Educational Research I: Building a Body of Evidence with Qualitative Methods

RMTD 420

Wednesday 7-9:30pm, Water Tower Campus, Corboy Law Center, Room 423, Blended

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Course Overview

Course Description

This course introduces students to the practice of qualitative research. Course content is applicable to research and evaluation contexts in education as well as other social and human service practices. As a result of this course, you will be able to:

1. Read and understand a range of qualitative research studies, including how qualitative researchers define research problems, describe and explain research, and develop aims of inquiry;
2. Differentiate a variety of means of generating qualitative data, including interviews, observations, and document analyses;
3. Carry out aspects of a qualitative research study, including developing research questions, generating data, and analyzing data;
4. Practice reflexivity, including awareness of your own subjectivities, understanding of research as relationship, and the ethical responsibilities of qualitative researchers.

The IDEA http://luc.edu/idea/ (Student IDEA Log In is where you will complete the course evaluation at the end of the course) course objectives essential for this course include:

- Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving and decisions)
- Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view as needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course

Other objectives important to this course include:

- Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values
- Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view

Course Readings

This course has two required texts:


Additional readings are referenced in the weekly chart and full citations are provided at the end of the syllabus.

*All readings detailed below can be found on Sakai under Resources unless it comes from one of our required texts.

Qualitative Research—Refers to the book: *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*


### Weekly Schedule with Course Readings & Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Core Reading (Required)</th>
<th>Work Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Text</td>
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| 4 (Sept. 21) | Sampling; Ethics and Human Subjects (On-line)  | Qualitative Research: Ch. 4, pp. 73-103  
Jones, Torres & Arminio (2014)  
Rapley (2014)  
LUC Human Subjects  
Hemmings (2006)  
Deeds & Pattillo (2015) *optional*  
View Panopto Presentation | ARTICLE PRESENTATION ONLINE  
PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE FORUM 9/21-9/23 |
| 5 (Sept. 28) | Interviews (Guest Speaker: Lionel Howard/Bridget Virtually in Class) | Qualitative Research: Ch. 5, pp. 107-136  
Brinkmann (2013)  
Kelly (2003)  
Article from Guest Presenter  
Martinez & Deil-Amen (2015) | ARTICLE CRITIQUE |
| 6 (Oct. 5)   | Observation (Face-to-Face)                      | Qualitative Research: Ch. 6, pp. 137—161  
Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (2011)  
Jones et al. (2014a)  
Guest, Namely & Mitchell (2013) | COMPLETE CITI TRAINING  
COMPLETE MID-SEMESTER CLASS PARTICIPATION/READING RUBRIC |
| 7 (Oct. 12)  | Document Analysis (Bridget and group On-line Zoom appointments during class time) | Qualitative Research: Ch. 7, pp. 162—189  
Basit (2003)  
Bowen (2009) | RESEARCH PROPOSAL |
| 8 (Oct. 19)  | Responsibility, Reflexivity, Hegemony and Control (Bridget and group On-line Zoom appointments during class time) | Dimitriadis (2001)  
Milner (2007)  
Bryman (2004) (Administration and Supervision ONLY)  
Tierney & Clemens (2006) (Higher Education ONLY)  
Cucchiara (2015) (Curriculum and Instruction ONLY)  
Lather (2010) (Cultural and Educational Policy Studies ONLY)  
Patton (2002) (Research Methodology ONLY) | |
| 9 (Oct. 26)  | Data Analysis (Face-to-Face)                    | Qualitative Research: Ch. 8, pp. 195-236  
Cornish, Gillespie, & Zittoun (2014)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 (Nov. 2)</td>
<td>Spend time in groups on Data Analysis (Hiram in classroom for group assistance; Bridget available for online assistance )</td>
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<tr>
<td>(No Class)</td>
<td></td>
<td>DATA ANALYSIS PLAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 (Nov. 9):</td>
<td>Qualitative Research: Ch. 9, pp. 237—266</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goodness</td>
<td>Dennis (2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>or Quality</td>
<td>Firestone (1993)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Ropers-Huilman &amp; Winters (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Guest Speaker: Kristin McCann in class/Bridget Virtually in class)</td>
<td>DATA GENERATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 (Nov. 16):</td>
<td>Merriam, Ch. 10, pp. 267—291</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postmodern</td>
<td>Parker &amp; Lynn (2002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>textual</td>
<td>D’Enbeau, Buzzanell, &amp; Duckworth (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>representations</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Face-to-Face)</td>
<td>Chang (2011)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ARTICLE CRITIQUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 (Nov. 23)—</td>
<td>NO CLASS; THANKSGIVING</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 (Nov. 30):</td>
<td>Wrap-up and review</td>
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<tr>
<td>(On-line</td>
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<td>PRESENTATIONS ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE FORUM 11/30-12/2</td>
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<td>on Forum)</td>
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<td>QUALITATIVE INQUIRY PROJECT, REFLEXIVITY</td>
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<td>15 (Dec. 7):</td>
<td>No class meeting</td>
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**Grading**

