

# Department of Educational Studies

## EDST 508A (941) : Review of Research in Educational Studies - Introduction to Qualitative Methods

Dr. Handel Wright

WMAX 216

May 11 - June 18, Tuesday & Thursday, 4:30 - 7:30



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### INTRODUCTION TO QUALITATIVE METHODS

#### EDST 508D: Review Research in Educational Studies: Introduction to Qualitative Methods

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to qualitative research in general and qualitative research in education more specifically. It starts off by identifying anthropology, sociology and psychology as principal disciplinary origins of qualitative research and makes a link between those disciplinary origins and what has evolved as a comprehensive and diverse field of qualitative research in education. The course moves from origins to a significant historical moment of the relationship between quantitative and qualitative research, namely what has variously been called the "great quantitative versus qualitative debate" and "the paradigm wars" of the Seventies and Eighties and addresses a contemporary phenomenon, namely "paradigm proliferation" in qualitative research. The principal subject matter of the course is an overview of various qualitative traditions/genres and the informed design of proposals for qualitative research exercises. Students are introduced to ethnography, phenomenology, action research, case study, narrative and biographical life history. More cutting edge work in qualitative research (e.g. identity based epistemologies and new sites of research such as the internet can also be explored according to students interests). The course also introduces students to the fundamentals of qualitative data collection methods and techniques and includes collection of interview, observation and document data as well as reflection on data collection. Students are also taught the steps in designing and writing a proposal for qualitative research studies. The course takes the position and helps students understand that research is neither simply practice nor the application of a neutral set of methods to neutrally identified issues. Rather research is engaged as theoretically informed praxis and inherently political in both its inclusion (or exclusion) of sociocultural difference (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability) and paradigmatic positioning. Students are encouraged to take the notion of research as praxis as well as the politics of research into account in their conception, design and conducting of qualitative research.