EDHE 6850 Case-Based Inquiry in Higher Education
Syllabus Spring 2019

Instructor Information:
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Course Description: This course will focus on qualitative case study inquiry in the field of higher education. We will investigate how higher education scholars develop a case study strategy; collect and analyze data; approach credibility and trustworthiness; identify, monitor, and resolve ethical issues; and produce a high-quality written account of their studies. The course will be delivered in a mixed lecture and seminar format. Students will make individual presentations on the higher education case study literature. They will also individually critique completed case studies (reported in dissertations and peer reviewed journal articles). Finally, in collaboration with a peer case study team, students will propose a plan for inquiry and present a mock proposal outlining a qualitative case study.

Texts:


Assigned dissertations and journal articles.

Class Meetings: Tuesdays, 5:30 pm – 8:20 pm
Location: Language Building #304

Office hours: Tuesdays, 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Wednesdays, 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm
And by appointment

Course Objectives:

Students completing the course will learn the following course objectives:

A. How to critically assess the literature review supporting qualitative case study dissertations in the field of higher education.

B. How to select a problem for qualitative research.
C. How to draft a preliminary overarching research question for qualitative research.

D. How to select a specific qualitative research method.

E. How to design a qualitative case study in the field of higher education.

F. How to prepare for the collection and analysis of interview, observation and textual data.

G. How to achieve trustworthy and ethical research findings.

Course Procedures:

The course will be conducted in a mixed lecture and seminar format. I may also use multimedia, guest speakers, and in-class exercises to facilitate discussion. Students will be expected to have completed the readings for each class session in order to participate actively in class discussion and activities.

Grading and Evaluation:

Your grade for this course will be based on your performance on the assignments listed below. Also, although assignment grades will be given in terms of points (e.g. 45 out of 50), please remember we are using a 100 point scale for the course. So, at the end of the course, 90 to 100 points will be an A; 80 to 89 points will be a B, 70 to 79 points will be a C. Please consult the 2017-18 Toulouse Graduate School Catalog for the kind of work associated with each letter grade (e.g., A = excellent, B = good, C = fair, etc.) for assignments and for the final course grade. Here are the point allocations for the assignments:

20 points – Development and submission of 4 Case Study Rubrics (5 points each)

20 points – Development and submission of 4 Case Study Protocols (5 points each)

20 points – Presentation and submission of a Case Study Dissertation Assessment

20 points – Presentation and submission of a Case Study Introduction

20 points – Class participation

100 points – TOTAL

Learning Activities:

1. Development and submission of 4 Case Study Rubrics (20 points – 5 points each)
Each student must complete and submit 4 case study rubrics based on your reading of the course texts, the case study dissertations, and our discussions in class. These rubrics will be created in class as a part of your group work with other students and me. Each Case Study Rubric must be 1 page (single-spaced).

1. Rubric for Assessing the Literature Review
2. Rubric for Assessing Site Selection, Data Collection Methods, Participant Selection
3. Rubric for Assessing Interview Data, Observation Data, and Document Data
4. Rubric for Assessing Data Analysis, Trustworthiness, and Researcher Ethics

These Rubrics will have a general retrospective critical focus, guiding you as you critique scholarly work completed by another researcher.

2. Development and submission of 4 Case Study Protocols (20 points – 5 points each)

Each student must complete and submit 4 case study protocols based on your reading of the course texts, the case study dissertations, and our discussions in class. These protocols will be created in class as a part of your group work with other students and me. Each Case Study Protocol must be 1 page (single-spaced).

A. Protocol for Assessing the Literature Review
B. Protocol for Assessing Site Selection, Data Collection Methods, Participant Selection
C. Protocol for Assessing Interview Data, Observation Data, and Document Data
D. Protocol for Assessing Data Analysis, Trustworthiness, and Researcher Ethics

These Protocols will have a specific prospective constructive focus, guiding you as you build your Case Study Introduction.

3. Presentation and submission of a Case Study Dissertation Assessment (20 points):

Each student must complete and submit the Case Study Dissertation Assessment. I will give you four case study dissertations to choose from as the basis for your assessment. This document must be double-spaced, at least 15 pages in length (excluding title page and references). Your assessment must be organized in the following manner.

