

## **867-5 Qualitative Methods in Educational Research: *Knowing, Doing and Being***

Spring Semester 2010

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Class meets: EDB 9511 on Saturdays, 10:00-3:00, dates specified below,\* and online at [http://www.sfu.ca/~decaste/deCastell\\_867/867home.html](http://www.sfu.ca/~decaste/deCastell_867/867home.html)

This mixed mode, (part online, part face-to-face) course is intended to provide graduate students a hands-on experience in the “doing” of qualitative research as a practical, ethically regulated engagement in “knowing, doing and being”. Investigating, interrogating and interpreting values, meanings and purposes unspoken and taken largely for granted in the course and conduct of everyday life is what distinguishes the study of *human* action from all other forms of inquiry. It is because questions of value, significance and agency form the core of such inquiry that, for qualitative researchers, epistemological and ethical issues converge in *the very idea of what it is* to conduct research.

The course is structured around the completion of a ‘mini research project’, from start to finish. Each student will propose and carry out a study of their own. Course activities are designed to provide a guided apprenticeship into basic research practices, including observations, peer-review, ethical review (IRB), field-notes, interviews, data interpretation, analysis, reporting, presentation and write-up.

To support, extend and deepen their practical work, students will read exemplary research studies. Questions such as “What kind of story does this research tell?”, “Whose story is told, how, by whom, and for whose benefit?”, How can qualitative research claim ‘validity’?, will guide a comprehensive inquiry into contemporary qualitative research methodologies, methods and processes. We will also consider ways in which research practices are being technologically reconfigured, and how this technological re-mediation might shake qualitative research methods and practices to its foundations.

### **Class Structure**

\*This hybrid (mixed mode online and face-to-face) course requires that students are able to attend ALL of the following face-to-face classes. Please make certain you are able to attend on these dates before registering.

**Saturday, Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>**, 10:00-3:00 (ED 9511)

**Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup>**, 10:00-3:00

Additional required workshop/’atelier” sessions are scheduled for **Saturday, Jan 16<sup>th</sup>** (12:00-3:00), **Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup>** (12:00-3:00 and **Saturday, Mar. 6<sup>th</sup>** 10:00-3:00. These supportive project development sessions will be run by a senior graduate research assistant, and will be devoted to assisting students in the completion of their research projects, which may also involve some structured seminar activity focused on readings.

There will also be two peer-led classes on **Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup>** and **Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup>**, where students will divide into two groups to share work.

Finally, students will be responsible to individually schedule two Skype meetings (during the Olympics, **February 13<sup>th</sup>** to **27<sup>th</sup>**, and between **March 20<sup>th</sup>** and **27<sup>th</sup>**, with Suzanne and/or a

research assistant. These will serve as 'checkpoints' where students will discuss issues, difficulties and insights in their ongoing fieldwork/analysis.

All self-directed and group-directed course components and resources, both online and offline, are further detailed on the course site at

### **Required Readings**

How to Research. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, Open University Press, 1996. ISBN: 0335194524 (pbk).

A set of instructor-selected articles and one of the following books for the February 27 book report, to be selected by each student:

Paul Willis (1977) Learning to labour;  
T.L. Taylor (2006) Play between worlds: Exploring on-line game culture;  
Shirley Brice-Heath (1984) Ways with words;  
Dorothy Smith (1987): The everyday world as problematic,  
Judith Whyte (1986) GIST: The story of a project;  
Richard Ekins: (1998) Male/Femaling;  
Peter Hoeg (1995) Borderliners;  
Alison Jones (1995) At school I have a chance;  
Erving Goffman (1961) Asylums;  
Laud Humphreys (1970) Tearoom trade;  
Malinowski:  
Argonauts of the Western Pacific (1922);  
H. Becker et al (1961) Boys in white

Or you may suggest an alternative qualitative study.

### **Evaluation**

(1) Field Journal (10%)  
(2) Peer proposal reviews (10%)  
(3) Methodology powerpoint presentations(10%)  
(4) Book report v-log or powerpoint (from the list above) (10%)  
(5) Mini-Research Project (50%), based on:  
Proposal (10%)  
Project final presentation (20%) and a  
Article-form (12-14 page) research write-up (20%.)

### **Late policy**

The intensive nature of this course, and the structure of ateliers and meetings, means that students need to stick to deadlines in order to proceed through the coursework. For each day after the specified deadlines, late work will receive 1/3 of a letter grade. For example, handing an assignment in one day late will drop the potential mark from an A+ to A; two days late, A+ to A- and so on.