Points will be awarded for each assignment as follows below. Final grades will be determined by totaling the points received on each of the assignments above (100-94= A, 93-90 =A-, 89-86=B+, 85-83=B, 82-80=B-, 79-77=C+, 76-74=C, 73-70=C-, 69-60=D, 59 or below =F). An “A” signifies exceptional work in this course. Assignments are generally due by 11:55pm on the day specified in the Weekly Schedule, unless otherwise noted.

Boldfaced assignments are submitted in your research groups. All other assignments are submitted individually.
### Assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation/Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Encountering Qualitative Research Assignments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Article Presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Article Critique #1</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Article Critique #2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Qualitative Inquiry Project</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflexivity paper (Final project)</td>
<td>15</td>
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### Participation/Reading grade

Attendance is a requirement of the course. By attending face to face and online class, including viewing Presentations online, you all add valuable and unique perspectives that are essential to the course. You are expected to participate in class sessions through questions, critiques, illustrations, suggestions, and other forms of constructive feedforward. I will assess your participation by the “quality,” not the frequency of comments. In this case, quality is defined as thoughtful, respectful, and insightful questions and comments that serve to strengthen the ensuing dialogue. Please notify me in advance if you will be unable to attend class, face to face or online.

This course requires approximately 8-10 hours per week for completion of assignments. This time is mainly spent reading materials, communicating with classmates face-to-face and electronically, course forums, and completing projects. Inability to meet this time requirement will reduce your learning from the course, and, in some cases, fulfillment of assignments needed to complete and receive credit for the course.

Each of you is responsible for the material in the readings. The readings contain a broad array of scholarly and contemporary ideas and are designed to prompt critical analysis and thought-provoking questions, as well as provide a common information base for intellectually stimulating dialogue. The opinions and ideas in the readings do not necessarily reflect my opinion; rather they represent different aspects and ways of viewing qualitative research.

This course will primarily consist of dialogue and group activities. Please complete readings prior to class, consider your reactions to the authors’ ideas and prepare to share these with others. Some of the following questions may be helpful:

1) Does the author reveal personal biases? If so, what are they?
2) What is of value to your professional practice in the reading?
3) Which quotes are meaningful to you? Why?
4) In what ways is the reading connected to central ideas in the course?
5) How do your own experiences affirm or refute key concepts in the reading?

You will submit self-assessment to Assignments by 11:55pm CST on October 5 and answer three questions found at bottom of rubric for a mid-semester check-in. I will assess you at the end of the
semester for a final grade on Class Participation and Reading Comprehension based on the rubric found on Sakai.