A. Title Page
B. Introduction
C. Assessment of the Literature Review
D. Assessment of Site Selection, Data Collection Methods, Participant Selection
E. Assessment of Interview Data, Observation Data, and Document Data
F. Assessment of Data Analysis, Trustworthiness, and Researcher Ethics
G. Conclusions
H. References

The Case Study Dissertation Assessment will be retrospective document in the sense that it critiques aspects of a completed case study dissertation. You will need to read and
critically evaluate the entire case study dissertation to complete this assignment and you will need to validate and document your assessments with citations to our readings and page citations to the Case Study Dissertation that note the relevant passages, paragraphs, subsections and sections.

You need to indicate your selection of one of the four Case Study Dissertations by posting a message to the Case Study Dissertation Assessment Module by February 3. You need to acquire a copy of the document from the UNT database and have this with you at every class meeting.

You need to make a 12 minute PPT presentation to the class on your Case Study Dissertation Assessment on March 19, 2019. The PPT presentation is a requirement for earning any points on this assignment. However, all 20 points awarded for this learning activity will be based on the final draft. The final draft of this 15 page paper will be due on March 31, 2019 as a Word doc attachment e-mailed to Cliff.Harbour@unt.edu.

4. **Presentation and submission of Case Study Introduction (20 points):** Each student must complete and submit a Case Study Introduction. This document must be based on your selection of a possible case study research project. The case study should reflect your interests and areas of expertise. However, it must concern a viable issue or problem for research in American higher education. You will need to conduct some preliminary research on your own to identify a possible case study. I am available to speak with you outside of class about this. You need to provide me with an e-mail and 100 word abstract proposing the topic and focus on your Case Study Introduction, for my approval, by February 3, 2019. Your Case Study Introduction must be double-spaced, at least 20 pages in length (excluding title page, abstract, and references), and must be organized in the following manner:

A. Title Page  
B. Abstract  
C. Background  
D. Research Context  
E. Rationale for the Study  
F. Problem Statement  
G. Research Questions  
H. Methods  
  Site Selection  
  Data Collection Methods  
  Participant Selection  
  Data Selection  
  Data Analysis  
  Trustworthiness  
  Ethical Considerations  
I. Definition of Terms  
J. Conclusion  
K. References
You need to make a 12 minute PPT presentation to the class on your Case Study Introduction on April 30, 2019. The PPT presentation is a requirement for earning any points on this assignment. However, all 20 points awarded for this learning activity will be based on the final draft. The final draft of the Case Study Introduction must be submitted to me by May 3, 2019 as a Word doc attachment e-mailed to Cliff.Harbour@unt.edu.

5. Class Participation (20 points). Each student must participate in our weekly discussion. You must participate every week in this discussion - with this important exception - everyone gets one free unexcused absence. However, you cannot use this unexcused absence for the week you are presenting. Two or more unexcused absences will result in assigning a grade of 0 points for participation. If a student is absent for more than one class, he or she must schedule a meeting (in person or telephone conference) with me. For further information on the UNT Attendance Policy and guidelines for excused absences, student should consult the policy at: http://www.unt.edu/policy (see 6.039).

Also, in order to earn your participation points, your participation must be substantive. You do not need to make extensive comments to earn the participation points. And, the goal for participation is not perfection - its participation. Think. Discuss. Be engaged. But, quality and not quantity will be touchstone used in assessing participation. I will not provide an assessment of your participation until the end of the course so you have the responsibility of ensuring that your participation is thoughtful every week. The purpose of this activity is to promote growth in your understanding of higher education budgeting and finance through engagement with course materials and colleagues.

TURNITIN NOTICE: Students may be required to submit written assignments for this class to Turnitin, a web-based plagiarism detection service. Before submitting your paper to Turnitin, please remove your title page and other personal information. (Instructions regarding using Turnitin will be covered in class)

Academic Integrity & Academic Misconduct:

Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Academic Dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with University policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. The policy and procedures are available at: http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm

Eagle Connect:
All UNT students should activate and regularly check their EagleConnect (e-mail) account. EagleConnect is used for official communication from the University to students. Many important announcements for the University and College are sent to students via EagleConnect. For information about EagleConnect, including how to activate an account and how to have EagleConnect forwarded to another e-mail address, visit https://eagleconnect.unt.edu. This is the main electronic contact for all course-related information and/or material.

**Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT):**

Completion of an online students’ perceptions of teaching survey is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you close to the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work continually to improve my teaching. I consider your completion of this online survey to be an important part of your participation in this class.

**Student Behavior in the Classroom:**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at http://www.unt.edu/csrr/

**Observation of Religious Holy Days:**

If you plan to observe a religious holy day that coincides with a class day, please notify me as soon as possible.

**Students with Disabilities:**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by
appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

**Updates and Revisions:**

When necessary to accomplish the objectives of the course and the goals of the Higher Education Program, changes to this syllabus may be required. Written advance notice will be provided if this is necessary.

**Readings and Tentative Course Schedule:**

**January 15 - Welcome, Introductions, Review of the Syllabus, and the Venues**

Readings and other Media:

The course syllabus.

**Class Activity:** We will review the syllabus with special attention on the course objectives, learning activities and calendar. I will focus specifically on the Case Study Introduction and Case Study Dissertation Assessment and explain how they should complement each other. We will also discuss the venues for reporting higher education research including dissertations, research conferences, peer reviewed journals, and academic books.

**January 22 - The Two Big Assignments and the Rubrics and Protocols**

Readings and other Media:

The Four Case Study Dissertations

**Class Activity:** I will present the Case Study Dissertations and describe them to you. Then we will discuss them, I will ask you to select one of them for your Case Study Dissertation Assessment assignment. We will review the required organization for the Case Study Dissertation Assessment assignment. I will explain how the Rubrics will help you build your final document.

We will then discuss the Case Study Introduction Assignment. I will explain the purpose of the assignment and review the required organization of the Case Study Introduction Assignment. I will explain how the Protocols will help you build your final document.
I will also ask you to begin thinking about the background, research context, rationale for the study, problem statement, research questions, and methods for your Case Study Introduction Assignment. Please note,... these will change over the course of the semester.

Finally, I will ask for an update and any questions on your work to select an issue or problem to serve as the basis for your Case Study Introduction.

**January 29 - What is Qualitative Research? What is a Case Study? What is a Case?**

Readings and other Media:

- Merriam & Tisdell: Preface and Chapter 1
- Stake: Introduction and Chapter 1
- Alfred Hitchcock’s *Vertigo* (1958)

**Class Activity:** We will discuss the characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research. We will also discuss Hitchcock’s film *Vertigo* as a case. We will focus on *Vertigo* as a complex text inscribed with visual, audial, temporal, geographic, and social meaning. If we were to approach *Vertigo* as a case for potential study,... traditional qualitative research practice says we would need to make preliminary decisions about,... the literature to be reviewed, the context, the research questions, the data, analysis, interpretation, and recommended questions for future research. What preliminary decisions would we make and why? We will end our discussion of *Vertigo* for this class with a research question that I will assign: Considered as a critical event involving a limited number of people over a limited period of time at a specific place, what happened and why?

**February 5 - Qualitative Research Designs**

Readings and other Media:

- Merriam & Tisdell: Chapter 2
- Stake: Chapter 3

**Class Activity:** We will identify and explain strengths and limitations for the following research designs discussed in Merriam & Tisdell’s Chapter 2:

  - Case Study
  - Phenomenology
  - Ethnography
  - Grounded Theory
  - Narrative Inquiry

**February 12 - The Literature Review - The Dissertation Assessment**
Readings and other Media:

Merriam & Tisdell: Chapter 4
Stake: Chapter 2
The Four Case Study Dissertations

Class Activity: Please carefully read the Literature Review in your Case Study Dissertation before you come to class. After we discuss the Literature Reviews in the large group, I will ask you to work in small groups and develop a Rubric (1) for assessing the Lit Review in your Completed Dissertation. You may collaborate in developing your Rubric and share information etc. However, everyone needs to develop their own Rubric and upload it to the Rubric Module in Canvas by February 17.

February 19 - Collecting Data Part 1 - The Dissertation Assessment

Readings and other Media:

Merriam & Tisdell: Chapters 4 and 5
Stake: Chapter 4
Vertigo

Class Activity: We will discuss the various kinds of data used in qualitative case studies. I will ask you to work in small groups to develop and then report out a tentative Rubric (2) for assessing, overall, the site selection, data collection methods, participant selection, and data selection in your Completed Dissertation. You may collaborate in developing your Rubric and share information etc. However, everyone needs to develop their own Rubric and upload it to the appropriate thread in the Rubric Module in Canvas by February 24.

February 26 - Collecting Data Part 2 - The Dissertation Assessment

Readings and other Media:

Merriam & Tisdell: Chapter 6 and 7
Stake: Chapter 4

Class Activity: We will discuss the various kinds of interview, observation, and document (text) data used in qualitative case studies. I will ask you to work in small groups to develop and then report out a tentative Rubric (3) for assessing, overall, the interview data, observation data, and document data analyzed in your Completed Dissertation. You may collaborate in developing your Rubric and share information etc. However, everyone needs to develop their own Rubric and upload it to the appropriate thread in the Rubric Module in Canvas by March 3.

March 5 - Data Analysis, Trustworthiness, and Ethical Considerations - The Dissertation Assessment
Readings and other Media:

Merriam & Tisdell: Chapter 9
Stake: Chapters 6 and 7

**Class Activity:** We will discuss the various kinds of data analysis and trustworthiness techniques used in qualitative case studies. I will ask you to work in small groups to develop and then report out a tentative Rubric (4) for assessing, overall, the data analysis and trustworthiness techniques and ethical considerations reported in your Completed Dissertation. You may collaborate in developing your Rubric and share information etc. However, everyone needs to develop their own Rubric and upload it to the appropriate thread in the Rubric Module in Canvas by March 10.

**March 12 - UNT Spring Break – No Class**

**March 19 - What Makes a Good Case Study,… “Good”?**

**Class Activity:** Presentation of the final draft of your Dissertation Assessments. This document should incorporate the final text of your Rubrics.

**March 26 - The Literature Review - The Case Study Introduction**

Readings and other Media:

Merriam & Tisdell: Chapter 4
Stake: Chapter 2

**Class Activity:** I will also ask you to work in small groups to develop and then report out a tentative Protocol (A) for developing the literature review section of your Case Study Introduction. You may collaborate in developing your Protocol and share information etc. However, everyone needs to develop their own Protocol. This needs to be uploaded to the Protocol Module in Canvas by March 31.

**April 2 - Collecting Data Part 1 - The Case Study Introduction**

Readings and other Media:

Merriam & Tisdell: Chapter 4 and 5
Stake: Chapters 4

**Class Activity:** I will also ask you to work in small groups to develop a tentative Protocol (B) for the site selection, data collection methods, and participant selection for your Case Study Introduction. You may collaborate in developing your Protocol and share information etc. However, everyone needs to develop their own Protocol. This will help
you develop your Case Study Introduction. This needs to be uploaded to the Protocol Module in Canvas by April 7.

**April 9 - No Class – AERA Annual Meeting**

**April 16 - Collecting Data Part 2 - The Case Study Introduction**

Readings and other Media:

- Merriam & Tisdell: Chapter 6 and 7
- Stake: Chapter 4

Class Activity: I will also ask you to work in small groups to develop a tentative Protocol (C) for guiding you, overall in the collection of interview data, observation data, and document data for your Case Study Introduction. You may collaborate in developing your Protocol and share information etc. However, everyone needs to develop their own Protocol. This will help you develop your Case Study Introduction. This needs to be uploaded to the Protocol Module in Canvas by April 21.

**April 23 - Data Analysis, Trustworthiness, and Ethical Considerations - The Case Study Introduction**

Readings and other Media:

- Merriam & Tisdell: Chapter 9
- Stake: Chapters 6 and 7

Class Activity: I will also ask you to work in small groups to develop a tentative Protocol (D) for your anticipated data analysis and trustworthiness techniques and ethical considerations, to be described in your Case Study Introduction. You may collaborate in developing your Protocol and share information etc. However, everyone needs to develop their own Protocol. This will help you develop the anticipated site and participants and anticipated data sections for your Case Study Introduction. This needs to be uploaded to the Protocol Module in Canvas by April 28.

**April 30 - The Best Road Trips are Planned. What’s your Plan?**

Class Activity: Presentation of the final draft of your Case Study Introduction.

Revised 1-15-19