students are encouraged to bring in relevant readings, including sample case studies, and share those with the class and the instructor. There are many, rich sources of information available to help us think through research issues. If you found a reading, be it a book, article, essay, case study, technical report or research critique helpful, someone else may as well. So, feel free to embellish the materials we consider in this course.*

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

### UNIT ONE OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDY RESEARCH

*This section of the course is designed to provide a broad introduction to case study research from the vantage point of three major writers in the field. In this unit, we will examine different definitions of and approaches to case study research. This background should provide a basis for the more focused treatments of key aspects of case study research that follow.*

*January 28: Introduction to the Course and to the Notion of "Disciplined Inquiry"*

*In addition to reviewing course aims, approaches, requirements, evaluation procedures, "group agreements," and the like, we will read and discuss a chapter on the broad notion of "disciplined inquiry." By addressing the nature of the research enterprise, this chapter will help set the stage for the more specialized treatment of research methods in subsequent sections of this course. We will also read and discuss two memos that offer suggestions for critically appraising the "themes and theses," the inferences and interpretations in the writings we encounter. While these memos were developed for use in a history course, their contents can be helpful here as well since we will be working to sharpen our critical thinking capabilities throughout the course.*

*Required Readings: (read during session)*

*Shulman, Lee S. (1988). Disciplines of inquiry in education: An overview. In Richard M. Jaeger (Ed.). Complementary Methods for Research in Education. pp. 3-17. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.*

*Degler, Carl and Tyack, David. "Some suggestions on critically evaluating your reading," and "A guide for critical reading in educational history." Undated, unpublished course materials, from Stanford University.*

*February 4: Alternative Perspectives on Case Study Research, Part 1*

*In this session we review definitions of case study research, efforts to distinguish case study research from other research strategies and systems for characterizing and classifying case studies. We discuss the potential strengths and limitations (empirical and theoretical) of different kinds of cases and identify other pertinent design issues that case study researchers confront.*

*Required Readings (continued on next page):*

*Merriam, chapters 1-3, Yin, chapters 1-2, and Stake, chapters 1-3, 6 & 10. Note Stake's directions re: when to read chpt 10.*

*Brown, Deenen L. (2000, January 23). "Her sisters' keeper," The Washington Post Magazine, pp. 14-17, 26-27. (Read with an eye toward discussing whether this piece is a*

*case study. Is it a case narrative? a case study? a catalyst for doing a case study? Think about how Merriam, Yin & Stake would classify this writing. Think too, about what the article is a "case" of. In other words, what is the phenomenon of interest? How might various types of case studies be used to more fully examine the phenomenon of interest?*

**February 11 *Alternative Perspectives on Case Study Research, Part 2***

*In this session we draw on Stake and Yin to illustrate, then compare and contrast the range of views regarding key aspects of case study research and to highlight the contested character of case study research. We revisit issues of definition, form and function and begin considering issues regarding the rigor of case study research. Guide questions include: How is case study research defined and distinguished from other research strategies? What forms might such research take? What are the appropriate purposes and uses of case study research? How are case studies to be designed? How can cases be framed and selected? How can data be collected, analyzed and communicated? How is the "quality" of case study research assessed? How are issues of "rigor" and relevance addressed? These and other questions serve as an orienting/organizing framework for illustrating alternative conceptions of case study research.*

***Required Readings:***

*All chapters of Stake and Yin.*

**February 18: *Alternative Perspectives on Case Study Research, Part 3***

*Drawing on Stake, Yin, Merriam and related readings, we continue the discussion of the different, at times contested approaches to case study designs and the various, at times contested approaches to the inter-related processes of collecting, selecting, analyzing and interpreting data, developing and inspecting lines of argument and composing the case report.*

***Required Readings:***

*Review Stake & Yin, all chapters.*

*Merriam, all chapters.*

*Levine, Murray. (July 1980). Investigative reporting as a research method. American Psychologist, 35, 7. pp. 626-638.*

***Recommended Readings:***

*Murphy, Jerome T. (1980). "Intensive interviewing," and "Transient observation and document analysis," in Author, Getting the Facts, pp, 75-107; 111-128. Santa Monica: Goodyear.*

*Patton, Michael Q. (1990). "The content of interviews," in Author, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, Second Edition, pp. 290-330. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.*

