

**QUAL 8400: Qualitative Research Traditions**  
**Spring 2007**  
**306 Aderhold**

**Professor Derrick P. Alridge**  
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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 10-12 and  
Thursdays 3:00-4:30

**Course Description**

This course examines concepts and methods used in qualitative research. Primarily, we will study sociological, anthropological, and historical research that employs qualitative methods. Qualitative research methods are part of the social science disciplinary matrix. As such, I have conceptualized the course as an introduction to methods in the social sciences.

**Course Objectives**

- 1) Identify major concepts and methodological approaches in qualitative research.
- 2) Identify a wide-range of studies in qualitative research and literature.
- 3) Explain the components of a qualitative research study.
- 4) Discern the issues of subjectivity, objectivity, and validity that qualitative researchers encounter.
- 5) Distinguish between various types of qualitative research.
- 6) Develop a plan of research.

**Required Texts**

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

deMarrais, K. & S.D. Lapan (Eds.). *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Du Bois, W.E.B. (1899/1996). *The Philadelphia Negro: A social study*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Locke, L.F, Spirduso, W.W., & Silverman, S.J. (2000). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

## **Additional Readings**

Alridge, D.P. The dilemmas, challenges, and duality of an African American educational historian. *Educational Researcher*, 32(9), 25-34.

Boote, D.N. & Belle, P. (2005). Scholars before researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher*, 34(6), 3-15.

Chaudhry, L.N. (1997). Researching my people, researching myself: Fragments of a reflexive talk. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(4), pp. 441-453.

Morris, J.E. (2004) Can anything good come from Nazareth? Race, class, and African American schooling and community in the urban South and Midwest. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(1), 69-112.

***I will provide additional reading assignments throughout the semester on WebCT or as handouts.***

## **Attendance**

You are expected to attend class each week. You are allowed one unexcused absence. I will consider the number of unexcused class absences in assigning final grades.

## **Conceptual Theme of the Course**

I will teach this course primarily from my areas of interest and expertise. Therefore, as an historian who studies the African American experience, a number of the articles that we read in this course will focus on the African American experience. However, I will also cover a wide range of topics in our study of qualitative methods.

## **Writing**

This course is writing intensive. I view writing as a process that improves with practice and hard work. In addition to the numerous writing workshops in class, I suggest that you also work closely with your assigned group to help you improve your writing. I also suggest that you consider working with the UGA Writing Center (<http://www.english.uga.edu/writingcenter/>) if you are not confident with your writing.

## Grading

Grades in this class are based primarily on your performance on written assignments. A's will be reserved for students who exhibit *exemplary* performance on almost all of the written assignments. Points **are not** awarded for effort, but I will take effort into consideration in determining your final grade. My job is to assign you the grade that most accurately reflects the quality of your work. In assigning grades, I use the following framework and numerical scoring:

**A = Exemplary (95-100)**

Work on written assignment was *exemplary*. Student *far exceeded* my expectations.

**A- = Excellent (90-94)**

Work on written assignment was *excellent*. Student *exceeded* my expectations.

**B+ = Very good (85-89)**

Work on written assignments was *very good*. Student *nearly exceeded* my expectations.

**B = Good (80-84)**

Work on written assignments was *good*. Student *met* my expectations.

**B- = Slightly above satisfactory (75-79)**

Work on written assignments was *slightly above satisfactory*. Student *met* my expectations.

**C+ = Satisfactory (70-74)**

Work on written assignments was *satisfactory*. Student *barely met* my expectations.

**C = Unsatisfactory (66-69)**

Work on written assignments was *unsatisfactory*. Student *did not meet* my expectations.

**F = Failure (65 or below)**

Work on written assignments was *unsatisfactory*. Student *did not meet* my expectations.

### Assignment Percentages

Group Project	20%
Literature Review	35%
Proposal	45%

### Due Dates

Please turn in your assignments on the due dates. I will **SUBTRACT 5-POINTS** from your assignment for each day your assignment is late. Also, note that **I DO NOT ACCEPT E-MAIL ATTACHMENTS OF ASSIGNED PROJECTS**, so please bring your assignments to class on the due dates.

**I DO NOT GIVE INCOMPLETE (I) GRADES.**

## Course Schedule

### **January 9**

Introduction

What is qualitative research?

### **January 16**

King Program (Class will meet in Memorial/Adinkra Hall)

Students will receive 5 points to lowest assignment grade for attendance.

(YOU MUST SIGN IN AT THE DOOR.)

### **January 23**

Topics: Social Science Research, Historical Research, and Critical Ethnography

Read deMarrais and Lapan, Chapter 10-11

### **January 30**

Topics: Social Science Research, Historical Research, and Critical Ethnography

Read Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, Introduction-Chapter 3

### **February 6**

Topics: Social Science Research, Historical Research, and Critical Ethnography

Read Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, Chapters 4-11

Read Morris, "Can Anything Good Come from Nazareth?"

### **February 13**

Topics: Social Science Research, Historical Research, and Critical Ethnography, Positivism, Constructionism

Read Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research*, Chapter 1-3

### **February 20**

Topics: Social Science Research, Historical Research, and Critical Ethnography, Interpretivism (hermeneutics), Marxism

Read Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research*, Chapters 4-6

Read deMarrais and Lapan, Chapter 3

Read Derrick P. Alridge, "The dilemmas, challenges, and duality of an African American educational historian"

### **February 27**

Topics: Critical Theory, Postmodernism, Feminism, Reflexivity, Subjectivity

Read Crotty, Chapters 7-9

Read Lubna Chaudhry, "Researching 'my people,' researching myself"

Topics: Proposal Writing and Ethics in Research and Review of Literature

Read Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman, *Proposals that work*, Chapters 1-3

Read Boote & Belle, "Scholars before researchers"

**March 6**  
**Group Presentations**

**March 13**  
Spring Break

**March 20**  
**Group Presentations**

**March 27**  
Writing workshop in class (In Groups)  
Share parts of your proposal with members of your group

**April 3**  
***Lit. Review/Mini-Proposal Due***

**April 10**  
Writing Workshop (In Groups)

**April 17**  
Writing Workshop (In Groups)

**April 24**  
***Final Proposal Paper Due***

*All academic work must meet standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” All students must inform themselves about these standards before performing any academic work.*

*The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

**About the Instructor:** I received my B.A. and M.Ed. degrees in history from Winthrop College in 1987 and 1992, respectively. Before pursuing a doctorate, I taught history for four years in middle and high schools in Columbia, S.C. I received a Ph.D. (specialization in history of American education) from the Pennsylvania State University in 1997. My research focuses on American educational and intellectual history, historical methodology, and civil rights. As an historian, I approach the study of qualitative research from an interdisciplinary perspective that draws primarily from methods in history, but also from methods in anthropology and sociology. My first exposure to qualitative research came through my readings of W.E.B. Du Bois’s *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* and St. Clair Drake’s and Horace Cayton’s *Black Metropolis*. My work in the area of qualitative research is best exemplified in an ongoing research project that I co-direct called the *Foot Soldier Project for Civil Rights Studies* (<http://www.fsp.uga.edu/>).

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

**and**

**RUBRICS**

# Group Article Critique Assignment

## Presentation and Paper

The purpose of this assignment is to critique and analyze a research-based article in the field of qualitative research. Your analysis should focus on explicating the concepts and methods used in the article. The paper should be 8-10 pages in length. The presentation should be no more than 15 minutes. Please use the American Psychological Association Manual of Style for writing this paper.

The presentation and paper for this assignment should cover the following areas:

**1. Overview of Project**

Provide a summary of the article. Explicate the purpose and thesis/argument. Who is the target audience for the article? 1-2 pages

**2. Theoretical Framework**

Identify the theory or theories that frame the research in the article. Discuss briefly the major proponents of the theories used in the theoretical framework. 2 pages

**3. Methodology**

Identify and explain the methodologies used in the study. 2 pages

**4. Discussion/Analysis**

Discuss the results of the study and the author(s) interpretations. What are some of the strengths of the study? What are some of the weaknesses of the study? How might the study be improved? 3 pages

**5. Implications**

Discuss the implication of the study for contemporary society. How might the research in the article help inform or improve some aspect of social life? What might the researchers do to extend the work in the study? 2 pages

# Project Proposal/Literature Review Assignment

## Assignment Description

The purpose of the proposal/literature review assignment is to help you begin to understand the logic and processes involved in proposing and doing qualitative research. The directions below should provide a guide to help you narrow down your topic and analyze the extant literature on your proposed research.

1. Introduction: What is the central problem you intend to address within the context of the broader issue? What is the purpose of your proposed study? What are the questions that will help guide the purpose of your proposed study? Why do these questions need to be asked? What is the significance or rationale of your study? What relationship does your project have to the larger and broader area of inquiry? 3 pages maximum.
2. Review of Literature: Discuss at least ten secondary sources related to the larger topic *and* the issue or problem you propose to study. What are the main arguments in the literature? What themes emerge in the literature? How will your research contribute to or build upon existing literature on the topic of study? 7-8 pages.
3. Conclusion: Restate your thesis and recapitulate how you have defended your argument. 1 page
4. Use the APA format and style for writing this paper.
5. Provide a cover sheet, which should include your name, date, and university affiliation.
6. The paper should be **no more than** 12 pages in length.

## Proposal/Review of Literature Assignment Grading Rubric

#	<b>Components of Paper</b>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Point Value</i>	<i>Points Earned</i>
1	Introduction/Proposal Section	Clearly identifies topic and focus of the study. Presents well organized introduction. Presents clear and concise purpose statement or thesis.	25	
2	Review of Literature	Presents scholarly explication of secondary literature. Identifies strengths and/or weaknesses in the literature. Exhibits exceptional knowledge and grasp of relevant secondary literature. Explains potential contributions of the study to the literature.	25	
3	Writing, Grammar, and Style	Writes clearly and concisely. Makes very few grammatical errors. Uses APA Style correctly.	25	
4	Overall Analysis	Offers exceptional depth of analysis. Exhibits clear understanding of proposed topic.	25	

### Grading Scale:

25 = Excellent  
 23 = Good  
 21 = Good to Average  
 19 = Average  
 17 = Poor

### Instructor's comments:

## Research Project Proposal

The research project proposal is a formal description of a qualitative research project on a topic of your choice. You should choose a topic that, in some way, helps you begin to conceptualize a thesis or dissertation, contributes to a review of literature, helps you think about the significance of your research, and encourages you to think about your identity as a scholar and researcher. The objective is to identify a pressing social or educational *problem* that you hope to address in your research. In length, the proposal should be **no more than** 17 pages, not including the bibliography. The format described below is one used by many funding agencies and by many thesis and dissertation committees; so it is to your advantage to become familiar with it.

### *Cover Sheet*

This one page summary should contain the following information:

1. Your full name
2. Your home and e-mail address
3. Departmental and University Affiliation
4. Project title
5. Time allotted for research
6. Abstract (a concise description of the project in one paragraph).
7. Your signature and the date of submission of the draft.

### *Project Description*

1. **Introduction:** Give a full description of the project as a whole. What are the broad issues that you hope to address (i.e., multicultural education, school vouchers, and gender equity, school desegregation, and problems in special education)? What is the central *problem* you intend to address within the context of the broader issue? What is the *purpose* of your proposed study? What are the questions that will help guide the purpose of your proposed study? Why do these questions need to be asked? What is the *significance* or *rationale* of your study? What relationship does your project have to the larger and broader area of inquiry? Approx. 3 pages
2. **Review of Literature:** Discuss the relevant literature of your project. Who inside your field has written extensively on your topic? How have they treated the questions you seek to answer? Are there important controversies or major disagreements among researchers regarding the issues you raise? Where does your work fit in with that already being offered? Does your work expand on something that has already been done or are you breaking new ground? Approx. 5 pages
3. **Conceptual or Theoretical Framework:** Discuss the concepts or theories that will help guide your thinking in the proposed study. Will you be using critical theory, Marxist theory,

grounded theory, postmodernism, feminist theory, queer theory, post-structuralism, or any other theories to help interpret your data? Be sure to identify the theories you will use and provide a rationale as to why those theories are most appropriate. 1 page maximum.

4. **Subjectivity Statement:** Provide a brief description of yourself as a researcher and discuss your positionality in relation to your proposed study. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your positionality? How might you address any biases that might provide overly skewed interpretations of your data? Approx. 1 page maximum.
5. **Methodology:** Describe the methodology or methodologies you will use in your study. Discuss the methods you will use to answer each of your research questions. What area(s) of qualitative research methodology does your methodology fit? Also, how will you organize your search for information and how will you proceed? Approx. 5 pages
6. **Plan of Work:** Provide an anticipated timeline, as precisely as possible, of when you will begin and end each task in your research. For example, if you plan to begin by reviewing the literature, specify how long it will take. Provide a brief breakdown of the time you might spend in the collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, and writing your final results. Approx. 11/2 pages maximum.

### **Bibliography**

List in standard bibliographical style (use the latest edition of American Psychological Association) the works cited in you proposal.

### **Standards**

This proposal is a serious and formal piece of writing. It should be as professional as possible.

## Paper Proposal Assignment Grading Rubric

### 100 Points

#	Components of Paper	Criteria	Point Value	Points Earned
1	Introduction and Purpose Statement	Presents clear and concise purpose statement and research questions. Clearly illuminates the research problem and significance of research.	25	
2	Concepts and Methodology	Clearly articulates concepts or theories that guide the research and methods used.	25	
3	Writing, Grammar, and Style	Writes clearly and concisely. Very few grammatical errors (i.e. run-ons, misspellings, tense changes). Uses APA Style correctly.	25	
4	Overall Analysis	Offers exceptional depth of analysis. Exhibits clear understanding of proposed topic.	25	

#### Grading Scale:

25 = Excellent  
23 = Good  
21 = Good to Average  
19 = Average  
17 = Poor

#### Instructor's comments: