

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM
QUAL 8510
(Formerly ERSH 8510)
Theories in Qualitative Design
Spring, 2006

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Catalog Description

This course reviews theories in qualitative research design and conduct. Theories commonly used in qualitative approaches to educational programs and issues will be reviewed, including sociocultural, psychosocial, critical, feminist, and postmodern theories.

Course Description

This course is designed for doctoral students who intend to do a qualitative study for their dissertations. ERSH 8400 and ERSH 8410 are prerequisites.

We see this course functioning as an advanced seminar to assist you in developing your skills in designing qualitative research projects, and evaluating published qualitative studies. Theoretical foundations learned in ERSH 8400 and ERSH 8410 will be revisited as you examine the ways in which theory informs and guides the design and conduct of research.

Course Objectives

As a learner you will be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of the relationship of theorizing to the research process through an examination of a variety of theoretical orientations;
2. Formulate ways to compare and contrast different approaches to human inquiry: positivist, postpositivist, critical, feminist, postmodern, and others;
3. Identify the origins and developments of these varying approaches, underlying values and assumptions, and their strengths and limitations; and
4. Analyze the basic assumptions and implications of the identified research traditions and specify the interrelationships among them. What assumptions about reality, knowledge, and value does each tradition entail?

Required Texts

Alford, R. R. (1998). *The craft of inquiry: Theories, methods, evidence*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Best, S., & Kellner, D. (1997). *The postmodern turn*. New York: The Guilford Press.

- Bruner, J. (2004). *Acts of meaning: Four lectures on mind and culture*. Harvard University Press.
- Feinberg, W., & Soltis, J. F. (1992). *School and society* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Oakley, A. (2000). *Experiments in knowing: Gender and method in the social sciences*. New York: The New Press.

Articles/Chapters

All readings will be available for copying from the OIT Office, 232 Aderhold for the duration of the course. Readings are scanned and available electronically via UGA libraries. To access the on-line documents, go to the Course Reserve module in GIL (<http://gil.uga.edu>). The password access is: theory

WebCT

Additional resources will be posted on WebCT. Use your UGA MyID to access these.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance and Participation

Please be prompt to class.

I expect regular attendance and points will be deducted from the final grade if there are excessive absences (missing more than 6 hours of a 3-credit course). Your participation in class discussions and course activities is essential. If you have a conflict with a session due to prior commitments, please see me privately (so as not to use our limited class time with individual scheduling concerns).

I expect people to come to class prepared, to contribute to class discussions, and participate in activities. Frequent lack of preparation or failure to contribute will also be taken into account in the final course grade.

You will be expected to share written work with others in the class for discussion and feedback.

Email

All students are required to have and to use an electronic mail account. For urgent messages, the class listserv should be used. Other email may be facilitated via WebCT, so be sure to check WebCT regularly.

Posting to the discussion list:

To send mail to the list (ie, to all list subscribers), send the message to the *list* address, QUAL8510-06@listserv.uga.edu

Assignments

Please complete reading and written assignments by the due date. Points will be deducted for papers submitted after the due date (0.5 points per day). Remember that **both** content and quality of your writing products are very important. If there are extenuating circumstances for which you require an extension, please arrange an appointment to discuss this with me. Extensions will not be granted on the due date of assignments.

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 have a disability and desire accommodations to complete your course requirements, please notify me as soon as possible to discuss your request.

Tutorial assistance

Assistance with writing and editing is available from The Division of Academic Enhancement at Milledge Hall Learning Center. Ph. 542 7575.

Walk in assistance is also available at the Student Learning Center. See:
<http://www.slc.uga.edu/students.html#writing>

Free and Open Exchange of Ideas: Classroom Climate

As a graduate student at The University of Georgia, the free discourse of ideas should be expected. I believe the open exchange of ideas is necessary for learning. You may find that some of the class readings and discussions challenge your views and theoretical frameworks. I expect openness to difference and a willingness to interpret issues from frameworks that may not be quite so comfortable for you.

I have opinions, and will express those. You are free to express either agreement or disagreement without fear of consequences. This does not mean of course, that I may not challenge your views or disagree with them. But it does mean that you will experience no consequences for disagreeing with me. If you feel that I am violating this commitment, please arrange an appointment to discuss the issue.