## UNIT TWO CREATING QUALITY CASE STUDIES

*This section "zooms in" on issues associated with case study research. It reexamines elements of case study research with an eye towards the issues and challenges that face case study researchers and the ways in which those issues and challenges (conceptual, methodological, political and ethical) might be responsibly addressed.*

*February 25 Theoretical Foundations/Contributions of Case Study Research  
A Conversation with Sally McCarthy.*

*Since "good" case studies begin and end with the consideration of theory, this session is designed to help students understand the linkages between case study research and theoretical advancements. We will examine the debates regarding (a) the relationship between theory development and case study research and (b) the degree of formalization and flexibility in the research design. Most of this session addresses how theory can help one get clear about (a) the phenomenon of study, (b) the vantage point from which the phenomenon is to be viewed, (c) the primary purpose of the study and (d) the type of case study that might be most appropriate. We will discuss how choices on these matters affect decisions about site selection, data sources and methods, data analysis, study interpretations and related arguments regarding the empirical and conceptual "significance" of the study. In other words, we will try to come full circle to show how theory is used to design the study and how the design of the study influences the ways the study can contribute to theory.*

*Readings for this session provide definitions of a "conceptual framework," and discuss how the conceptual framework operates as a causal orientation, a parameter setting device, an interpretive schema and a bridging device that connects findings of studies to related bodies of literature. They illustrate how to utilize extant literature and how to check to be sure that the study design "fits" the phenomena of study and that the methods are appropriate to the questions. The readings also provide the basis for a candid discussion of issues involved in framing and "doing" case study research.*

*Required Readings: Shulman, "Disciplined Inquiry," Yin, chpt. 2; Merriam, chpt. 3*

*Becker, Howard S. (1986). "Terrorized by the literature review," in Author, Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book or Article, pp. 135-149. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.*

*Wells, Amy Stuart, et al. (June/July 1995). Bounding the case within its context: A constructivist approach to studying detracking reform, Educational Researcher, 24,(5), pp. 18-24.*

*McCarthy, Sally (2003). Dissertation proposal.*

*Recommended Readings:*

*Dissertation proposals by Sue Geary, Bridget Turner, Jennifer Taylor-Cox; Sharon Corsi.*

**March 3**      *Developing the Design: Issues, Options, and Trade-offs  
Potential Contributions to Policy Analysis and Evaluation  
Paper #1 Due*

*This session revisits design issues and the trade-offs embedded in them. The session illustrates how various types of case studies are described and justified and how case study findings might be used to examine policies and to illuminate broader notions about, as well as particular instances of the phenomenon of interest.*

*Required Readings:*

*Patton, Michael Quinn (1990). "Designing qualitative studies: Critical trade-offs," in Author, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, pp. 162-186. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.*

*Yin, Robert (1990, December). The role of theory in case study research and evaluation. A paper that was to be published as a book chapter. Since I have not been able to secure a copy of the book, we will use the paper version.*

*Yin, Robert (1991, July). The case study method as a tool for doing evaluation. A paper that was to appear in a journal. Since I did not track the journal, we will use the draft copy which is more than adequate for our purposes.*

*Excerpts from "Interview methods in political science," Political Science & Politics,*

*December 2002, pp. 663-688. Contributors address "Asking questions: Techniques for semi-structured interviews," "Getting in the door: Sampling and completing elite interviews," "Conducting and coding elite interviews," "Ethical dilemmas in personal interviewing," "Validity and reliability issues in elite interviewing," and "Interviewing political elites: Lessons from Russia."*

**March 10**      *No class, AEFA*

**March 17**      *Rigor in Case Study Research: Inferences, Arguments and Standards of  
"Quality" Research  
Paper #2, part 1 due.*

*Case studies are often characterized as non-rigorous research. One challenge for researchers using case study methodology is to ensure that their work meets the standards of "disciplined inquiry." Meeting those standards involves systematically attending the logic that links evidence with inference and the logic that undergirds the arguments developed as data are reported and interpreted. Therefore, we examine these most basic processes which are all too often given short-shrift in the design, conduct and communication of research.*

We also identify additional "criteria" for judging the quality of case study research and use those criteria to assess sample case studies.