**Late assignments**
Due to this course having multiple assignments, including many that build on one another, I strongly discourage late submission of assignments. Please see me if for some reason you are unable to meet a deadline. If you contact me ahead of the deadline we may be able to schedule an extension for no more than one week. If not, late papers may not be accepted and/or subject to at least a grade letter reduction. Please turn in all assignments electronically on Sakai. For your own protection, please retain all returned and graded work.

**Assignment Descriptions**

**Assignment Submission**
Please submit assignments electronically via Sakai, unless I indicate that they need to be submitted in LiveText (Article Critique 2, Reflexivity Paper). I will repost your assignments with grades and comments in Sakai or LiveText, respectively. If you have difficulties uploading the file, then please email it to me at bkelley4@luc.edu. To assist with file organization, please use the following naming conventions for your assignments if you email it: [Assignment Tag]_Firstname. For example, when submitting the first assignment, I would name it EQR1_Bridget.doc.

**Encounter with Qualitative Research Assignments [EQR]**
The purpose of these assignments is to facilitate case-based learning of qualitative research. These assignments support the first three objects in the course.

All of these assignments require you to consider the following elements of the qualitative study, which are adapted from AERA standards and evident in course readings:

- Research Problem/Question
- Theoretical framework
- Review of the literature (if provided)
- Methodology, design and logic
- Sample selection, unit of analysis
- Data collection (generation) methods
- Classification, analysis and interpretation

**Article Presentations**
With a partner, choose a study in your discipline or area of study that utilizes qualitative approaches to inquiry. To identify articles for review, conduct a literature search on a topic of interest to you and your partner. Many substantive and discipline-specific journals publish qualitative research studies (e.g., American Educational Research Journal; Journal of College Student Development). Such journals often publish research that utilizes a range of methodologies, so be sure that the study utilizes qualitative research methods. Alternatively, the following list contains journals that predominately
publish qualitative studies. You might also want to search within a journal to find an article on a topic of interest to you. Please note that in these journals, some articles are theoretical papers, rather than an empirical study that utilizes qualitative methods. You do not want to use a theoretical paper for this assignment. You are welcome to send me the study if you are uncertain that it uses qualitative approach(es).

Action Research International
Discourse Processes
Discourse Studies
Educational Action Research
Field Methods
Electronic Journal of Sociology
Ethnography
The Grounded Theory Review
International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education
International Journal of Social Research Methodology Theory & Practice
Journal of Contemporary Ethnography
Journal of Social and Personal Relationships
Narrative Inquiry
Qualitative Family Research
Qualitative Health Research
Qualitative Inquiry
The Qualitative Report
Qualitative Research
Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice
Qualitative Sociology
Quality and Quantity: International Journal of Methodology
Research & Reflection: A Journal of Leadership and Organizations
Sociological Research Online
Social Research Update

Next, carefully review the study. In a no more than 15 minute-interactive (audio, video) presentation, identify the following elements of the study

- Research Problem/Question
- Theoretical framework
- Review of the literature
- Methodology, design and logic
- Sample selection, unit of analysis
- Data collection (generation) & analysis methods
- Discussion of findings, conclusion, implications

Article Critiques
Provide a 1500 word critical review of an empirical qualitative research article that discusses at least three (and not more than five) of the following elements (adapted from AERA standards).

- Research Problem/Question
- Theoretical framework
• Review of the literature
• Methodology, design and logic
• Sample selection, unit of analysis
• Data collection (generation) & analysis methods
• Discussion of findings, conclusion, implications

Be sure to address both *strength(s)* and *weakness(es)* of the article. Summarize your critique in a thesis statement that can be the organizing argument for the paper. In the process of discussing and critiquing the research design elements of the article, be sure to provide evidence from the article to support your claim(s), as well as utilize course readings to describe the research design elements and substantiate your critique. Please note that you choose to critique the research problem/question, theoretical framework, and/or review of literature, be sure to how focus on how the nature of the element is consistent and inconsistent with the study methodology, rather than about the substantive quality of the element in your particular field. Finally, give your overall impression of the article and how it could help you understand your area of study. Please see attached rubric under Assignments.