Please be sensitive in your class participation by not unfairly dominating discussions. My goal is to create a psychologically safe space in which everyone feels that they can participate in the discussion. This does not mean people cannot disagree. This does not mean people cannot have emotions connected to their words. What it does mean is that we all need to be sensitive, appreciative, and respectful, no matter how strongly we might disagree.

Academic Honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

The University of Georgia seeks to promote and ensure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and other members of the University community. Academic honesty is defined broadly and simply -- the performance of all academic work without cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed. All students must comply with an appropriate and sound academic honesty policy and code of honest behavior. All members of the University community are responsible for and involved in bringing about an honest university, and all must work together to ensure the success of the policy and code of behavior. Where suspected violations of the academic honesty policy occur, appropriate procedures are designed to protect the academic process and integrity while ensuring due process. All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

I take academic honesty seriously, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Quality academic writing includes accurate reference to others' ideas with appropriate acknowledgement.

Further Information

<http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Note:

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

Requirements and Grading

The following are common expectations and assignments for all students that will be taken into account in the course grades. These will include the following:

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Book review	20	February 13
Theory position paper	25	March 6
Group theory project	20	April 3
Research proposal	25	May 1
Class participation	10	NA
Total Points	100	

Letter grades will be determined as follows:

- 90 - 100 points = A grade
- 80 - 89 points = B grade
- 70 - 79 points = C grade
- 60 - 69 points = D grade

Book Review (20)

Select a book-length qualitative study for review that has been published in the last 3 years in your field of interest. Examine the theories that have informed the study's design, and how the author/s has informed the field of study theoretically. Write a 1500-2000 word review of the book. It would be useful to read a number of published reviews prior of other books to inform your own writing. Your review should address the following elements:

- Research Purpose/Questions
- Theoretical (Conceptual) Framework
- Data Collection Methods and Sampling Procedures
- Data Analysis Methods
- Findings/Conclusions
- Personal Reactions/Critique

I encourage you to submit the review for publication (for example; *Educational Studies, Teachers College Record*).

Theory position paper (25 points)

You will construct a 10-15 page position paper describing your theoretical perspectives in qualitative research. You will situate this discussion in the context of your readings. What theoretical perspectives and scholarly work inform your research? What are the key concepts within this framework? How does it inform your work? What are you drawn to in this particular framework? What will this framework allow you to do in your research project? What questions will it enable you to pursue?

Group Theory Project (20)

In pairs or a small group of 3, select a theoretical perspective to research in-depth. You will organize a 30-minute class presentation with respect to the theory that provides the following information:

- Definition/s of the theory, and focus of research perspective
- Historical and disciplinary background
- Assumptions underlying the approach
- Major concepts/terms used
- Contributing scholars and reference list
- Methodologies and/or methods ore research used by researchers using this theoretical perspective
- Critiques of the approach
- Examples of published research that have used the theoretical approach

Your presentation should include relevant hand-outs for members of the class.

Final Research Proposal (25)

You will design a research project 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.) This proposal will include the following sections:

1. Background of the Problem: What is the personal context for your interest in this study? What is the scholarly literature that informs this work? What do we already know from research about this problem? What are the gaps in the literature? How will your study contribute to this literature? What do you hope to learn? What is the “so what”? What makes your study important and unique?
2. Statement of the Problem and Research Questions
3. Theoretical Framework: What are the macro-level, mid-level, and substantive theories that inform your work?
4. Site of Research: Describe the site where you will be working. Why this site and not another? What is your rationale for selecting this site?
5. Sample and Sample selection: Who are your participants? What is your rationale for selecting these participants? What are your selection criteria? What is your rationale for selecting these people and not others?
6. Methods of Data Collection and Analysis: What are the specific methods you will use to generate the data you need to answer your research questions?
7. Time Line and Implementation: Description of what you will do, how, when, and why
8. Ethical and Political Considerations: What ethical and political issues may emerge as you engage in this study? How will you build strategies into your design to address these issues?
9. Representation: How might you write up your study? Who do you consider your audience(s)? What genre(s) will be most appropriate for those intended audiences?

Assessment criteria:

Written assignments should show:

Understanding and use of the relevant readings

A critical engagement with the ideas presented

Clear organization and structure, fluent and accurate writing.

