

EDS 102BGS Proposed Syllabus: Exploring Learning Contexts: Field Methods in Education Global Seminar Athens 2027

This document is a draft syllabus. If the Global Seminar is approved, we will collaborate with EDS staff to formally approve the course for the Global Seminar and revise the syllabus content accordingly to align with the seminar's structure and objectives.

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Overview

Welcome to EDS 102BGS! I am eager to engage in this learning experience with all of you. You may not yet consider yourself a “researcher.” However, we are all inherently researchers; conducting studies in our daily lives. This class will introduce you to a particular kind of empirical research - qualitative research. We will explore the foundational principles and conceptual underpinnings of qualitative research in the field of education. You will learn about the purpose of qualitative research, different types of qualitative research, and how qualitative studies are designed and conducted. We will explore how to identify a research problem, collect and analyze data, and disseminate findings. We will also examine the ethical dimensions of qualitative research. As equity is an important goal in the field of education and in research, we will also read qualitative research and/or reflections on conducting research in education by, with, and/or on scholars and students from historically marginalized groups.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the differences between qualitative and quantitative research.
- Understand the purpose and role of qualitative research in education.
- Understand and know how to design the fundamental components of a qualitative research study.
- Understand the basics of qualitative data collection and analysis.

- Understand the challenges of qualitative research design, including ethics.

My goal is that every student will leave this course with an understanding of the basics of qualitative research methods and how to design a qualitative study. My hope is that this class will provide a stable foundation for future methods courses and support you on a path of scholarly creativity that can meaningfully benefit you and the communities you engage with.

Course Materials

We will use one main text:

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation, 4th edition*. John Wiley & Sons.

You can access a free [online version](#) of the text through the UCSD library/EBSCO host. Alternately, you may wish to purchase the book from [Amazon](#) or your preferred vendor. Be sure to purchase the 4th edition.

All other materials will be posted on the [Canvas](#) course website. You will also submit assignments on this site.

Course Context, Modality, and Expectations

We aim for us to build a supportive and enriching learning community within the class. In addition to helping you learn course content, my goals are to make sure you feel heard, validated, and cared about by me and by each other. Positive relationships are an important foundation for learning. Please review the [UCSD Principles of Community](#).

This course is held in-person with the exception of October 24 when class will involve an online, asynchronous lecture. Attendance is expected at every class session. If you must miss a class due to illness or another compelling reason, please contact me in advance. I am fully aware that life on any given day may bring unexpected challenges. If you are having a hard time or have anything you need to share with me, please reach out.

In order to maximize our time together, we will ask that you come to class prepared having completed the readings and any other assignments. I like to keep things interesting, so each week the class activities will vary. There is no substitute for in-class engagement, and you will receive credit for activities completed in-class. Several of these activities will help you work towards the completion of written assignments that are due for this class. Lecture slides will be posted on Canvas.

Any technology used during class should support your learning and not distract others from their learning opportunities.

UCSD Land Acknowledgement

The UC San Diego community holds great respect for the land and the original people of the area where our campus is located. The university is built on the unceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. Today, the Kumeyaay people continue to maintain their political sovereignty and cultural traditions as vital members of the San Diego community. We acknowledge their tremendous contributions to the region and thank them for their stewardship.

Academic Integrity

Please review the campus policy on [Integrity of Scholarship](#). Please make sure that the work you submit for this class is your own. The written assignments for this class involve you developing your own creative ideas for a research study and showing your learning. You are not permitted to use AI tools, such as ChatGPT, to generate text for you on the written assignments. Such actions can undermine honesty and fairness, violate the trust of me and your peers, and result in an academic integrity violation. An acceptable usage of these tools could be to seek clarification of qualitative research concepts (e.g., What is ethnography?). If you have questions about what might be acceptable on this front, please contact me. You may also find this campus [guidance on Chat GPT](#) to be useful.

UCSD Support and Accommodations

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability should provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). You may contact [OSD](#) for further information.

If you are struggling to meet basic needs, please note that our campus has a comprehensive basic needs center called the [Hub](#). If you need help connecting to any other campus services, please let me know.

