

## Qualitative Inquiry Program

Course title: **QUAL 8400, 21-073, Qualitative Research Traditions**  
Instructor: **Melissa Freeman**  
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Office Hours: **Tuesdays 4:00-5:00 pm; or by appointment**  
Class Times: **Tuesdays 12:30 – 3:15**  
Location: **Aderhold Room 626**  
Spring 2008: **January 8, 2008 – April 28, 2008**  
Credits: **3.0**

*"The perceiving body does not calculate logical probabilities;  
it gregariously participates in the activity of the world,  
lending imagination to things in order to see them more fully"*  
(Abram, 1996)

### **Course Description**

Foundations of qualitative design: history, philosophy, nature, types, examples, and assessment. Reading and evaluating reports of qualitative research in education and identifying methodological issues.

### **Required Texts** (Available UGA Campus Bookstore)

Crotty, Michael (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN 0-7619-6106-2

Maxwell, Joseph A. (2004). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN 9780761926085

### **Choice of One** (Available UGA Campus Bookstore)

Evans-Winters, Venus E. (2005). *Teaching Black Girls: Resiliency in Urban Classrooms*. Peter Lang Publishing. ISBN-10: 0820471038

Goodwin, Latty, L. (2006). *Graduating Class: Disadvantaged Students Crossing the Bridge of Higher Education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. ISBN: 0791467422

Lewis, Amanda E. (2003). *Race in the schoolyard: Negotiating the color line in classrooms and communities*. Rutgers University Press. ISBN: 0813532256

## **Additional Readings**

All additional readings are on Webct under Course Content, Readings in pdf.

## **Nature of this Course**

Students should expect to engage in a variety of learning experiences: whole class and small group discussions, lectures, readings, videos, and participatory activities.

As a graduate student at The University of Georgia, the free discourse of ideas should be expected. I believe that the open exchange of ideas is necessary for learning. As you will find out quickly from the readings, there is no one right or best way to do qualitative inquiry. Instead, there are many theoretical and methodological positions, along with their associated assumptions and justifications. The goal of this course is not to come to consensus on the merits of one particular perspective, but to provide a basis from which to understand the wide variety of positions held by qualitative researchers and in doing so develop a deeper understanding of your own perspective.

You may find that some of the class readings and discussions challenge your views and theoretical frameworks. In many instances you will question or openly disagree with a perspective that I, one of your classmates, or the author of a text articulate. Diverse perspectives are to be expected in our discussions as are diverse levels of emotions associated with these perspectives. As colleagues who share an interest in understanding a diversity of inquiry perspectives, we can agree to disagree, and do so in a mutually respectful way. I believe we learn best when we actively push ourselves and others to articulate our opinions, perceptions and ideas. I expect openness to difference and a willingness to interpret issues from frameworks that may not be quite so comfortable for you. We all have something to contribute to the class' discussions and understanding. I will encourage an atmosphere of open questioning and critique as an essential part of how we make sense of this diverse field.

Furthermore, since you are all working on individual research proposals you should expect to read beyond the course requirements as well as consider all the course readings as resources for developing your theoretical perspective and research methodology. As you read take note of sources for your topic, other work that has approached your topic with this theoretical perspective, how others have used interviewing or whatever method you plan to use in your design, how others talk about sampling, selecting, justification, validity, ethical concerns, etc., as well as the references they cite. This class cannot give you a template. You are the

designers of your work so like detectives you want to find supporting resources for your argument wherever you can.

## **Objectives**

As a learner in this course you will investigate methodological possibilities and various ways of dealing with procedural, philosophical, analytical and ethical issues related to undertaking qualitative research projects.

Specifically, you will:

1. Identify and explain the range of problems addressed by qualitative research. What is qualitative research? What are the different ways it is conceptualized? How does it define problems? What are its origins?
2. Reflect on your own presuppositions and subjectivities in regard to the educational research processes.
3. Specify the units of analysis examined in qualitative research and the nature of the explanations generated. What kinds of human phenomena does qualitative research examine? What goals does it attempt to achieve?
4. Identify the tasks and processes required to formulate appropriate research problems within educational settings, to design relevant qualitative research strategies for examining such problems, to select pertinent data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis methods, and to assess the results of such efforts.
5. Examine ethical dilemmas and issues related to the research process.
6. Recognize exemplars of qualitative research derived from varying approaches and traditions, identify the goals and presuppositions of these different exemplars, and critically assess the designs for their accomplishment of specified research goals.
7. Develop an understanding of the relationship of educational theorizing to the research process through an examination of a variety of theoretical orientations.

## **University of Georgia Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy**

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A culture of Honesty.” All students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Learning to appropriately quote and paraphrase and to cite and attribute sources is a skill that is key to honest and creative scholarship. All students should review the guidelines at the website <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. If you have questions about what would be considered violations of the standards, please raise them in class or with me.

## **Need for Editorial Assistance**

This course requires substantial writing. Students who need editorial assistance are encouraged to make such arrangements. A good place to start is the UGA Writing Center:

<http://www.english.uga.edu/~writingcenter/home.html>.

## **Accommodations for Qualified Individuals with Disabilities**

It is the policy of The University of Georgia to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability and desire accommodations to complete your course requirements, please notify the course instructor as soon as possible to discuss your request.

## **Note on Use of Data in the Qualitative Research Sequence (QUAL 8400, 8410, 8420, 8520)**

Data from research involving human subjects that is collected for the qualitative research courses in the College of Education (COE), whether taken by students inside or outside the COE, must either be approved for research under an existing UGA Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved application or under the IRB-approved class project application submitted by the instructor of the class. *Students who plan to use data collected in QUAL 8410 in their dissertations MUST have IRB approval for their dissertation research PRIOR to the commencement of QUAL 8410.*

## **Syllabus Changes**

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

## **Requirements and Grading**

1. I expect regular and punctual attendance and will take excessive absences (missing more than 2 classes) into account in the final course grade. If you have a conflict with a session due to a prior commitment, please email or see me privately (so as not to use our limited class time with individual scheduling concerns).
2. I expect people to come to class prepared and to contribute to class discussions and activities. Your participation in these activities is essential. Frequent lack of preparation or failure to contribute will also be taken into account in the final course grade.

3. I expect all assignments to be turned in by the due date. Points will be deducted for papers submitted after the due date. Remember that both the content and the quality of your writing will be assessed.
4. All students are required to use the WebCT services that support this course. Some course material will be available only on the course WebCT site. We will use WebCT to post messages, ask questions, and for sharing resources on specific topics. Assignments are to be submitted on the WebCT site. For access go to: <http://www.uga.edu/> click on “My WebCT,” then log in to this course using your UGA MyID.
5. All students are required to complete the following written assignments with the final grade based on the distribution indicated below:

<b>Project</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Goals and Subjectivities Statement	10	1/27
Critical Book Review	20	2/17
Problem Statement and Research Questions	15	3/9
Theoretical Perspectives Statement	20	3/30
Qualitative Research Proposal	25	4/29
Participation	10	
Total:	100	

### **Assessment Criteria**

Written assignments should show:

- Understanding and use of relevant readings
- A critical engagement with the idea presented
- Clear organization and structure, fluent and accurate writing

### **Grading**

Grading follows the University of Georgia policy:

100 – 93 = A	79 – 77 = C+
92 – 90 = A-	76 – 73 = C
89 – 87 = B+	72 – 70 = C-
86 – 83 = B	69 – 60 = D
82 – 80 = B-	59 – 0 = F

## **Descriptions of Assignments**

### **1. Goals and Subjectivities Statement (10 %) Due: 1/27**

Maxwell (2005) states that “a clear understanding of the goals motivating your work will help you to avoid losing your way or spending time and effort doing things that don’t advance these goals” (p. 15). He identifies several types of goals – personal, practical, and intellectual – that may lie behind your dissertation choice.

For this assignment you will 1) Describe who you are in relation to what and who you are studying and how you think your personal experience and demographic features may affect your research, and 2) Examine your goals and assumptions as they relate to your study.

1. A subjectivity statement describes who you are in relation to what and who you are studying. It is influenced by your personal history, your previous experiences (especially those pertinent to your study topic), and your cultural worldview. The emphasis is on you in relation to your research topic/participants. For example, “What prior experiences have you had that are relevant to your topic or setting? What assumptions about your topic or setting have resulted from these experiences?” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 28)
2. “What goals have emerged from these, or have otherwise become important for your research? How have these experiences, assumptions, and goals shaped your decision to choose this topic, and the way you are approaching this project? What potential advantages do you think the goals, beliefs, and experiences that you described have for your study? What potential disadvantages do you think these may create for you, and how might you deal with these?” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 28)

This will be a 1- 3 page (double spaced) essay that will contribute to the formulation of your final research proposal due at the end of the semester. Please draw on the course readings on subjectivities (Maxwell, Kilbourn, Peshkin, Villenas) as you discuss your subjectivities in relation to your research topic. Use APA style throughout. Do not go over 3 pages!

### **2. Critical Book Review (20 %) Due: 2/17**

For this assignment you will review either:

1. Evans-Winters (2005)
2. Goodwin (2006)
3. Lewis (2003)

Your book review should NOT be a summary of the book. You should provide adequate details, however, as you describe how well the author set out to do what he or she hoped to do in this work and how well he or she was able to present what he or she actually did and found to the reader.

The following questions may be helpful in guiding you through this task (not necessarily in this order). In fact, I encourage you to find your own way of presenting this book to the reader in an engaging and comprehensive way:

**Purpose:** What is the overall intent of the study? What questions was it seeking to answer?

**Theoretical Framework and Epistemology:** In what way does the author frame the work within some form of theoretical framework? Which epistemological perspective most closely fits the author's approach to the study? What assumptions (expressed or evident) lend support to this epistemological approach?

**Methods:** What methods are used to gather the necessary information? Why were these methods chosen? What do you think were their strengths and weaknesses?

**Analysis:** How were the data analyzed? If multiple forms of analysis were used, how were these integrated to form a conclusion?

**Argument :** Is there a central argument? If so how does it guide the presentation of the work? How well does the author persuade the reader with his or her argument? How is the conclusion linked to the data?

**Evidence:** How adequate is the information provided to move the central argument forward?

**Researcher Role:** What is the role of the researcher? What is his/her relationship with participants? How, if at all, does the author present and include his or her subjectivities?

**Style:** Is the text clearly written and accessible?

**Conclusion:** What are your thoughts and reactions to this work? – provide a brief overall assessment of how well you think the author accomplished his or her goal.

Your review should be 6 to 8 pages double spaced and include references and page numbers for any quoted material. Use APA throughout.

### **3. Problem Statement and Research Questions (15%) Due: 3/9**

What is the problem that your study will address? How has it been addressed by others? What have others omitted? How will yours contribute? One of the most important parts of a dissertation proposal is a clear statement of the problem that the study will address. "The problem statement is usually set within a discussion of the background or context to the problem and a statement of the significance of the problem for

educational research. (It is common to see Background, Problem, and Significance as separate subheads in a proposal.) A statement of the problem need not be simple, but it must be clear and it must be explicit. It should be as complex as needed; dissertation problems frequently have a “layered” quality to them. It is generally a broader sort of statement than the specific questions that a study will address” (Kilbourn, 2006, p. 541)

“Most, but not all, qualitative proposals contain a set of questions to be answered that are more specific than the general problem statement. These questions should be seen to be logically linked to the overall problem and should be as precise and clear as possible, within the bounds of the overall approach to the inquiry” (Kilbourn, 2006, p. 549)

For this 1-3 page assignment you will develop a clear problem statement and then link that problem statement to a set of research questions aimed at addressing this problem. APA style should be used throughout.

#### **4. Theoretical Perspective Statement (20 %) Due: 3/30**

Crotty (1998) states that the theoretical perspective is the “stance lying behind the methodology” (p. 66). It gives meaning to the design’s choice of methods, logic and components; “different ways of viewing the world shape different ways of researching the world” (p. 66).

You will construct a 4-5 page essay (double-spaced, 12 font, with references) describing the theoretical perspective you propose to take in your own research study. (Draw from at least 3 different sources beyond the article you use as an example)

Your essay should include:

1. A paragraph introducing your research topic and the problem it seeks to address.
2. An outline of your epistemological stance (Based on Crotty’s description, with which epistemological stance do you identify: objectivist, constructionist, subjectivist? Why? Include a description of the key beliefs about reality and knowledge that this epistemological stance assumes)
3. A description of the theoretical perspective that will guide your methodological design (Based on Crotty’s description, which form/s of social science research do you most identify with: those that seek to predict, understand, emancipate, or deconstruct?) Which theoretical perspective(s) informs your study? (e.g., feminist, phenomenological, symbolic interactionist, etc.) Describe this perspective so that someone not familiar with it understands its basic assumptions. Draw from class readings.

4. An example of a study that has been carried out using this perspective (you can use any study we've used in class or draw from one you have found yourself – just describe it well enough so that a reader unfamiliar with it understands its focus).
5. Using this example, explain and describe the way this theoretical perspective shapes the kinds of questions that you will ask in your own study, the methods used, and the relationship you as the researcher expect to have with your participants.
6. A statement on the possibilities and limitations of this theoretical perspective for your proposed study.

## **5. Qualitative Research Design (25 %) Due: 4/29**

You will design a research proposal for a qualitative study that can be used in your graduate process (additional qualitative courses, a research study for a publishable article, pilot study for your dissertation, dissertation, etc.). Your design should include (adapted from Maxwell, 2002, p. 136):

**Title:** Your title should clearly describe the heart of the study.

**Research goals:** What is this study about? What intellectual, practical, and personal goals will doing the study accomplish? What do you expect to learn? What problem(s) will the study address, and why is it important to address this?

**Conceptual framework:** What are the most important theories, ideas, and knowledge (personal as well as research) that informs this study? How have these shaped the study? What is your own conceptual framework for the study, and how does it use and incorporate these? What do we not know that your study will address?

**Research questions:** What do you want to learn by doing this study? What specific questions is this study meant to explore, describe, or explain? How will answering these questions address the study's goals? How are the questions connected to your conceptual framework?

**Research relationships:** What sorts of research relationships do you plan to establish with the participants in your study or setting, or with those controlling access to your setting or data, and why? How will you go about this, and how will this be influenced by any existing relationships you have with them?

**Site and participant selection:** What setting(s) will you study, and/or what individuals will you include in your study? What is your rationale for selecting this setting and/or these participants? What theoretical

assumptions and practical considerations have influenced these choices?  
How are these choices connected to your research questions?

**Data collection:** How do you plan to collect your data, and what data will you collect? How will these data enable you to answer your research questions?

**Data analysis:** What strategies and techniques will you use to make sense of your data? Why have you chosen these? Indicate the kind of analyses you plan to do; don't just give boilerplate descriptions of methods.

**Validity:** What do you see as the most important potential threats to the validity of your conclusions? What will you do to address these? What limitations on generalizability do you see?

**Materials:** List interview or survey questions you will use. Attach a copy of any instruments that you intend to use.

**Schedule of Class Meetings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
<b>1. 1/8</b>	<b>Overview of Course</b>		
<b>2. 1/15</b>	<b>The Practice of Qualitative Research</b>	<b>Kilbourn (2006) Connor (2006) Merten (1996)</b>	
<b>3. 1/22</b>	<b>The Why of the Study and Researcher Subjectivities</b>	<b>Maxwell Pref. &amp; Chs. 1 &amp; 2 Peshkin (1988) Villenas (1996)</b>	<b>Subjectivities Statement DUE 1/27</b>
<b>4. 1/29</b>	<b>Research Design and Research Questions</b>	<b>Maxwell Chs. 3 &amp; 4 Jones (2002) Watson (2006)</b>	
<b>5. 2/5</b>	<b>Epistemology, Theoretical Perspectives, Methodologies, and Methods</b>	<b>Crotty Chs. 1 &amp; 2 &amp; 3 McCotter (2001)</b>	
<b>6. 2/12</b>	<b>Ethnographic Studies</b>	<b>Choice Book – Book Circles</b>	<b>Critical Book Review DUE 2/17</b>
<b>7. 2/19</b>	<b>Symbolic Interactionism</b>	<b>Crotty, Ch. 4 (pp: 66-78) Faircloth (2004) Kusow (2004)</b>	
<b>8. 2/26</b>	<b>Phenomenology Hermeneutics</b>	<b>Crotty, Ch. 4 (pp. 79-86) &amp; Ch. 5 (87-105) Vagle (2006) Cohen &amp; Omery (1994)</b>	
<b>9. 3/4</b>	<b>Critical Theory Critical Race Theory Queer Theory</b>	<b>Crotty, Chs. 6 &amp; 7 (pp. 112-125, 147-159) Ladson-Billings (1998) Rolón-Dow (2005)</b>	<b>Problem Statement &amp; Research Questions DUE 3/9</b>
<b>10. 3/11</b>	<b>No Class</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>	
<b>11. 3/18</b>	<b>Feminism, Postmodernism &amp; Poststructuralism</b>	<b>Crotty, Chs. 8 &amp; 9 Stoddart (2001) Pillow (2000)</b>	

<b>12. 3/25</b>	<b>TBD</b>		<b>Theoretical Perspectives Statement DUE 3/30</b>
<b>13. 4/1</b>	<b>Data Collection and Analysis Methods</b>	<b>Maxwell Ch. 5 Sorrell &amp; Redmond (1995) Preissle &amp; Grant (2004)</b>	
<b>14. 4/8</b>	<b>Validity</b>	<b>Maxwell Chs. 6 &amp; 7 Freeman et al. (2007)</b>	
<b>15. 4/15</b>	<b>Putting it All Together</b>	<b>Hemmings (2006) Moses 2002</b>	
<b>16. 4/22</b>	<b>Last Class</b>		<b>Qualitative Research Proposal DUE 4/29</b>

**Course Readings**

Cohen, Marlene Z. & Omery, Anna (1994). Schools of phenomenology: Implications for research. In J. M. Morse (Ed.), *Critical issues in qualitative research methods* (pp. 136-156). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Connor, David J. (2006). Michael’s story: “I get into so much trouble just by walking”: Narrative knowing and life at the intersections of learning disability, race, and class. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 39(2), 154-165.

Faircloth, Christopher, Boylstein, Craig, Rittman, Maude, Young, Mary E. (2004). Disrupted bodies: Experiencing the newly limited body in stroke. *Symbolic Interaction*, 27(1), 71-87.

Freeman, Melissa, deMarrais, Kathleen, Preissle, Judith, Roulston, Kathryn, & St. Pierre, Elizabeth A. (2007). Standards of evidence in qualitative research: An incitement to discourse. *Educational Researcher*, 36(1), 25-32.

Hemmings, Annette (2006). Great ethical divides: Bridging the gap between institutional review boards and researchers. *Educational Researcher*, 35(4), 12-18.

Jones, Susan R. (July/Aug. 2002). (Re) writing the word: Methodological strategies and issues in qualitative research. *Journal of College Student Development*, 43(4).

- Kilbourn, Brent (2006). The qualitative doctoral dissertation proposal. *Teachers College Record*, 108(4), 529-576.
- Kusow, Abdi M. (2004). Contesting stigma: On Goffman's assumptions of normative order. *Symbolic Interaction*, 27(2), 179-197.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7 – 24.
- McCotter, Suzanne S. (2001, June). The journey of a beginning researcher. [103 paragraphs]. *The Qualitative Report* [On-line serial], 6(2). Available: <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR6-2/mccotter.html>
- Merten, Don E. (1996). Burnout as cheerleader: The cultural basis for prestige and privilege in junior high school. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 27(1), 51-70.
- Moses, Michele S. (2002). The heart of the matter: Philosophy and educational research. *Review of Research in Education*, 26, 1-21.
- Peshkin, Alan (1988). In search of subjectivity – One's own. *Educational Researcher*, 17(7), 17 – 22.
- Pillow, Wanda S. (2000). Deciphering attempts to decipher postmodern educational research. *Educational Researcher*, 29(5), 21-24.
- Preissle, J. & Grant, L. (2004). Fieldwork traditions: Ethnography and participant observation. In K. B. deMarrais & S. D. Lapan, (Eds.). *Foundations for research: Method of inquiry in education and the social Sciences* (pp. 161-180). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rolón-Dow, Rosalie (2005). Critical care: A color(full) analysis of care narratives in the schooling experiences of Puerto Rican girls. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(1), 77-111.
- Sorrell, Jeanne M. & Redmond, Georgine M. (1995). Interviews in qualitative nursing research: differing approaches for ethnographic and phenomenological studies. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 21, 1117-1122.
- Stoddart, Kenneth (2001). People like us: Memories of marginality in high school and university. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(2), 171 – 191.

Vagle, Mark D. (2006). Dignity and democracy: An exploration of middle school teachers' pedagogy. *RMLE (Research in Middle Level Education) online* 29(8).

Villenas, Sofia (1996). The colonizer/colonized Chicana ethnographer: Identity, marginalization, and co-optation in the field. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(4), 711-731.

Watson, Cate (2006). Narratives of practice and the construction of identity in teaching. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice*, 12(5), 509-526.