

**RMTD 420 COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH I: BUILDING A BODY OF EVIDENCE WITH QUALITATIVE METHODS**

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Campus Office: Lewis Tower #1122, 820 N. Michigan Ave.

Class Meetings Via Zoom link in Sakai: Wednesdays 5:30-8:00 pm

Virtual Office hours Wed & Thurs 12:30-1:00 via zoom in Sakai or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

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. You will be able to:

1. Read and understand a range of qualitative research studies, including how qualitative researchers define research problems, nature of explanations, and aims of inquiry
2. Practice reflexivity, including awareness of your own subjectivities, understanding of research as relationship, and the ethical responsibilities of qualitative researchers
3. Develop habits of a qualitative researcher, including ethical practice, reflexivity, writing and representation, and analytic thinking
4. Practice a variety of means of generating and analyzing qualitative data, including interviews, observations, and document analyses
5. Design a coherent qualitative research study.
6. Understand the breadth of the historical and philosophical traditions within the field of qualitative inquiry

**COURSE GRADING**

<b>Grading</b>	<b>95-100 pts.</b>	<b>A</b>
	90-94 pts.	A-
	86-89 pts.	B+
	83-85 pts.	B
	80-82 pts.	B-
	75-79 pts.	C+
	70-74 pts.	C
	< 70 pts.	F

**Late Work/Make-Up Policy**

Due to this course having multiple assignments, including many that build on one another, I strongly discourage late submission of assignments. Additionally, late submission of your work will result minimal comments from me. If you need to turn in an assignment late, please do so with the understanding of these matters. Consistently late assignments will affect your participation grade, since timeliness is critical for class project. Late assignments related to your participation grade should be made up as soon as possible after the missed class. Please reach out for alternative arrangements if more than one week is needed.

## Summary of Assignments

Participation (Class & Qualitative Inquiry Project)	55
Attendance	7
Writing Exercises	13
Contributions to discussion	5
Data generation: Document Analysis	5
Data generation: Interview Transcript	5
Data generation: Fieldnotes	5
Preliminary Analysis	5
Book Club	10
Value of Qualitative Inquiry Paper	5
Qualitative Study Synopsis	10
Prospectus	20
Reflexivity Paper	5
Future Aspirations	5

## READINGS

Hyperlinks provided for readings available electronically through Loyola University Chicago library. Other readings posted in designated lesson and Sakai Resources Folder.

### Required Text

[Hays, D. G., & Singh, A. A. \(2012\). \*Qualitative inquiry in clinical and educational settings\*. The Guilford Press.](#)

### Additional Readings

Please note that readings indicate as “to be determined” will be added as the class project and your final projects take shape.

[Cho, J. \(2018\). \*Evaluating Qualitative Research \(Understanding qualitative research\)\*. Oxford University Press. Ch. 1 & 2, p. 1-41.](#)

[Chavez, C. \(2008\). Conceptualizing from the inside: Advantages, complications, and demands on insider positionality. \*The Qualitative Report\*, 13\(3\), 474-494.](#)

[Dimitriadis, G. \(2001\). Coming clean at the hyphen: Ethics and dialogue at a local community center. \*Qualitative Inquiry\*, 7\(5\), 578-597.](#)

Faulkner, S. L. (2005). Method: Six Poems. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(6), 941–949.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405276813>

Fine, M. (2018). *Just research in contentious times: Widening the methodological imagination*. Teachers College Press. Ch. 1, p. 1-10.

[Markham, A. N., Harris, A., & Luka, M. E. \(2021\). Massive and Microscopic Sensemaking During COVID-19 Times. \*Qualitative Inquiry\*, 27\(7\), 759–766.](#)  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420962477>

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

[Milner, H. R. \(2007\). Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen. \*Educational Researcher\*, 36\(7\), 388-400.](#)

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE WITH COURSE READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week	Topic	Readings	Small Group Activity	Writing Exercises	Assignment due
9/1	Intro to Course, What is Qualitative Inquiry	<a href="#">Hays &amp; Singh, Ch. 1, 3 (p. 67-89), &amp; 4 (p. 103-111, 127-133)</a> <a href="#">Markham et al (2021)</a>	Identify Research Purpose & Question	Educational Autobiography	
9/8	Reflexivity, Entering the Field, & Sampling	<a href="#">Hays &amp; Singh, 5 &amp; 6</a> Choose one: <a href="#">Chavez (2008)</a> , <a href="#">Dimitriadis (2001)</a> , <a href="#">Faulkner (2005)</a> , Fine (2018), <a href="#">Milner (2007)</a>	Develop Sampling Plan & Data Generation Tools	Reflexivity Memo	CITI Course Completion (optional)
9/15	Trustworthiness & Quality, Institutional Review Board	<a href="#">Hays &amp; Singh, Ch. 7</a>	Develop & Review IRB application	Reflexivity Memo	Value of Qualitative Inquiry Paper
9/22	Document Analysis	<a href="#">Hays &amp; Singh, Ch. 3 (90-98) &amp; Ch. 9</a>	Work on Recruitment & Document Analysis	Analytic & Methodological Memos	Qualitative Study Synopsis
9/29	Interviews & Observation	<a href="#">Hays &amp; Singh, Ch. 8</a>	Pilot Interviews & Observations	Any Type Memo (except Integrative)	Document Analysis
10/6	Take a Breath	<a href="#">Hays &amp; Singh, Ch. 10</a>	To be determined	Any Type Memo (except Integrative)	Interview Transcript/Fieldnotes
10/13	Data Analysis	<a href="#">Hays &amp; Singh, Ch. 11</a>	Preliminary Data Analysis	Analytic Memo	
10/20	Data Analysis & Representation	<a href="#">Hays &amp; Singh, Ch. 12</a>	Refining Data Analysis & Representation	Integrative Memo	Coding of data sources
10/27	Paradigms & Traditions; Proposal Writing	<a href="#">Hays &amp; Singh, Ch. 2; Ch. 4 (p. 112-126, 133-136)</a> , Maxwell (2005)	Interdisciplinary Dialogues	Reflexivity Memo	
11/3	Paradigms & Traditions	To be determined	Peer Feedback on Proposal	Memo	
11/10	Conceptual Frameworks	To be determined	Peer Feedback on Proposal	Memo	Initial Ideas
11/17	Methodologies	To be determined	Peer Feedback on Proposal	Memo	
11/24	THANKSGIVING BREAK				
11/27	Book Club	Selected book	Book Club Discussion	Discussion Summary	
12/1	Goodness & Quality	<a href="#">Cho (2018), Ch 1 &amp; 2</a>		To be determined	Presentations
12/8	Course Reflections			To be determined	Presentations
12/14	No synchronous class				Prospectus

## ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

### Participation (55 pt)

Class participation includes the following:

- Attending synchronous sessions prepared to engage (7 pt; 0.5 per class)
- Contributing to class and small group discussions (5 pt)
- Completing data generation and analysis activities for class qualitative inquiry project (20 pts)
  - Document analysis (5 pts)
  - Interview transcript (5 pts)
  - Fieldnotes from observation (5 pts)
  - Preliminary analysis of data sources (5 pts)
- Completing writing exercises (13 pt; 1 per class)
- Book club (10 pt)

### Value of Qualitative Inquiry Paper (5 points)

The purpose of this assignment is for you to *experience* the extent to which and ways in which qualitative research may or may not generate and contribute knowledge. Identify a qualitative research article about a topic or issue that may help you understand your own life experiences, whether personal or work-related (refer to Hay & Singh's Characteristics of Qualitative Research on p. 5—9). This topic DOES NOT have to relate to your research interests, but it may.

Examples:

- As a new faculty member I read *Challenges of the Faculty Career for Women: Success and Sacrifice* by Maïke Ingrid Philipsen and Mary Deane Sorcinelli.
- As a reader on dissertation committees, I have read several studies on students' experiences in higher education that have shaped my own work with students.
- When I was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, I read qualitative studies on women's experiences with cancer treatment.

While you are reading the study, make notes about 1) new insights that you have, 2) connections or lack of connections to your own life experience and why, 3) findings that the researcher presents that you agree with/disagree with/question, and so on. Then, look through the notes you have taken, and develop a thesis about the extent to which and/or ways in which the study may or may not have generated and contributed to knowledge. Write a 600-800 word paper, in which you support this thesis with evidence from your experience reading the book/article. In the process of writing the paper, integrate course readings that relate your personal experience with the book/article to the literature on qualitative research.

### Grading Guidelines

- Based on a qualitative research study (1 pt)
- Has a clear argument or main idea (1 pt)
- Integrates evidence/examples from the study to support the argument (1 pt)
- Demonstrates how qualitative research contributes knowledge (2 pt)

### **Qualitative Study Synopsis (10 points)**

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 your group. Many substantive and discipline-specific journals publish qualitative research studies (e.g., American Educational Research Journal). 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*

Provide a brief overview and analysis of your article. Use the template provided in Sakai, as much as possible identify key elements of the study (refer our course checklist). Provide a brief description for each element (if provided), including page number where you found the supporting evidence. Then, using the definitions and characteristics of qualitative research from Hay & Singh's Characteristics of Qualitative Research on p. 5—9 demonstrate how this study exemplifies a qualitative research study.

Grading Guidelines

- Attempted to identify 7 elements of the study (7 pt)
  - Research purpose
  - Research problem/question
  - Conceptual framework
  - Methods or modes of inquiry, including role of researcher, sampling and research site(s), data sources and/or participants, data collection, and data analysis and interpretation
  - Validity
  - Significance of study
- Demonstrated characteristics of a qualitative study consistent with course readings (3 pt)

### **Qualitative Research Prospectus (20 pts)**

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. Be sure to 1) conduct a literature review on previous research on your topic and conceptual 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, when possible.

The prospectus should include the following, although following this order is not necessary:

- Research purpose
- Research problem/question
- Conceptual framework
- Methods or modes of inquiry, including role of researcher, sampling and research site(s), data sources and/or participants, data collection, and data analysis and interpretation
- Data collection (generation) methods, including sample selection
- Validity
- Significance of study

Refer to chapter 7 in Maxwell (2005) and Hays and Singh (2012) text to assist you. You will have interim assignments due throughout the course that will be opportunities for formative feedback from colleagues and instructors. Checklist used in grading your final prospectus will be in Sakai. See Assignments in Sakai.

### **Reflexivity Paper (5 pts)**

Write a 1500-2000 word paper where you practice reflexivity regarding the qualitative inquiry study you propose in your prospectus. 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 may draw from some of your reflexivity memos that you wrote during the course, as appropriate. It may focus on one or both of the elements below. See Assignment in Sakai for further details.

NOTE: This paper is NOT a reflection on your learning experience in this course.

### Grading Guidelines

- Awareness of researcher's identities and responsibilities (1 pt)
- Understanding of how identities/responsibilities affected the validity of the study (1 pt)
- Good understanding of the process of doing qualitative research (1 pt)
- Ability to be self-critical; honesty and willingness to admit faults (1 pt)
- Well-written, organized, coherent, concise (1 pt)

### Future Aspirations (5 pts)

Consider what you have learned this semester, and then address the following questions.

1. How will you integrate what you have learned into your professional aspirations?
2. What else would you like to learn regarding qualitative research as you move forward in your career?
3. What additional authors, books, or articles would you like to read? List 3 to 5 items.
4. What topics, if any, would you be most important to you to study in-depth through an advanced seminar? Examples of past and current seminars include: Critical theories in qualitative research, case study research, qualitative data analysis, discourse analysis, mixed methods research.
5. What qualitative research skill sets would you like additional opportunities to develop? What are some ways that you might seek out opportunities to practice these skill sets? For example, in your current job? Through work on a research team? With a particular mentor?

You will be given one point for each of the 5 questions addressed.

**Loyola University Chicago  
School of Education  
Syllabus Addendum**

**\*School of Education Commitment - COVID-19:** Loyola's School of Education (SOE) recognizes that this is an unprecedented time. We understand that moving into the 2021-2022 academic year while living in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic may stir feelings of uncertainty, fear, or anxiousness. We want you to know that your safety, health, and well-being, as well as that of our faculty and staff, remain our primary concern. We want to be able to support you in any way that we can. We ask you to embody the Jesuit value of [\*Cura Personalis\*](#), or care for the whole person, as we prepare to learn together. We ask that you consider your way of being in this community, to act with care, and treat all with dignity to keep yourself and others safe. If you are not feeling well, please use Loyola's SYMPTOM Checker. It can be found on the webpage or APP [Loyola Health](#) under the **COVID -19 Related Information Tab** at the top of the page. The University understands that you may encounter obstacles that make reaching academic goals more difficult. We strongly encourage you to access the Student Resources on [Loyola's COVID-19 Response webpage](#) for information, supports, and resources on basic needs such as housing, food, financial aid, and medical and mental health. This web page also offers

information on official University communications, access to technology, and student services. All Loyola University Chicago administrators, faculty, and advisors are also here for you.

The SOE is committed to working with all students to address any challenges that may arise during the semester. Please reach out to your professor as early as possible to discuss any accommodations you think may be necessary in order for you to successfully complete your coursework. Active and engaged communication with all of your professor is encouraged. We know the FALL 2021 Return to Campus will be like no other, but through collaboration, communication, and shared responsibility, we will not only get through this difficult time; we will thrive.

**\*COVID-19 Required Personal Safety Practices:** We all have a part to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Following a simple set of required personal safety practices can lower your own risk of being infected and can help protect others. All members of the Loyola community are expected to follow these practices while on any of the University's campuses. **Face masks or face coverings must be worn by all students, faculty, and staff while on any of Loyola's campuses, when in the presence of others, in classrooms, and in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.** Appropriate use of face masks or coverings is critical in minimizing the risks to others around you, as you can spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. Please be sure to review all [LUC REQUIRED Safety Protocols](#).

**\*COVID-19 Reporting Protocol:** In preparation for our upcoming semester, Loyola University Chicago's Emergency Response Management team has been working to develop [protocols](#) in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines that help ensure the health and safety of our community. Given the rising number of COVID-19 cases across our country, it is very likely that incidence within our community will occur in the fall.

Students, faculty, and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 must report their case to the University as soon as possible. **If you have tested positive for the virus, please contact us at [covid-19report@LUC.edu](mailto:covid-19report@LUC.edu) or by calling 773-508-7707. All COVID-19-related questions or feedback should continue to be sent to [covid-19support@LUC.edu](mailto:covid-19support@LUC.edu), not the new case reporting email address.**

### **SOE Vision**

The School of Education of Loyola University Chicago is a community that seeks to transform members to impact local and global communities through the principles of social justice.

### **School of Education Mission**

The School of Education at Loyola University Chicago, a Jesuit Catholic urban university, supports the Jesuit ideal of knowledge in the service of humanity. We endeavor to advance professional education in service of social justice, engaged with Chicago, the nation, and the world. To achieve this vision, the School of Education participates in the discovery, development, demonstration, and dissemination of professional knowledge and practice within a context of ethics, service to others, and social justice. We fulfill this mission by preparing professionals to serve as teachers, administrators, psychologists, and researchers who work across the developmental continuum, and by conducting research on issues of professional practice and social justice.

### **Conceptual Framework and Conceptual Framework Standards**

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

- Understanding how mixed methods research supports social action
- Equipping students to evaluate mixed methods studies critically
- Practicing culturally responsive approaches to research
- Understanding and practicing ethics necessary to be professional and just mixed methods researchers
- Engaging with local and/or global communities in the process of doing mixed methods 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.

No Conceptual Framework Standards or Dispositions are assessed in this course.

### **Smart Evaluation**

Towards the end of the course, students will receive an email from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness reminding them to provide feedback on the course. They will receive consistent reminders throughout the period when the evaluation is open, and the reminders will stop once they have completed the evaluation.

- The evaluation is completely anonymous. When the results are released, instructors and departments will not be able to tell which student provided the individual feedback.
- Because it is anonymous and the results are not released to faculty or departments until after grades have been submitted, the feedback will not impact a student's grade.

The feedback is important so that the instructor can gain insight in to how to improve their teaching and the department can learn how best to shape the curriculum.

### **This course will be assessed on the following objectives:**

3. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
4. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course
12. Learning to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the public good

### **Online Course Policies**

#### **\*Privacy Statement**

Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Students will be informed of such recordings by a statement in the syllabus for the course in which they will be recorded. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with

informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording. Recordings including student activity that have been initiated by the instructor may be retained by the instructor only for individual use.

### **\*Class Conduct**

One important aspect of a Jesuit education is learning to respect the rights and opinions of others. Please respect others by (1) allowing all classmates the right to voice their opinions without fear of ridicule, and (2) not using profanity or making objectionable (gendered, racial or ethnic) comments, especially comments directed at a classmate.

### **\*STUDENT SUPPORT**

#### ***Special Circumstances--Receiving Assistance***

Students are urged to contact me should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have any special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work, please let me know so we can establish a plan for assignment completion. If you require assignment accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with [Student Accessibility Center](http://www.luc.edu/sac/) (SAC) (<http://www.luc.edu/sac/>).

#### **\*Center for Student Access and Assistance (CSAA)**

*Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE Referral for yourself or a peer in need of support: [www.LUC.edu/csaa](http://www.LUC.edu/csaa). If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf.*

This link directs students to statements on essential policies regarding *academic honesty, accessibility, ethics line reporting and electronic communication policies and guidelines*. We ask that you read each policy carefully.

This link will also bring you to the full text of our conceptual framework that guides the work of the School of Education – ***Social Action through Education***.

#### **Syllabus Addendum Link**

<https://www.luc.edu/education/academics/syllabi/>