*Required Readings: Shulman, "Disciplined inquiry," and Yin, "What makes an exemplary case study?"*

*Hastings, Arthur (1964). The structure of argument, pp. 126-27, to be distributed and Parker, Nancy & Timpane, John (1989). "Writing to persuade," in Authors, Writing Worth Reading, Second Edition, pp. 122-133. New York: St. Martin's Press. (A Cliff Note's version of Toulmin's model for examining the relationship between data, warrant and claim.*

*Goetz, Judith P. and Lecompte, Margaret D. (1984). "Assessing ethnographic design," in Authors, Ethnographic and Qualitative Design in Educational Research, pp. 233-245. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, Inc.*

*Odden, Allan & Archibald, Sarah (2000, March). A Case Study of Resource Allocation to Reduce Class Size, Enhance Teacher Planning Time and Strengthen Literacy: Clayton Elementary School. Consortium for Policy Research in Education.*

*Clandinin, D. Jean, et al. (1996). "Living the tension: A case study of teacher stories of teacher evaluation," Journal of Educational Policy, 11, (2), 169-183.*

*Prestine, Nona N. (1989). "The struggle for control of teacher education: A case study," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11, 285-300.*

*Recommended reading:*

*Hargreaves, Andy (1996). "Revisiting voice," Educational Researcher, 25, (1), 12-19.*

*March 24: No class, Spring Break.*

*March 31: Rigor in Case Study Research: Validity, Reliability, Causality and Generalizability*

*The previous session on rigor focused on the relationship between data, warrant and claim. While these foundational understandings are necessary, they are not sufficient. Meeting the standards of "disciplined inquiry" also involves conducting research in ways which add to the confidence one can have in the data secured and the interpretations rendered. Since the analyst is often viewed as the instrument in case study research, we pay particular attention to this aspect of case study research as well as to other sources of bias and error and the range of strategies case study researchers can employ to address issues of validity, reliability, causality and generalizability.*

*Required Readings (continued on next page): Review Lecompte & Goetz, Yin, chapters 2-5; Merriam, chapter 10; and Stake, chapter 7.*

*Herriott, Robert E. and Firestone, William A. (1993). "Multi-site qualitative policy research: Optimizing description and generalizability," Educational Researcher, 12, (2), 14-19.*

*Firestone, William A. and Herriott, Robert E. (1983). "The formalization of qualitative research: An adaptation of 'soft' science to the policy world," Evaluation Review, 7, (4), 437-467.*

*Cusick, Philip A. (1983). The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School: Studies of Three Schools, pp. 131-135. New York: Longman.*

*Firestone, W. A. (1993). "Alternative arguments for generalizing from data as applied to qualitative research," Educational Researcher, 22, (4), 16-23.*

*Becker, Howard S. (1990). Generalizing from case studies. In Eliot W. Eisner & Alan Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate, pp. 233-242. New York: Teachers College Press.*

*Schofield, Janet W. (1990). Increasing the generalizability of qualitative research. In Eliot W. Eisner & Alan Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate, pp. 201-232. New York: Teachers College Press.*

**Recommended Reading:**

*Murphy, Jerome T. (1980). "Coping with bias and error," in Author, Getting the Facts, pp. 57-72. Santa Monica: Goodyear.*

**April 7 Revisiting the Justifications, Contributions and Limitations of Case Study Research, Paper #2 Due**

*This session seeks to integrate insights about case study research by revisiting the rationales for the use of case studies, the conditions under which case studies are particularly appropriate, the common criticisms of case studies, the criteria for judging the merit and worth of case studies, and the various contributions that can be made by particular cases, by "aggregated" cases, and by well grounded, programs of research. Students should be prepared to highlight insights from their paper #2 assignment.*

**Required Readings:**

*Jarrett, Robin L. (January 1995). Growing up poor: The family experiences of socially mobile youth in low-income African American neighborhoods. Journal of Adolescent Research, 10, (1), 111-135. An illustration of how case studies can enrich more quantitative treatments of a topic.*

*Wilson, William Julius (2002, March). "Expanding the domain of policy-relevant scholarship in the social sciences," PSOnline, 1-4.*

*Examples (subject to change): Using case studies to test theories, to extend existing theory; "test" existing theory and to generate "new" theory.*

*Malen, B., Croninger, R., Muncey, D. & Jones, D. (2002). "Reconstituting schools: Testing the theory of action," Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24, (2), 113-132.*

