

**Course Name:** GRADEDUC 90517 Culturally Sensitive Research Methods in Education  
**Program Title:** MA, Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies  
**Program Type:** Research Intensive

**Course Time and Location:** Synchronous, Wednesdays 6:00—9:00 p.m.  
**Start Date:** Wednesday, September 07, 2022 (12 weeks)  
**Course Duration:** Fall  
**Recognized Holidays in the Term:** Thanksgiving, Monday, October 10, 2022  
**Prerequisites:** None

**Instructor Name:** Nyasha Nyereyemhuka  
**Email:** [nnyereye@uwo.ca](mailto:nnyereye@uwo.ca)  
**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 3:00—5:30 p.m. or by appointment

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### **Contact Policy:**

The preferred method of contact and communication for the course is via email correspondence. I aim to provide a channel for positive and respectful two-way communication with a response turnaround received within 48 hours or two business days if sent during a weekend/statutory holiday. If a response is not received within three business days, please do not hesitate to send a follow-up email. Considering this, please plan to reach out within a timeframe that allows for a response that will benefit the matter at hand and your learning in a timely manner. For matters requiring immediate attention, students are encouraged to schedule a face-to-face meeting via zoom.

### **Course Calendar Description:**

This course provides an investigation of the theoretical and epistemological foundations of qualitative research with a focus on culturally sensitive research methods in the field of education. Students will interrogate questions concerning the significance of culturally sensitive research methods in contemporary literature and how to maintain validity and rigour in the research design. Topics of examination may include Eurocentric methodologies, decolonization, comparative studies, ethnography, and case study.

## Learning Outcomes:

The learning outcomes for this course have been organized into five objectives.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment
<i>By the end of this course, students will be able to:</i>	<i>This learning outcome will be demonstrated through:</i>
Identify and define culturally sensitive ways of knowing in a K-12 context	Participation Journal reflection OWL forum cases
Assess and evaluate contemporary research methods in relation to methodological shifts	Participation OWL forum cases Research proposal
Investigate the connections between researcher and participant ethical concerns	Participation Journal reflections OWL forum cases Research proposal
Build efficacy as a researcher and research proposal reviewer	Participation OWL forum cases Journal reflections
Develop a research proposal that showcases the use of a culturally sensitive research method in a study	Research proposal

## Course Texts and Other Resources:

All course readings will be accessible on-line through the Readings tab on the OWL course site. Additional readings can be found online through Western University's library database with article titles communicated in lecture.

1. Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016) 'Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature', *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 1272-1311
2. Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
3. Milner IV, H. R. (2007) 'Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen', *Educational researcher*, 36(7), 388-400

4. Shields, C. M. (2004) 'Dialogic leadership for social justice: Overcoming pathologies of silence', *Educational administration quarterly*, 40(1), 109-132
5. Scheurich, J. J., & Young, M. D. (1997) 'Coloring epistemologies: Are our research epistemologies racially biased?', *Educational researcher*, 26(4), 4-16
6. Tillman, L. C. (2002) 'Culturally sensitive research approaches: An African-American perspective', *Educational researcher*, 31(9), 3-12

## Assignments and Course Requirements:

Evaluation Component	Grade Weight	Due Date
Class Participation and Preparation	20%	On-going throughout the course
Journal Reflections (x2)	20%	September 30 November 29
Owl Forum Cases	20%	October 07 November 04
Research Proposal	40%	December 19

### Assessment Descriptions

#### *Class Participation and Preparation (20%)*

Knowledge creation by fostering relationship and communication is an essential component of culturally sensitive research methods. To create an environment of mutual learning, students are expected to participate in all seven sessions of the course through active engagement in activities, course discussion (partners, group, and the class at large), and student/guest lecture presentations.

Ample communication and feedback on participation in the form of a midterm grade (given on October 12) will be provided to students. Participation guidelines are posted on the OWL site and it is encouraged that they are reviewed before class. Students may be contacted by the instructor prior to the above date should their participation fall below the participation expectations in the guideline.

#### *Journal Reflections (2) (20%)*

Engaging in reflexive writing as a researcher is an effective way of assessing your researcher bias and learning gaps. Students will be required to complete two journal reflections in this course, at the beginning and the end respectively. In these reflections, students are required to synthesize the course readings, lecture materials, in-class discussion, and OWL forum cases in a manner that highlights their contributions to your learning. Journal reflection length is between 600 to 800 words maximum and does not include references in the word count. Guiding question to help organize your thoughts will be posted in the OWL site. The first journal reflection is due on September 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:00p.m. in the OWL drop-box and the second journal reflection is due on November 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:00p.m.

### *Owl Forum Cases (20%)*

On the first Sunday of each month, a methodology case will be posted in the OWL forums. Students are required to read the case and provide a detailed written response to addressing the case by the following Friday at 10:00pm. Throughout the month, as a class we will review student responses and address in class how to navigate the complexities of each case and the solutions provided.

### *Research Proposal (40%)*

A critical component of this course is to develop a research proposal that demonstrates the use of a culturally sensitive research method in a study. Students will develop a research proposal that is in accordance with Western University's Research Ethics Board. Students will be required to use minimum five secondary sources in addition to course content to complete their proposal. Sample research proposals can be found on the OWL site. Consultations to review outlines will be held in lecture two weeks before the submission deadline.

### **Course Time Commitment Expectations**

The anticipated workload for students in this course is approximately 10 hours per week which may vary per week depending on each students' learning experience with the course readings and assessments.

## **Course Schedule**

<b>Week and Corresponding Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Week 1— September 07	Introduction to Qualitative Research
Week 2— September 14	Theoretical and Epistemological Foundations
Week 3— September 21	Researcher and Researched Relationships
Week 4— September 28	Cultural Sensitivity and Criticisms
Week 5— October 05	Maintaining Validity and Rigour
Week 6— October 12	Fall Reading Week- No Classes
Week 7— October 19	Gate Keepers and Ethical Considerations
Week 8— October 26	Decolonizing Methodologies
Week 9— November 02	Feminist Methodologies
Week 10— November 09	Comparative Studies
Week 11— November 16	Case Study
Week 12— November 23	Ethnographic
Week 13— November 30	Dissemination and

# Course Policies and Expectations

## Teaching Approach

My goal as the instructor is to foster an open, welcoming, and inclusive environment that provides learning opportunities that cater to students' individual needs. Experiential learning and equity-based lessons are components that guide my teaching approach as an instructor.

Assessments have been structured to provide a variety of modes of engagement with the course materials that aim to highlight students' individual strengths. By engaging in group discussion, bell hooks notion of purposeful dialogue will propel our discussion towards a teaching community where both students and the instructor are co-creators in knowledge.

## Suggestions for Success:

The learning outcomes and assessments in this course have been designed enable students with an opportune learning experience. To be successful in this course, attendance in every class is vital. As a course, we will discuss a variety of topics and concepts centered on culturally sensitive research methods that will incorporate examples that will be beneficial for assessment application. It will be beneficial for you to be present and engaged in class discussion during small breakout rooms and the whole class at large.

Considering the synchronous nature of this course, students are encouraged to test WiFi connection and technology compatibility prior to class as well as respect the privacy of peers from audio/video recording and zoom-bombing.

An integral component in this course is peer interaction and group work. Students are required to be respectful of their peers and engage in verbal and written discussion that is inclusive of varying learning styles and strengths.

Please feel comfortable to contact me if you are having challenges with the course concepts or readings. We can schedule a face-to-face meeting to discuss challenges in detail and establish a plan for your success in this course.

## Relationship Between Attendance and Grades:

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes in this course. In the event of an absence, students are required to provide written notification of absence and if applicable the appropriate documentation. The instructor may assign additional course work to compensate for missed class(es). Typically, students who are absent from 25% or more of the scheduled classes will be assigned a letter grade of "F". For synchronous courses, attendance and participation in each week's discussion is equivalent to onsite class.

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor in advance of absences or the inability to participate for a significant period of time such as a week or more.

## Late Submission Policy:

If an assignment is received late without prior arrangement for an extension, marks will be deducted amounting to 5% per day. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor in a timely manner for cases requiring an extension and are expected to provide the appropriate documentation in accordance with Western's policies.

### **Student Code of Conduct Policies:**

In order to successfully complete this course, students are required to adhere to the Western Student Code of Conduct located at <http://www.edu.uwo.ca/graduate-education/policies.html>. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the governing policies and are responsible for its observations with violations subject to sanctions.

### **Evaluation:**

Students must maintain a grade letter minimum of "B" average in the program. "Students who do not maintain a minimum average of 70% each term or receive a final course grade lower than 60% may be removed from the program.

Although only numeric grades are assigned by instructors in the Faculty of Education, the following alpha grade ranges are provided for your information.

**A** = 80% and above

**B** = 70% - 79%

**C** = 60% - 69%

**F** = Fail - less than 60%

Below are the guidelines for assigning grades in accordance to the Faculty of Education.

- A: Reserved for those students whose work is excellent. Their work will contain an element of originality, creativity, or thoroughness. It will be well organized and expressed and will reflect a particularly clear command of techniques and principles, incisive judgements, sound critical evaluations, and so on.
- B: Assigned for proof of good competent work. A "B" grade indicates that a student has mastered the course material and can manipulate it, can write clear prose, can demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate and synthesize material, and can apply the course material to relevant situations or problems.
- C: Assigned because a student does not meet one or more of the above criteria. Even though the student may be conscientious, he or she has not demonstrated a mastery of the graduate work in the course. A lack of mastery may include any number of characteristics such as an inability to write clearly, to research a topic adequately, to synthesize material, or to make basic judgements about relevance, and so on.
- F: Glaring inaccuracy and confusion, little or no grasp of techniques and principles, trivial and irrelevant treatment of topics. In general, a failure to demonstrate the minimal knowledge and skills for effective work in the discipline.

**INC:** (Incomplete) An INC may be granted for a course where the student has not been able to complete the assigned work in the normal timeline due to exceptional circumstances. Permission to carry an INC must be sought from the Chair, Graduate Education before the end of the term. The INC must be completed by the end of the following term or a grade of F (FAIL) will be assigned. According to SGPS policy, NO exceptions will be granted to this rule.

A numerical grade submitted for an INC grade, or an F grade resulting for an INC, is final. The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will not consider a subsequent revision of either such grade except on documented medical or compassionate grounds. Instructors shall inform students, both in class and in the course outline, as to any policies and/or penalties concerning late submission of assignments.

**IPR:** (In Progress) assigned during preparation for Thesis or Directed Research Project or a half or full course which extends over two or more terms.

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## **Additional University Policies**

### **Student Accessibility Statement:**

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility Services, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both SAS and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction. For more information, see <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>

### **Support Services:**

The Web sites for Registrarial Services (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>), and the same for affiliated university colleges when appropriate, and any appropriate Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC listed here: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>) and the Student Development Services, should be provided for easy access.

All course outlines should contain the following statement: “Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

**Statement on Academic Offences:**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously; a student guilty of a scholastic offence may be subject to the imposition of one or more penalties, ranging from reprimand to expulsion from the university, as well as criminal proceedings where appropriate. Students are strongly encouraged to review the appropriate policy document, and specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence: [https://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/13.html](https://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/13.html)

**Plagiarism:**

Students are expected to submit assignments in their own words and refrain from academic dishonesty. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).