Course Schedule of Readings and Activities

Course overview

January 9

January 16

MLK Day

January 23

Reading theory, and constructing arguments

Alford, R. R. (1998). *The craft of inquiry: Theories, methods, evidence*. New York: Oxford University Press. Introduction & Chapters 1-4

January 30

Foregrounding interpretive & historical arguments; multiple paradigms of inquiry

Alford, R. R. (1998). *The craft of inquiry: Theories, methods, evidence*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 5-8

February 6 **Examining social problems from multiple perspectives**
Feinberg, W., & Soltis, J. F. (1992). *School and society* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers
College Press. Chapters 1-8
Functionalist, Marxist, and Interpretivist points of view

February 13 **The construction of knowledge in the social sciences**
Oakley, A. (2000). *Experiments in knowing: Gender and method in the social sciences*.
New York: The New Press. Parts 1 & 2, pp. 1-160

*******Book Review Due*******

February 20 **The construction of knowledge in the social sciences**
Oakley, A. (2000). *Experiments in knowing: Gender and method in the social sciences*.
New York: The New Press. Parts 3 & 4, pp. 161-324

Examining mind and culture

February 27
Bruner, J. (2004). *Acts of meaning: Four lectures on mind and culture*. Harvard
University Press.

Examining mind and culture

March 6
Bruner, J. (2004). *Acts of meaning: Four lectures on mind and culture*. Harvard
University Press.

*******Theory position paper due*******

March 13-17 Spring Break NO CLASS

In search of the post modern

March 20
Best, S., & Kellner, D. (1997). *The postmodern turn*. New York: The Guilford Press.
Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-145

Critical theory and postmodernism

March 27
Best, S., & Kellner, D. (1997). *The postmodern turn*. New York: The Guilford Press.
Chapters 5-8, pp. 146-303

Group presentations: Theory Projects

April 3

Individual work week: NO CLASS

April 8-12 AERA **Examining problems: Interpretivist perspectives**

April 10
Phenomenology

Trotman, D. (2005). "Looking for sparks": A phenomenological study of educational
practice of the imaginative lifeworld in primary schools. *Teaching Education*,
16(1), 61-72.

Constructivism

Rodriguez, A. J., & Berryman, C. (2002). Using sociotransformative constructivism to
teach for understanding in diverse classrooms: A beginning teacher's journey.
American Educational Research Journal, 39(4), 1017-1045.

Symbolic Interactionism

Mohan, D. (2004). Reimagining community: Scripting power and changing the subject through Jana Sanskriti's Political Theatre in rural North India. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 33(2), 178-217.

April 17 Examining problems: Emancipatory projects

Feminist Theory

Darling-Wolf, F. (2004). Sites of attractiveness: Japanese women and westernized representations of feminine beauty. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21(4), 325-345.

Howell, S. L., Carter, V. K., & Schied, F. M. (2002). Gender and women's experience at work: A critical and feminist perspective on human resource development. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 52(2), 112-127.

Rolon-Dow, R. (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.

Examining problems: Deconstructive projects

April 24

Postcolonial theory

Somerville, M., & Hartley, L. (2000). Eating place: Postcolonial explorations of embodiment and place. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 21(3), 353-364.

May 1 Debate: The place of theory in educational research

*******Research proposal due*******

Further reading on different theoretical perspectives

Symbolic Interactionism

Rock, P. (2001). Symbolic interactionism and ethnography. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 26-38). London: Sage.

Activity Theory

Lim, C. P. (2002). A theoretical framework for the study of ICT in schools: A proposal. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 33(4), 411-421.

Critical Theory

Kellner, D. (1990). Critical theory and the crisis of social theory. *Sociological Perspectives*, 33(1), 11-33.

Critical Race Theory

DeCuir, J. T., & Dixon, A. (2004). "So when it comes out, they aren't that surprised that it is there": Using critical race theory as a tool of analysis of race and racism in education. *Educational Researcher*, 33(5), 26-31.

Dixon, A., & Rousseau, C. K. (2005). And we are still not saved: Critical race theory in education ten years later. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 7-27.

Queer Theory

Dilley, P. (1999). Queer theory: Under construction. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 12(5), 457-472.

Grace, A., Hill, R. J., Johnson, C. W., & Lewis, J. B. (2004). In other words: Queer voices/dissident subjectivities impelling social change. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 17(3), 301-324.