*Malen, B. (1994). Enacting site based management: A political utilities analysis. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 1, 249-267. (Using case study data to extend theory).*

*Mazzoni, Tim L. (1991). "Analyzing state school policymaking: An arena model, " Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 13, 115-138. A sophisticated analysis that derives a theory from the literature, uses case study data to test the derived theory, then revises that theory.*

*April 14 No class, AERA.*

### **UNIT THREE**

#### **APPLYING UNDERSTANDINGS: DEVELOPING A QUALITY CASE STUDY**

*This portion of the course provides opportunities for students to apply their understandings of case study methods to their specific research interests. Students will work individually and collaboratively to elaborate the major lines of argument required to describe and defend a case study design and/or to carry out a mini case study. The precise format for collaborative work will be developed with the students. Since there are many ways that students can engage in collegial review, we will discuss the forums and formats that students in this class find most constructive/useful. We will dedicate three sessions to collegial exchanges designed to help students strengthen the lines of argument they are making in their final course paper. Generally speaking, throughout this portion of the course, students will develop and distribute outlines and drafts of paper #3. They will secure feedback from the students in as well as the instructor of this course. In developing paper #3 (or other assignments, for that matter) students are encouraged to talk with their advisors and/or other faculty who may have expertise in the topic areas they have selected and/or in case study methodology.*

*April 21 Student Presentations/Exchanges on Final Paper*

*April 28 Student Presentations/Exchanges on Final Paper*

*May 5 Student Presentations/Exchanges on Final Paper*

*May 12 Cross-cutting Issues and Opportunities for Further Study  
Course Appraisals/Follow-ups  
Final Paper Due.*

*In addition to opportunities to discuss issues students confronted in their final course papers, this last session provides opportunities to talk about how to bridge the introductory*

*work in the course and the additional work necessary to develop a stronger command of case study research. Students will draw on course readings and course papers to identify "cross-cutting concerns" that warrant further attention through additional course work, directed readings, and independent research. We will "debrief" the class and complete written course evaluations. If students wish, and if this option does not present a problem for any class member, the last session will be held at my home in Annapolis.*

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

### *Paper #1 Alternative Perspectives on Case Study Research (10-12 pages).*

*This paper asks students to analyze three perspectives (Merriam, Stake & Yin) on case study research. At minimum, the paper should (a) identify the major purposes of case study research along with the various forms and distinctive features of case study research, (b) define, compare and contrast how each of the authors view key aspects of case study research, and (c) discuss the implications of this analysis for your understanding of case study research purposes, uses and approaches, as well as for your understanding of the "standards" case study research "should" meet.*

*In the introduction students should include a clear statement of purpose and an overview of how ideas in the paper will unfold.*

*In the body of the paper, students may wish to create a matrix so they can compare authors' positions on common dimensions of interest. However, the students may use the matrix only as an analytic tool, not as a substitute for a coherent narrative about the authors' positions, including their ideas about the forms and uses of case studies, about standards and properties of quality case studies, or about other aspects (or issues) associated with case study research.*

*In the implications section, students may wish to talk about how their understandings of case study research have been influenced by the various authors; they may identify key questions that such a comparative analysis raises and/or the kinds of choices that case study researchers must think through. Students may also discuss other implications that occur to them as a result of this analysis.*

### *Paper #2 Critique of A Case Study or Case Studies (5-10 pages).*

*This paper requires students to select and critique a case study (or case studies) on a topic of interest to them. The case study may be reported in an article, a series of articles, a book, a dissertation and/or a technical report.*

*The first step involves submitting a copy of the case along with a one-page statement regarding why this case warrants a careful review. This step is due March 17.*

*The second step involves identifying the criteria used to appraise the case study research. In step two, draw on course readings (or other independent readings) to set up the "lens" you will use to evaluate this work.*

*The third step involves applying those criteria in an essay review of the work. Be sure to provide reasons for your judgements and be explicit about the evidence that supports your analysis of the work.*