Assignments

Reading (Weekly): Each week you will be assigned between 30-50 pages of reading. Readings are essential to the completion of assignments; therefore you are expected to complete readings each week as we will be discussing them in class.

Group activities (In class): Most weeks we will be doing small group activities in class that relate to the readings. Your grade for these assignments will be based on participation/ completion (0= not completed; 2 pts = fully completed/fully participated). Each student will be allowed one “free pass” on one missed in class activity due to absence. If you miss another activity, you can make up the written assignment on your own by Friday of that week’s class for a maximum of 0.5 points as you will be missing the important group element. You can make up

a maximum of two missed activities. You must email me regarding the makeup option within 24 hours of missed class.

Reading checks (quizzes) (10/10 and 11/7): We will have an in-class reading check (i.e. quiz) at the beginning of class on October 10 and November 12. The format will be multiple choice and true/false. If you are keeping up with the readings, you should find the quizzes to be manageable. You may bring a 3" x 5" notecard with your notes (on front and back) if you wish. If you miss class due to illness, please make arrangements with me to make up the quiz within 24 hours of the missed class.

Reading analysis (due 12/2 can be submitted sooner): Draw on 2 or 3 of the following readings (Yoon - week 1; Martinez - week 6; Paris - week 9) to write an analysis on *the role of the qualitative researcher in relation to their research participants*. Be sure to reference the readings to support your points. Length: Approx. 500-800 words. You do not need to include a reference list. Your writing will be evaluated according to (1) whether it addresses the prompt; (2) the extent to which your writing is analytical and reflective; (3) the quality, clarity, and organization of your writing; and (4) your ability to integrate readings/concepts from the course. A rubric is posted with the assignment on Canvas.

Research proposal (Part 1 due on 11/1; Part 2 due on 12/6 but can be submitted sooner): You will develop a brief proposal for a qualitative study on an *education* topic of your choice. You will not be conducting the study; you will just be developing some elements of a proposal for a study.

Part 1 of the proposal (due 11/1 at 11:59 p.m. on Canvas) must have the following components. Please also consult the rubric that is posted with the assignment on Canvas.

- (1) Title page: Include your name, student ID number, and a title of your proposed study. Feel free to come up with something creative that reflects the focus of your study.
- (2) Topic and problem statement - Describe in approximately 500-1000 words what education topic you would like to study, what problem your study will address, and why it is important to you and to the field. The topic needs to be one that can be pursued through a qualitative study, and it needs to focus on some aspect of education. In class we will discuss what topics might fit these parameters, and the textbook will also be helpful. If you want to get a sense of current national and local topics in education, you may wish to look at [Education Week](#) or the [Voice of San Diego](#), but the topic can also evolve from your own experience in high school, community college, at UCSD, etc. or it might reflect a topic that came to your attention in another course you took. In explaining why the topic is important to the field, consult at least three sources (2 of which must be research

sources, e.g., use Google Scholar). Be sure to cite the outside sources and include a reference list with links to the sources.

- (3) Research question - What research question or questions will guide your study? In class we will discuss how to write a good research question, and the Merriam and Tisdell book will also be helpful.
- (4) Type of qualitative study and rationale - Explain in approximately 200-400 words what type of qualitative study do you plan to undertake (e.g., ethnography, narrative analysis, basic qualitative study, etc.) and why. Provide sufficient detail so that the reader will understand what characterizes that type of study. Cite the Merriam and Tisdell book to help support your rationale for choosing that type of study.

Part 2 of the proposal (due 12/6 at 11:59 p.m. on Canvas) must have the following components.

- (1) Include all of the elements from Part 1. If you wish to revise any aspects of Part 1 based on feedback you received, feel free to do so. While your grade from Part 1 won't change, if the suggestions were extensive, clarifying the foundational elements of your study could help your grade for Part 2.
- (2) Sampling and data collection plan - Describe in approximately 300-500 words what site/whom you plan to study and provide a rationale and what kinds of data you will collect. For example, you might decide to examine the experiences of students in schools that recently adopted the International Baccalaureate program. Your study will need to include schools that have implemented this change, and you will need to explain how you will select students to inform you about their experience, but you don't need to refer to a specific school. Your study must involve at least interviews and observations, and you may choose to use other qualitative methods (e.g., document review) as well if you wish. Please refer to the text and lectures in providing support for your plan.
- (3) Interview protocol and observation plans/protocol - (a) Develop a list of approximately 10 high quality interview questions for interviewees who will participate in the study. (b) Describe in approximately 200-300 words what you could observe in a setting, describe what you will be looking for in those observations and, if applicable, develop an observation protocol. We will examine examples in class. (c) If your study also involves examining documents or other types of qualitative data, please explain what you will look for. Please refer to the text and lectures for guidance. Be sure that the interview questions, observation plans, and document review plans (if applicable) help inform your research questions.
- (4) Positionality statement - In approximately 300-400 words reflect on your own identity, experiences, and beliefs in relation to the topic. Writing such a statement can help researchers become aware of how their own lenses, biases, and

assumptions shape how they undertake a study and examine the data they gather. We will discuss and begin to draft positionality statements in class.

Parts 1 and 2 of the research proposal must be submitted on Canvas by the due dates. Your proposal elements will be evaluated according to (1) whether they meet the criteria; (2) the extent to which your research plan is coherent and plausible; (3) the quality, clarity, and organization of your writing; and (4) your ability to integrate readings/concepts from the course. Please also consult the rubric that is posted with the assignment on Canvas. Please note that word length guidelines are approximate. Use the space you need to address the prompts.

Grading

Your grade for this class will be based on the following:

Reading checks (two quizzes): 20% (each is worth 10 points)
In-class activities: 14% (each in class activity is worth 2 points)
Reading analysis: 16% (16 points)
Research proposal: 50%
 Part 1 (25%) (25 points)
 Part 2 (25%) (25 points)

There is no final exam for this course.

Extra credit (3 points): Complete [The Social and Behavioral Educational Foundations CITI certification](#) and upload your completion certificate on Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on December 6. To access the course, click the “register” button in the upper right and type “University of California San Diego” when it asks for your organizational affiliation. The course will then be free.

Late submission of assignments will affect your grade. Up to 10% of the assignment points will be deducted per day. The lowest grade possible for late submission will be 50% of the assignment points.

Early submission of assignments: I find that some students like to get ahead. It is perfectly fine to submit your assignments early, and we will grade them as they are turned in. The reading reflection and Part 2 of the research proposal could be submitted in advance of weeks 9 and 10 (when they are due) as you will have the background needed to complete them earlier.

Grading scale (based on points out of 100):

A+	98-100
A	93-97
A-	90-92

B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C =	73-76
C- =	70-72
D =	60-69
F =	59 or below

*We will use common rounding rules and will round up if your percentage is followed by .5 to .9.

Course Schedule (To be revised accordingly)

Week 0 - Thursday, September 26

Topic: Introduction to the class and expectations

Week 1

Tuesday, October 1

Topic: On campus “Field trip” to gather data and debrief

Thursday, October 3

Topic: Understanding the basics of qualitative research

Assignment:

Read: Merriam & Tisdell intro to Part 1 (pp. 1-2) Chapter 1 (pp. 3-21)

Week 2

Tuesday, October 8

Topic: Understanding the role of the qualitative researcher

Assignment:

Read: Yoon, I. (2019). Hauntings of Korean American woman researcher in the field.
International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 32(5), 446-464.

Thursday, October 10

Topic: Different types of qualitative research approaches – Part I

Assignments:

- (1) Read: Merriam & Tisdell Chapter 2
- (2) Study: There will be a reading check (quiz) at the beginning of class on Chapters 1-2 of the text.

Week 3

Tuesday, October 15

Topic: Different types of qualitative research approaches – Part II

Assignments:

- (1) Read: Merriam & Tisdell Chapter 3
- (2) Think about an educational issue/topic you may wish to study

Thursday, October 17

Topic: Designing a Qualitative Research Study – Part I

Assignments:

- (1) Read: Merriam & Tisdell Chapter 4 (pp. 73-83)

Week 4

Tuesday, October 22

Topic: Designing a Qualitative Research Study – Part II

Assignments:

- (1) Read: Merriam & Tisdell Chapter 4 (pp. 82-103)

Thursday, October 24

**** Please note we will not have class in person on this day as I will be away at a professional meeting. Please watch the online lecture that will be posted on Canvas. It is asynchronous so you can watch it anytime during the week.**

Topic: Collecting qualitative data through interviews – Part I

Assignment:

- (1) Read: Merriam & Tisdell intro to Part 2 (p. 105-106) and Chapter 5 (p. 107-136)

Week 5

Tuesday, October 29

Topic: Collecting qualitative data through interviews – Part II

Assignment:

- (1) Be sure you have read Merriam & Tisdell intro to Part 2 (p. 105-106) and Chapter 5 (p. 107-136) which was assigned for Oct. 24.
- (2) Jot down some ideas of interview questions you could ask someone regarding your topic of interest.

Thursday, October 31

Topic: Collecting qualitative data through observations – Part I

Assignment:

- (1) Read: Merriam & Tisdell Chapter 6 (p. 137- 161)

Due Friday, November 1 at 11:59 pm: Part I of research proposal (see details above and on Canvas)

Week 6

Tuesday, November 5

Topic: Collecting qualitative data through observations – Part II

Assignment:

- (1) Read: Martinez, D. C. (2016). ‘This ‘ain’t the projects’’: A researcher’s reflections on the local appropriateness of our research tools. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 47(1), 59-77.

Thursday, November 7

Topic: Positionality statements and gathering data from documents and artifacts

Assignment:

- (1) Read: Merriam & Tisdell Chapter 7 (p. 162- 189)
- (2) Study: There will be a reading check (quiz) in based on Chapters 6-7 in class

Week 7

Tuesday, November 12

Topic: Analyzing data from documents and artifacts

- (1) If you have already read Chapter 7 you are caught up.

Thursday, November 14

Topic: Qualitative data analysis – Part I

Assignment:

- (1) Read: Merriam & Tisdell intro to Part 3 (p. 191- 193) and Chapter 8 (p. 195- 236)

Week 8

Tuesday, November 19

Topic: Qualitative data analysis – Part II

- (1) If you have already read Chapter 8 you are caught up.

Thursday, November 21

Topic: Validity, reliability, and ethics in qualitative research – Part I

Assignment:

- (1) Read: Merriam & Tisdell Chapter 9 (pp. 237-266)

Week 9

Tuesday, November 26

Topic: Validity, reliability, and ethics in qualitative research – Part II

Assignment:

Read: Paris, D. (2011) 'A friend who understand fully': notes on humanizing research in a multiethnic youth community. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 24(2), 137-149..

NO CLASS on Thursday, November 28th due to Thanksgiving.

Week 10

Submit Reading Analysis (details above) on Canvas no later than Dec. 2 at 11:59 p.m

December 3

Topic: Exploring a range of published qualitative studies – Part I

Assignments:

- (1) Read: Conchas, G. Q., Lee, J., Cambero, S., & Acevedo-Gil, N. (2019). The Chicana/o/x Promise: Testimonios of educational empowerment through the enactment of la facultad among first-generation college students. *Journal for Leadership, Equity, and Research*, 5(1-2).

December 5

Topic: Exploring a range of published qualitative studies – Part II

Assignments:

- (1) Read:
 - (a) Flenbaugh, T. K., Howard, T. C., Malone, M. L., Tunstall, J., Keetin, N., & Chirapuntu, T. (2017). Authoring student voices on college preparedness: A case study. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 50(2), 209- 221.
 - (b) Datnow, A. (2018). Time for change? The emotions of teacher collaboration and reform. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 3(3), 157-172.

Submit Part 2 of your research proposal (see details above) on Canvas by Dec. 6 at 11:59 p.m.