EDF 6938 (138D) Reading, Designing, and Conducting Qualitative Research
Educational Technology Group
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A note on office hours: I live in Williamsburg, VA and will not hold traditional office hours. Online office hours are by appointment only and will have to be conducted electronically through Skype, Zoom or Google Hangouts. I will generally be available on our course shell’s chat most week days from 10am until 4pm if a need ever arises for simple questions or contact. Otherwise, please email me.

Course description:
This online course is designed to introduce students to the basic concepts and principles of qualitative research methods, along with an overview of the design and conduct of qualitative studies. Examples of different types of qualitative research designs and approaches will be analyzed in relation to specific evaluative criteria.

Course objectives include:
- Facilitating students’ understanding of the qualitative research process as framed by past and current debates on methodological, personal, political, and theoretical concerns.
- Enabling students to become informed consumers of qualitative research
- Providing students with the skills to conduct a qualitative research project.

Since this is an introductory course, it is designed to provide an overview and a point of departure for a deeper understanding of qualitative research methods. Students who are interested in using a qualitative research approach in their dissertation should take advanced courses offered in the College of Education and across campus that focus on data collection, analysis, interpretation, and theories in qualitative research.

Required texts and materials:

Access to Course Reserves on Ares
Each class will also include a selection of additional readings that students will access online through the Education Library. To access these materials, students will need to create an account on the course reserves website on Ares at: https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu. Off-campus students can only access course reserve material through a VPN connection. The instructions for establishing a VPN connection are found on the Moodle course site.

Course Format
This course is taught online through the Canvas website (http://online.education.ufl.edu). Here students will find resources, participate in online discussion forums, and upload
responses to the required assignments. Students will need to have a Gator link ID in order to log on to the course website, and participate in the online exercises and assignments.

**Technical Assistance**
If you require any technical assistance, please use the ‘Help’ button in the upper right hand corner of the Canvas screen to submit a request for help.

**Online Assignments**
Students will have three primary assignments. The first assignment will be to participate in an online discussion around a series of guided prompts relative to the assigned readings. Student responses to these questions will be **public and read and commented upon by all class members** as well as the instructor. The second assignment is to read and analyze research studies based on evaluative criteria provided by the professor. This assignment will include a peer rating component, although the peer ratings will not be factored into the grade for this assignment. The third assignment is to conduct a qualitative research project based on an inquiry question developed by each student. This project may prove useful as a pilot study from which students can develop a dissertation proposal. As part of this assignment, students will keep an online reflection journal that will only be read by the professor so that I can track your progress in developing and implementing your research project.

**Online Environment Expectations**
1. The online classroom requires active participation. You are expected to be present and contributing to the online class discussion each week. If you need to be away for more than this period of time, please let the instructor know in advance so that you will not be considered "absent."
2. The number of times you respond to the class discussion area is less important than the **content** of your responses.
3. Build on others’ postings—do not reiterate ideas, **reference them**. Each message must take the discussion further. This means that you will need to read all the messages others have posted and reference them.
4. Instructor access: Teaching an online class makes the professor more accessible than regular office hours but I would like to establish some reasonable expectations in this area. I will read and respond to all posts within a 48 hour time frame. In addition, students may contact me by email or phone if they have a specific concern they wish to discuss. The best times to reach me will be in the evening from 8 – 11 pm (I tend to be a night owl) for direct contact.

**Academic Integrity**
“UF students are bound by the Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the UF community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at UF, the following pledge is either required or implied, “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code ([http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/)) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the
possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Disability Accommodations
Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Office of the Dean of Students. Staff will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. More information is available at this website: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/.

This course utilizes the electronic course reserve service offered by the George A. Smathers Libraries. Under the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with disabilities have the right to equal access, use and benefit of the course materials that have been placed on reserve in the Libraries.

- Students who have registered with the University of Florida Disability Resource Center should initiate their request for assistance and accommodation in accessing these materials.
- The Center will work with the Libraries Course Reserve Unit to provide accessible course materials.
- Information submitted by the student to the Libraries in fulfilling the request for accommodation will be kept confidential.
- Information on services for students with disabilities is available through the University of Florida Disability Resource Center at 352-392-8565 or at accessuf@dso.ufl.edu
- General information on course reserves is available through the Course Reserves Unit at 352-273-2520, or email at ares@uflib.ufl.edu.

Other Support Services
Other resources are available at http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help for:
- Counseling and Wellness resources: http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support
- UF Police Department: Please call 392-1111 or 911 for emergencies

Assessment
All forms of assessment are grounded in a professor’s assumptions about learning and expected outcomes for students. In doctoral level classes, my primary concern is that students grasp the material and demonstrate mastery in ways commensurate with how they are likely to be assessed in their professional careers. One key attribute is the ability to read complex material and present strong critiques in oral and written form similar to defending one’s research in a defense or job interview, or preparing a paper for public presentation and/or publication. A second attribute is the ability to identify a problem or
concern that needs further investigation, acquire the skills to collect information (data), analyze it, and analyze the results in relation to future actions. Grades will be based on meeting the following expectations:

- You are expected to post regularly, preferably in relation to the dates listed on the course calendar document. It is your responsibility to contact me in advance to explain any absence. More than two unexcused postings will impact your final grade.
- Students are expected to have read the assigned material and be prepared to ask questions and engage in the discussion forums.
- All students are required to complete the written assignments on the due dates listed on the syllabus. Any exceptions must be approved by me in advance. No ‘incomplete’ grade will be given except under rare circumstances. Students who need to take emergency medical leave will be given options to make up their missing assignments/papers/projects in consultation with the professor. All written assignments should demonstrate:

  ✓ Critiques of the relevant literature
  ✓ Ability to develop a critical and justified argumentation structure
  ✓ Reflections on personal subjectivity
  ✓ Clear organization and structure with no spelling and grammatical errors
  ✓ Use of APA style

Below is a brief outline of the assignments and the grading scale. A more detailed outline of the assignments is provided in a separate course planning guide.

1. **Responding to guided inquiry questions – 28 points**
   Each week I will post questions on the course site tied to the assigned readings. Students will be expected to respond to these questions and to engage in an online dialogue with classmates.
   **Due:** Specified on course site

2. **Responding to research articles – 28 points**
   We will cover four specific perspectives for framing qualitative research, along with a research study utilizing that perspective to illustrate the close linkage between theory and method. Students will analyze these articles based on the following elements: (a) Research purpose/questions/central argument; (b) Theoretical/conceptual perspective; (c) Data collection methods and sampling; (d) Data analysis process and techniques; (e) Findings/conclusion; and, (f) Personal reactions/critique with reference to the author’s choices, and your perspective on future research directions. These responses will be assessed based on a rubric provided by the instructor.
   **Due:** Specified on course site

3. **Writing in a reflective journal – 8 points**
   As part of the inquiry process, students will keep a reflective journal about their reactions and feelings about their research progress. This journal will only be read
by the instructor. The responses will not be assessed, but students will receive a point for each week they complete their entry on time.

**Due: Specified on course site**

4. *Designing and conducting a qualitative research inquiry – 38 points*

Each student will develop a qualitative inquiry project that includes a description of why they chose a particular topic, describe research literature relevant to their topic, collect data relevant to their question(s), and discuss actions they would take based on what was learned from the preliminary analysis of the data. Grading for this assignment has two components: 1) an online media presentation (19 points); and a written report (19 points).

- **Media presentation due:** April 17
- **Written report due:** April 24

**Grading Scale**

- 96 – 100   A
- 92 – 95    A-
- 88 – 91    B+
- 84 – 87    B
- 80 – 83    B-
- 77 – 79    C+
- 74 – 76    C
- 70 – 73    C-
- 60 – 69    D
- Below 60    F
Course outline
Because this is an online course, I have listed the general topics we will cover each week from Wednesday to Wednesday as our first week begins midweek this academic year.

Jan. 4 - 11
Week 1 Approaches/traditions in qualitative research
- Creswell, chapters 1 & 2
- Forum question #1
- Community forum #1

Jan. 11 – 18
Week 2 Qualitative research designs
Ethics in educational research/IRB issues
- Creswell, chapter 3
- Handout on ethical dilemmas
- Forum question #2
- Community forum #2
- Reflective journal #1

Jan. 18 – 25
Week 3 Qualitative approaches to inquiry
- Creswell, Chapters 4 & 5
- Forum question #3
- Community forum #3
- Reflective journal #2

Jan. 25 - Feb. 1
Week 4 Developing a research focus, collecting data, and interviewing
- Creswell, chapter 6 & 7
- Forum question #4
- Community forum #4
- Reflective journal #3

Feb. 1 – 8
Week 5
Standards of evidence in evaluating qualitative research
- Creswell, chapter 10
- Article rubric (handout)
- Forum question #5
- Community forum #5
- Reflective journal #4

Feb. 8 – 15
Week 6
Qualitative research from a phenomenological perspective
- Research critique #1
- Reflective journal #5

Feb. 15 – 22
Week 7
Qualitative research from an ethnographic perspective
- Research critique #2
- Reflective journal #6
Feb. 22 – Mar. 1
Week 8
Qualitative research from a social-constructivist perspective
- Research critique #3

Mar. 1 – 15
Week 9
Qualitative research from a case study perspective
- Research critique #4
- **Spring Break: Mar. 4-12**

Mar. 15 – 22
Week 10
Analyzing qualitative data
- Creswell, chapter 8
- Reflective journal #7
Mar. 22 – 29
Week 11 Preparing the qualitative research report/dissertation proposal
  • Creswell, chapter 9
  • Reflective journal #8

Mar. 29 – Apr. 5
Week 12 Qualitative research in cyberspace
  • Forum question #6
  • Community forum question #6

Apr. 5 – 12
Week 13 Qualitative research for policymakers
  • Forum question #7
  • Community forum question #7

Apr. 12 – 19 No readings – work on final projects
  • Media presentation of inquiry project due April 17
  • Written report of inquiry project due April 24