**Paper #3 Option A--A Case for A Case Study (25-30 pages).**

*This paper requires students to apply their knowledge of the elements of a quality case study as well as the reasons for conducting research using case study methodology in the creation of a "case for a case study." Students should first identify the phenomenon of study as well as the theoretical tradition(s) within which the study will be grounded, e.g., sociological, psychological, historical, anthropological, political.....In other words, students should articulate "what this is a case study of" and what general theoretical perspectives will guide the research. This cut at a conceptual framework will be rudimentary for most students, save those who have a strong grasp of the theoretical and empirical literature on their topic of interest. Once the theoretical groundwork is identified, students should set out the central research question(s) to be examined. Students will then describe, in detail, the type of design they might use in an original case study as well as the reasons for that design choice (as a possible prototype for section III of a thesis or dissertation). In other words, this section of the assignment requires students to more fully and explicitly articulate the boundaries of the case study, identify the kind of case study they will be conducting and the reasons for the selection of single or multiple sites. The paper should address the relationship between the kind of case study they are proposing and the empirical and theoretical contributions which can be made. The rationale for the proposed study should identify the strengths, limitations, and/or tradeoffs embedded in case study designs. The rationale should reflect an understanding of what case study research can and cannot do. Students will also discuss what data would be included and why; how data would be analyzed and why; how data would be reported and why; and how the analyst would check for bias and error throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting processes.*

**Paper #3 Option B--An Original Case Study (25-30 pages).**

*This assignment permits students to "try out" this method before they decide to use it for more their dissertation or for a major research project. This paper should identify the phenomenon of study and the boundaries of the case. It should describe and assess the design of the study, report the findings and discuss those findings in light of broader literatures, or, at least suggest how such a discussion might be pursued. The scope of the case is not an issue. The care with which the case is defined, conducted and discussed is the key. The intent is to give students the opportunity to practice disciplined inquiry on a limited scale before they seek to carry out more extensive case studies.*

**Paper #3 Option C--An Individualized Alternative**

*This option permits students to propose a paper that allows them to develop understandings and skills that they deem important at this time in their program. Students are responsible for initiating a conversation about the purposes and parameters of this individualized seminar paper with the professor before spring break.*

*Note: Work on papers 2 and 3 should be concurrent and complementary. As students read and review case studies, they should be noting how case designs are articulated, justified, and appraised. Students are encouraged to critique case studies on topics similar to the ones they will pursue in their "case for a case study" paper or in their original case study or on topics relevant to their individualized paper 3 option.*

## SAMPLE CASE STUDIES

*These sample writings are included so students have a "ready reference" for actual illustrations of aspects of case study research we discuss in this course. Since the list is intended to whet the appetite, it includes examples on a range of topics and examples from a variety of educational contexts.*

*In addition to these references, several recently completed dissertations and masters papers are fine examples of case study research. See especially, the dissertation on the micropolitics of classroom discipline by Jennifer Taylor-Cox, the impact of a program on racial identity (a case study of a program and nested case studies of individual participants) by Bridget Turner, and the study of a university decision to adopt a policy requiring all students to have computers, by Sally McCarthy.*

*Allison, Graham, T. (1969). "Conceptual models and the Cuban missile crises," The American Political Science Review, 63 (3), 689-718. The classic illustration of how case studies can be mined to make major conceptual contributions.*

*Abrams, D.M. (1987). Political competition and cooperation between public and higher education agencies of state government. Journal of Educational Finance, 12: 369-390. A precursor to the author's book on the politics of collaboration, this article illustrates how theory, in this case theory about coalition formation, can be used to interpret data and how case study data can refine/extend theory.*

*Altbach, Philip G. & Lomotey, Kofi (1991). The racial crises in American higher education. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. This edited volume contains several interesting case studies of race relations on campuses.*

*Berdahl, Robert O. (1997). Balancing self-interest and accountability: St. Mary's College of Maryland. In Terrance MacTaggar (Ed). Excellence through independence, 59-83. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. A close-to home, case study.*

*Bull, Barry L. (1987). Confronting reform in teacher education: One state's experience. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 9, 25-40. Drawing on developments in Washington state, this piece illustrates how case studies can be used to evaluate policy proposals.*

*Carter, Stephen (19xx). Confessions of an affirmative action baby. A provocative "case study" used, in part, to appraise policy. (Sorry about incomplete citation; I've loaned my copy out).*

*Cohen, David K. (1990). A revolution in one classroom: The case of Mrs. Oublier, Education evaluation and Policy Analysis, 12, (3), 233-240. A case of an individual teacher's response to state policy.*

Cohen, David K. & Farrar, Eleanor (1977, Summer). "Power to the parents? The story of education vouchers," *Public Interest*, 72-97. An early, "classic" case study used to examine the central tenets of an education reform; thus, an interesting example of case study to evaluate policy options.