Second Article Critique needs to be submitted in Sakai and in LiveText (*LiveText*).

**Qualitative Inquiry Project**

Throughout this course, you will conduct a small qualitative study in groups of 3—4 students. This study is not to be a master’s research project and/or a dissertation research project; instead, consider it a research proposal with a pilot study. I do encourage you to use this opportunity to explore a topic you are interested in pursuing for a dissertation project, as it will be a means to further understand the topic, refine research questions and plans, and develop protocols. For assignments submitted in a timely manner, I will provide formative feedback. The final research paper will be graded.

Each group member will need to complete CITI Training course which is required of all students, faculty or administrators doing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved projects at LUC. It orients you to the history and rationale for human subjects’ research from an ethical standpoint.

Please note: You will need to generate the same number of pieces of data as you have group members. For example, if you have four members in your group, you need four pieces of data. It is neither necessary nor advisable to collect more data than this.

Throughout the course, the following interim assignments and final paper will be due. Unless noted, please submit one assignment per group.

**Research Ideas/Questions:** Please write a brief (1/2-1 page) description of a project you are interested in researching. Identify the general topic you wish to explore, and please also take the additional step of posing research questions that your study would answer. When selecting your research idea, please keep in mind the relatively narrow time frame and scope of this assignment. Indicate if there is anyone in class you share research interests with/would like to work with on the Qualitative Inquiry Project.
**Research Proposal [RP]:** Due to the nature of qualitative research, a pre-ordinate, prescriptive research plan is inappropriate. Even still, qualitative researchers identify a place to begin, a direction in which they intend to go, and an anticipated means of proceeding. Such a plan is particularly helpful for novice qualitative researchers. As background to this plan, be sure to 1) conduct a literature review on previous research on your topic and theoretical frameworks for understanding your topic, and 2) identify potential study participants or invested stakeholders to collaborate with you on your research plan, meeting with them and gaining their insights and contributions.

Structure your proposal after the model provided by Maxwell (2005). The proposal should include:
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Conceptual framework
- Research questions
- Research methods
- Validity

Using the resource provided on Sakai, be sure to also include a *Management Plan* for your research study, which is common in team projects, and clarifies deadlines for tasks as well as which group members are responsible for which parts of the project.

**Protocols [P]:** For each data source that you plan to use—interview, observations, document analysis—submit a draft of a protocol. An informed consent form should also be included, per guidelines by the Loyola University Institutional Review Board ([http://www.luc.edu/irb/irb_XIX.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/irb/irb_XIX.shtml)). As you develop the protocol(s), consider the following questions: How will you introduce the study to participants? What questions will you ask and/or what will you focus on observing to ensure you collect data that addresses your research question? How does your theoretical framework help inform your questions? Does the order of the questions matter? What will be your role or position? Be sure your protocol includes the following characteristics:
- Informed consent contains necessary components outlined by LUC IRB guidelines, and is easily readable/understandable for the intended audience
- Protocol gives enough specificity to guide what data the researchers intend to generate, while also providing opportunity for emergent issues
- Protocol will likely generate data that provides a holistic, coherent, complex understanding of the phenomenon
- Protocol will generate concrete data to address the research question
- Protocol is well-organized, easy to use, and uses language that is understandable for the participant

**Data Collection & Reflection [DCR]:** Individually, submit the data that you have generated, such as an interview transcript or field notes. You should have your initial notes as well as a “cleaned up” version. Utilize the format provided in Sakai for the “cleaned up” version. At the time you submit this, be sure to also share it with your group members.

**Data Analysis Plan [DAP]:** Based on the course readings, develop a half-page to one-page description of how your group intends to analyze the data generated for the study. Considering the following questions: How will you make meaning from your data? What techniques, if any, will you use? What
will be the process of the analysis? How will you ensure validity? How do you intend to represent the findings?

Be sure your plan includes the following characteristics:

- Addresses the research question(s)
- Provides a way of sorting, organizing and reducing the data
- Provides a way of developing categories, themes, or patterns in the data
- Provides a way to validate findings
- Recognizes that the analysis process is emergent and not procedural

**Presentations of Qualitative Inquiry Projects [P]**: Prepare a 10-15 minute presentation about your research project. Be sure to include an overview of your research questions; conceptual framework; research methods—data generation procedures, data analysis procedures; how you addressed validity; and a preliminary finding. This presentation will give you an opportunity to receive feedback on your final project from your peers. Please prepare an interactive, audio and/or video presentation.

**Research Project Paper [RPP] (group portion of final project)**: Write a 6000-8000 word paper (excluding Tables, Figures, and Appendices) to represent your research study. Think of this paper as a research study proposal with findings from a pilot study. This paper incorporates components of the previous assignments. See rubric for assessment.

**Individual Final Project: Reflexivity [R]**

Based on your experiences doing the small study and the readings in the course, write a paper where you practice reflexivity. In addition to submitting this on Sakai, this paper must also be submitted in LiveText for a core assessment. Choose ONE of the following approaches to reflexivity and write a 2000-2500 word paper where you practice reflexivity. Because this is a reflexivity paper, it MUST be written in first person. How you organize and structure the paper is up to you. Feel free to be creative in your approach. For example, you may choose to do so in the form of a story, you may organize it chronologically, by topic, or another way you find meaningful. This paper is NOT a reflection on your learning experience during the course. See rubric for assessment.

**Option ONE: Critical Self-Reflection**

Reflexivity is the "process of critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences, and so forth...It can point to the fact that the inquirer is part of the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand" (Schwandt, 2003, p. 260). The following questions may be helpful in stimulating your thinking:

- What was your role with participants (i.e., complete-observer, observer-as-participant, participant-as-observer, complete participant)? How did this role affect the data you generated and analyzed? (refer to the Dimetriadis article for an example of reflexivity on researcher role)
- What are your perspectives, biases, among other views, on what you are studying? How did these perspectives, biases, lenses, affect your study, including the formation of the study, data generation, data analyses, data representation and so on? Did your perspectives change over the course of the study? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
- How might your intersecting social identities (e.g. ability, gender identity or expression, language, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, spirituality) have impacted your role/interaction with the participant(s)? How might your intersecting social identities have impacted your understanding of the phenomenon you studied?
• In what ways did your views and understandings of oppression, privilege, power and social justice impact your role in this research? What ways could these issues be more prominent in future research you conduct?

**Option TWO: Inquiry as Action**
Schwandt (2003) also wrote the following about reflexivity. "...all accounts (in speech and writing) are essentially not just about something but are also doing something. Written and spoken accounts do not simply represent some aspect of the world, but are in some way involved in that world" (p. 260). While this quote refers to the accounts of research, the same can also be said about the process of doing a qualitative inquiry. As researchers, we are not just generating data without interfering with the world around us, we are also doing something with the social world. The following questions may also be helpful in stimulating your thinking:

- Did the research process and/or representation stimulate and facilitate action or social change? If so, describe this. If not, describe what you can do to facilitate this process.
- Were/was the participant(s) in the research empowered to act as a result of participating?
- Were you concerned with the extent to which participant(s) developed a greater understanding or appreciation for the topic of your study? If so, describe this. If not, what could you do differently?
- Were you concerned with how you were representing your research participant(s)? Was the participant's own constructions enhanced or made more informed and sophisticated as a result of participating in the research?
- Have you considered how your data representation may be used/misused by intended and unintended audiences? Describe these considerations.
- At Loyola, we emphasize the importance of social justice. How do you operationalize social justice? In what ways did your study "do" something to support social justice and address social inequities?

**Learning Community at Loyola University Chicago and School of Education**

Please see [http://www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/](http://www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/) for a summary of information on LUC’s policies on academic honesty, accessibility, conceptual framework, ethics and electronic communication policies.

**Conceptual Framework**
The conceptual framework of Loyola’s School of Education is "Social Action through Education." This course contributes to the realization of this framework by:

- Equipping students to evaluate qualitative studies critically (refer to Encounter Qualitative Research Assignments, particularly the article critique that is assessed in LiveText) (CF1)
- Practice culturally responsive approaches to research
- Understand and practice ethics necessary to be professional and just qualitative researchers (refer to the Qualitative Inquiry Assignments, particularly the reflectivity paper that is assessed in LiveText) (CF3)
- Engage with local, and perhaps global, communities in the process of carrying out a qualitative research project
**Diversity**

A characteristic of qualitative research is an awareness of one's own values, beliefs, and biases. We will address diversity issues (gender, race, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, methodological preferences, among others.) throughout the course in our readings and discussions as they relate to those biases and to engaging in ethical research. In order to foster a learning community in the classroom, openness to and respect of various perspectives and backgrounds is essential. As your instructor, I will promote full participation and contribution by all class members, asking that varied viewpoints be expressed, thoroughly considered and respected by all members of our class.

**Cell Phones/On Call**

If you bring a cell phone to class, please be sure it is either off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to respond to a call during class, please leave the room without disrupting class. Communicating with others not in our classroom (texting, emailing, instant messaging, among other modes) is not allowed during class. Your computer can ONLY be used to view readings, follow along with presentations, or take notes. If you are on call as part of professional responsibilities, please advise me at the start of the class session.

**Email/Sakai**

Email will be used as the primary mode of correspondence for this course. I will respond to/be available for email communication between Monday and Friday and get back to you within 48 hours during the work week. It is imperative that you activate your Loyola University Chicago account and check it daily. Please also check your Loyola spam mail and mail foundry to ensure course related messages are not misdirected. Additionally, Sakai will be used extensively to conduct forums, turn in assignments, and as a source to update the class about course material.

**APA Style/Writing**

Graduate education places a strong emphasis on developing writing skills and the ability to communicate effectively. All papers should be submitted in APA 6th Edition format. Guidelines for this will be covered at the start of the semester and a handout will be posted on the Sakai site. Key provisions are that papers should be 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one inch margins. The quality of writing is also of high importance. You are strongly encouraged to submit drafts of papers to peers and/or the Writing Center for initial feedback. If you have significant concerns regarding your writing ability you may be required to consult with the University Writing Center (http://www.luc.edu/writing/) for assistance.

**IDEA Course Evaluation Link for Students**

Each course you take in the School of Education is evaluated through the IDEA Campus Labs system. We ask that when you receive an email alerting you that the evaluation is available that you promptly complete it. To learn more about IDEA or to access the website directly to complete your course evaluation go to: http://luc.edu/idea/ and click on STUDENT IDEA LOGIN on the left hand side of the page.
Dispositions

All students are assessed on one or more dispositional areas of growth across our programs: Professionalism, Fairness, and the Belief that All Students Can Learn. This course will assess dispositions related to professionalism, fairness, and the belief that all students can learn. You can find the rubrics related to these dispositions in LiveText. Disposition data is reviewed by program faculty on a regular basis. This allows faculty to work with students to develop throughout their program and address any issues as they arise.

LiveText

All students, except those who are non-degree, must have access to LiveText to complete the benchmark assessments aligned to the Conceptual Framework Standards and all other accreditation, school-wide and/or program-wide related assessments. You can access more information on LiveText here: LiveText.

Syllabus Addendum Link

www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/. This link directs you to policies related to academic honesty, accessibility, ethics, and electronic communication.

All of these readings are available as PDF files posted on this course’s Sakai Resources page.

Course Reading List


Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications