

## Advanced Qualitative Research Methods: Case Study (RMTD 470)

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### Course Overview

#### Course Description

This course will be an in-depth study of a qualitative research methodology, case study research. Students will have an opportunity to consider the value of case study research within social science research, explore various approaches to doing case studies, and engage in doing a case study. Through the process of studying case study research methodology in-depth, various issues common across qualitative research methodologies will be addressed, such as the flexibility in research design and the ethical dimensions of qualitative research. Course content is applicable to research and evaluation contexts in education as well as other social and human service practices.

The outcomes of the course are the following:

- Understand the characteristics of various qualitative research methodologies, particularly case study research methodology (Conceptual Framework 1);
- Be able to conduct a qualitative research study using culturally responsive practices, including developing research questions, designing a study, generating data, analyzing and interpreting data, and representing findings, using a particular methodology, such as case study (Conceptual Framework 2 and 4);
- Be able to critically self-reflect on actions as social inquirers, including the ways in which one does and does not promote social justice (Conceptual Framework 3)

The IDEA 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 ethical reasoning and/or ethical decision making
- Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view

#### Required Text

Stake, Robert E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, Robert K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## Grading

<u>Scale</u>		<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Points</u>
93-100	A	Article Critique	10
90-92	A-	Group Discussion of Case Study	20
86-89	B+	Final Project	60
83-85	B	Class participation	10
80-82	B-		
Below 80	C		

Class participation is based on attendance, contributions to group discussion and small group activities, timeliness of assignments, and presentation of your final project.

Late assignments: I strongly discourage turning in assignments after the due date. The nature of the course is that the assignments build on one another. As a result, turning in one late assignment affects the appropriate completion of subsequent assignments. I will accept late assignments and do not reduce points for late assignments, but I will also provide less feedback and will not as rapidly return your graded assignment to you. If you know in advance that you will be gone when an assignment is due, please plan ahead and submit it early. If you have an unexpected personal circumstance, please talk to me about your concerns with completing course obligations.

## Weekly Schedule with Course Readings & Assignments

### Week 1 (Aug. 31): Introduction to Course, What is Case Study Research?

[Mabry, L. \(2009\). Case study in social research. In P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman, and J. Brannen \(Eds.\), \*The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods\*, pp. 214–227. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.](#)

[Hebert, T. A. & Beardsley, T. M. \(2001\). Jermaine: A critical case study of a gifted child living in rural poverty. \*Gifted Child Quarterly\*, 45\(2\), 85-103.](#)

### Week 2 (Sept. 7): “What is a case?” (Ragin & Becker, 1992); What is this a case of?\*

Stake, Ch. 1: The Unique Case (p. 1-14) & Ch. 2: Research Questions

Yin, Ch. 2: Designing Case Studies (p. 27-45)

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 6: The power of example.

Stake, Ch. 10: Harper School (p. 137-160)

*Case Ideas DUE*

### Week 3 (Sept. 14): What is a case? Bounding Case and Context\*

[Thomas, G. \(2011\). A typology for the case study in social science following a review of definition, discourse, and structure. \*Qualitative Inquiry\*, 17\(6\), 511–521.](#)

[Wells, A.S., Hirshberg, D., Lipton, M., & Oaks, J. \(1995\). Bounding the case within its context: A constructivist approach to studying detracking reform. \*Educational Researcher\*, 24, 18–24.](#)

Thomas, G., & Myers, K. (2015). *The Anatomy of the Case Study*. London, UK: Sage. Ch. 7, p. 93-120.

### Week 4 (Sept. 21): Why? Purposes and Aims

Yin, Ch. 1: Getting Started (p. 2-25)

Stake, Ch. 3: The Nature of Qualitative Research (p. 35-48)

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings of case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219–245.

### Week 5 (Sept. 28): FIELDWORK (No Class Meeting)

*Case Description and Research Questions DUE*

### Week 6 (Oct. 5): How? Planning, Designing, and Data Gathering \*

Stake, Ch. 4: Data Gathering (p. 49-70)

Yin, Ch. 2: Designing Case Studies (p. 49-69), Ch. 3: Preparing to Collect Case Study Evidence & Ch. 4: Collecting Case Study Evidence (p. 70-130)

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach: An Interactive Approach*. Sage. Ch. 7: Presenting and Justifying a Qualitative Study, p. 117-137.

**Week 7 (Oct. 12): How? Researcher Role and Ethics\***

Stake, Ch. 6: Case Researcher Roles (p. 91-106)

Thomas, G. (2015). *How to do your case study*. London, UK: Sage. Ch. 5 78-94

Nespor, J. (2000). Anonymity and place in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6, 546—571.

Clark, M.C., & Sharf, B.F. (2007). The dark side of truth(s): Ethical dilemmas in researching the personal. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13, 399—416.

**Week 8 (Oct. 19): How? Analysis and Interpretation\***

Stake, Ch. 5: Analysis and Interpretation & Ch. 7: Triangulation (p. 71-90, 107-120)

Yin, Ch. 5: Analyzing Case Study Evidence (p. 132-175)

*Protocols DUE*

**Week 9 (Oct. 26): Individual Meetings (NO REGULAR CLASS MEETING)**

*ARTICLE CRITIQUE DUE*

**Week 10 (Nov. 2): How? Analysis and Interpretation**

To be determined based on research proposals.

Mabry, L. (1991). Nicole, seeking attention. In D. B. Strother, *Learning to Fail: Case studies of students at risk*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa. Eric No. ED357104.

**Week 11 (Nov. 9): Representing Cases\***

Stake, Ch. 8: Writing the Report (p. 121-132)

Yin, Ch. 6: Reporting Case Studies (p. 164-191)

Caully, D. N. (2008). Making qualitative research reports less boring: The techniques of writing creative nonfiction. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14, 424—449.

**Week 12 (Nov. 16): Evaluating Case Studies\***

Revisit Stake p. 107-120

Revisit Yin p.45-49, 200-207

Thomas, G. (2011). *How To Do Your Case Study: A Guide for Students and Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Ch. 4, p. 61—71.

Thomas, G., & Myers, K. (2015). *The Anatomy of the Case Study*. London, UK: Sage. Ch. 3 & 4, p. 29—52

**Nov. 23—NO CLASS; THANKSGIVING**

**Week 13 (NOV. 30): CASE STUDY RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

**Week 14 (Dec. 7): CASE STUDY RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

**Week 15 (Dec. 14): Final Examination**

FINAL PROJECT DUE (MUST BE UPLOADED ON SAKAI BY 7:00PM)

*\*indicates a week that an example of a case study will be added to the reading list*

## Assignment Descriptions

### Assignment Submission

Please submit all assignments electronically via Sakai. I will repost your assignments with grades and comments. If you have difficulties uploading the file, then please email it to me at [lkallemeyn@luc.edu](mailto:lkallemeyn@luc.edu). To assist with file organization, please use the following naming conventions for your assignments if you email them to me: [Assignment Tag]\_Firstname. For example, when submitting the first assignment, I would name it **CI\_Leanne.doc**.

### Article Critique [AC]

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate an understanding of research design elements of case study research. Students are expected to include a 2—3 page *critical* review of an empirical research article that utilizes case study methodology and discuss at least one (and not more than four) of the following elements:

- Bounding of the case and context
- Research Problem/Question
- Theoretical framework
- Methodology, description and justification
- Case selection
- Data collection (generation) methods
- Analysis and interpretation
- Validity, including generalization

Be sure to address both *strength(s) and weakness(es)* of the article. If possible, 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. Finally, keep in mind that what you choose NOT to write about also helps the reader focused on what you view as the major strength(s) and weakness(es) of the article.

### Grading Guidelines

- Paper demonstrates an appropriate understanding of a limited number of research design elements for case study research (2 pt)
- Paper addresses both strength(s) and weakness(es) of the article (2 pt)
- Paper includes appropriate evidence from the article to support the critique (2 pt)
- Paper includes an integration of course readings to describe design elements and substantiate the critique (2 pt)
- Paper reflects appropriate discretion of which research design elements NOT to focus on in the paper (1 pt)
- Paper has a clear argument/thesis, good organization, and relatively no grammatical errors, typos, etc. (1 pt)

## Group Discussion of a Case Study

With a partner, choose a research article or book that utilizes case study research methodology in your field or area of interest. Carefully review the study so that you will be prepared to lead a 30 minute discussion and/or activity on the article. Be sure to email [lkallemeyn@luc.edu](mailto:lkallemeyn@luc.edu) the article or book section at least one week prior to your assigned week, so that it can approve the study and your colleagues will have an opportunity to review it. For your discussion, consider doing some or all of the following:

- Provide a synopsis of the study
- Prepare discussion questions based on the case study that relate to topics for that particular week of the course (and prior topics in the course, as appropriate)
- Prepare discussion questions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the study
- Develop a class activity related to the article

Be sure that all aspects of the discussion/activity focus on *how* the study was conducted, not what the study found.

When grading the presentation, I will be looking for the following (adapted from <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching-resources/document-your-teaching/peer-evaluation-teaching/>):

### Presenters as teachers

- Communicates clearly (1 pt)
- Has a positive attitude towards colleagues (1 pt)
- Exhibits respect for all colleagues (1 pt)

### Experts on content knowledge

- Finds a good example of case study methodology (2 pt)
- Has thorough knowledge of the article (2 pt)
- Connects the study to at least one conceptual idea we have discussed in the course (2 pt)
- Uses relevant information from course readings in teaching (2 pt)
- Focuses class discussion on the study's methodology, or aspects of how the study was conducted/reported (and not study findings) (2 pt)

### Facilitators of learning processes

- Places colleagues at the center when designing and teaching the presentation and activity (1 pt)
- Has an activating presentation and activity for colleagues (1 pt)
- Builds a presentation and activity in such a way that colleagues gradually learn to learn in a self-directed manner (1 pt)
- Gives feedback (1 pt)
- Assesses students' learning (1 pt)

### Organizer

- Cooperates with co-presenter, so there is equitable responsibilities with presentation and activity (1 pt)

- Communicates when cooperating with co-presenter (1 pt)

### **Case Study Research Project**

Throughout this course, you will develop a research proposal for a case study that includes a pilot study. I 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. If you obtain IRB approval for your project, you may use this project as a pilot study for your dissertation.

Throughout the course, you will have an opportunity to receive feedback from your colleagues and myself on the following elements of your final project:

Case Ideas [TI]: Half-page to one-page summary of 1) description of potential cases you would like to study and/or 2) your research interests, including two or three research problems or issues you are interested in exploring in a case study. This assignment will not be graded.

Case Description and Research Questions [CD]: First, describe your case in as much detail as possible based on your current understandings of the case, including how you are bounding the case and context and why you selected this case. Next, list of 3 to 5 research questions and/or foreshadowing issues based on your case ideas and what you have learned in the class for developing a research question and identifying issues. Be sure that your questions: 1) can be addressed using case study research methodology; 2) Point to the case; 3) Point to the context; and 4) Point to the issue(s)

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 wholistic, coherent, complex understanding of the case

- 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

Presentation: Prepare a 15 minute presentation about your final project. Be sure to include an overview of your case study research design, including particular strengths of the design as well as limitations or questions you have about the design. This presentation will give you an opportunity to receive feedback on your final project from your colleagues. Please prepare a powerpoint presentation and/or handout to support your presentation.

Final Project [FP]:

Develop a research proposal that utilizes case study methodology. In a dissertation, the third chapter typically focuses on methodology, so you could also think of this project as the methodology chapter of a dissertation.

I have provided a detailed outline for qualitative research proposals adapted from Maxwell (2005) in Chapter 7 to fit case studies. This outline provides a common way of organizing your research proposal; however, you are welcome to reorganize and amend this outline to fit your particular study. In the process, be sure the following are components are included:

- Abstract (2 pt)
- Introduction (1 pt)
- Conceptual framework
  - Brief literature review that frames the research topic, including
    - what is already known and (1 pt)
    - how this study makes a contribution (1 pt)
  - Theoretical framework (1 pt)
- Case Description and Research Questions
  - Introduce your case(s), including
    - How you are bounding the case (4 pt)
    - Context of the case (4 pt)
  - Research questions
    - State your question(s) (2 pt)
    - Demonstrate how research questions are consistent with your inquiry aims, conceptual framework, and case study methodology (2 pt)
    - Demonstrate how your research questions point to the case, context, and issue(s) (2 pt)
- Research methods
  - Overview of case study methodology—what is it and why did you choose it to address your research question(s) (2 pt)
  - Case selection process in detail (4 pt)
  - Researcher role/relationships with study participants (2 pt)
  - Data generation methods—what were they and how did you generate the data? (4 pt)



- Description of procedures for data analysis and interpretation (3 pt)
- Validity
  - What particular validity concerns were central for you to consider in this study? (2 pt)
  - What strategies did you use to help ensure validity? (2 pt)
- Preliminary finding and/or an outline for your findings section
  - Addresses the research question(s) (2 pt)
  - Form and organization of the paper reflect the intentionality of representation (2 pt)
  - Appropriately addresses generalizability (2 pt)
  - Appropriately acknowledges the limitations of the study or findings (2 pt)
- Appendices
  - Data collection tools (2 pt)
  - Timeline—when will you complete elements of the study (2 pt)
  - Dissemination plan—how will you or have you shared study findings with study participants or local stakeholders? (1 pt)
  - NOTE: You do not need to append interview transcripts or fieldnotes.

#### Additional Grading Criteria

- Integrates course readings to justify research approach, describe methodology, and/or to discuss appropriate generalizability and acknowledge limitations of the study (2pt)
- Integrates researcher reflexivity, and recognizes that the researchers have biases (2pt)
- Utilizes headings and subheadings to organize the paper effectively (2pt)
- Well-written, relatively free of typos and grammatical errors (2 pt)

Be sure that you cite appropriate literature that informs the design of your research, in addition to what you may include in your literature review.

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

Please see [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](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 case studies critically (CF1)
- Practice culturally responsive approaches to case study research (CF2)
- Understand and practice ethics necessary to be professional and just qualitative researchers (CF3)

- Engage with local, and perhaps global, communities in the process of developing or carrying out a case study (CF4)

A characteristic of qualitative research is an awareness of one's own values, beliefs, and subjectivities. We will address diversity issues (gender, race, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, methodological preferences, etc.) throughout the course in our readings and discussions as they relate to those subjectivities 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.

### **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](#).