Grant, Gerald. (1988). *The world we created at Hamilton High*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. A longer-term study that illustrates, among many notions, the complementary relationship between case study, ethnographic and historical research.

Hearn, J., (1989). *The paradox of growth in federal aid for college students, 1965-1988*. In *Handbook of theory and research in higher education*, Vol. IX (pp. 94-153). Bronx, NY: Agathon Press. Using student aid as a case in point, this article illustrates how case studies can illuminate policy processes and generate explanations of policy developments.

Henig, Jeffrey R., Hula, Richard C., Orr, Marion, & Pedescleaux, Desiree S. (1999). *The color of school reform: Race, politics, and the challenge of urban education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Drawing on case studies of education reform in urban areas, including Baltimore and Washington, DC, this book shows how case studies can be anchored in theoretical perspectives, applied to ongoing policy developments and aggregated to inform theory and policy.

MacLeod, Jay. (1995). *Ain't no makin' it: Aspirations and attainment in low-income neighborhoods*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Drawing on sociological perspectives and qualitative methods, this book is an example of "nested cases" as well as an example of how carefully crafted longitudinal work can yield powerful insights.

Mintrop, Heinrich (1999). "Changing core beliefs and practices through systemic reform: The case of Germany after the fall of socialism," *21*, (3), 1-26.

Muncey, Donna E. & McQuillan, Patrick J. (1996). *Reform and resistance in schools and classrooms: An ethnographic view of the coalition of essential schools*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Drawing on individual cases and comparative analysis of cases, this book illustrates how to capitalize on multi-site designs as well as individual site detail to examine education reform.

Muncey, Donna, Payne, Joyce & White, Noel (1999). "Making curriculum and instructional reform happen," *Peabody Journal of Education*, *74*, (1), 68-110. An analysis of curriculum policy implementation in Prince George's County.

Orr, Marion (1999). *Black social capital: The politics of school reform in Baltimore, 1986-1998*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas. This work is similar to Henig, et. al., noted above (all the cities studies were part of a coordinated research venture, headed by Clarence Stone), but this book focuses on one city; thus, the two books illustrate the "depth" v. "breadth" trade in case study designs and write-ups. Like the other works, this book draws on the notion of "civic capacity" to help anchor the analysis of education reform and to get at how race may be affecting education reform dynamics and developments.

*Roberts, Nancy C. & King, Paula, J. (1996). Transforming public policy: Dynamics of policy entrepreneurship and innovation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Using a case study of enacting school choice legislation in Minnesota, the authors describe how a small cluster of policy entrepreneurs operated to advance "radical" policy change in that state. The authors use case study findings to develop a "theory" of policy innovation by design (e.g., the deliberate actions of policy entrepreneurs who work individually and collectively to advance public school choice initiatives).*

*Shepard, Lorrie. (1991). Readiness testing in local school districts: An analysis of backdoor policies. In S. Fuhrman & B. Malen (Eds.), The politics of curriculum and testing. New York & London: Falmer Press. This study illustrates how policies designed for one purpose get used for another purpose and how case studies were instrumental in uncovering these unanticipated but important findings.*

*Spreen, Carol Anne (2001). Globalization and education policy borrowing: Mapping outcomes based education in South Africa. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York.*  
*Weatherly, Richard, & Lipsky, Michael (1977). Street-level bureaucrats and institutional innovation: Implementing special education reform. Harvard Education Review, 47: 171-197. A classic study of policy implementation.*

*Wells, Amy Stuart & Serna, Irene (1996). "The politics of culture: Understanding local political resistance to detracking in racially mixed schools," Harvard Educational Review, 66, 93-118 and other articles that report these case study data. This stream of work illustrates issues associated with multi-site designs and multiple researcher projects as well as reasons for the resistance to detracking in settings where such substantial resistance was not initially expected.*

*See also, journals representing the various disciplines ( e.g., sociology of education, history of education) as well as journals on qualitative studies in education, journals that focus on international educational developments, and journals that publish articles in your area of interest. There are many sources of interesting and "telling" case studies. Follow your topical interests as well as your disciplinary anchors and share your "finds" with the class.*