

Research Methods in Christian Education



CE 462 Fall, 2007 MF 12:45-1:50 PM BGC 237

Professor: Dr. Donald Ratcliff
Office Hours: See office door for hours
available and scheduling an appointment

Office: BGC 243 Phone: 630-752-5282
Email & Web Page: don.ratcliff@wheaton.edu or
don@ratcliffs.net

Textbooks and Readings

Clandinin, D. Jean., & F. Michael. Connelly. *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Research methods in Christian education readings [customized textbook available at the bookstore].

Complementary downloads: [will use in class, but also browse for possible purchase]

Clandinin, D. Jean. Locating narrative inquiry historically. *Handbook of narrative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006. www.sagepub.com/upm-data/13548_Chapter1.pdf

Clandinin, D. Jean. Autobiographical understanding and narrative inquiry. *Handbook of narrative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006. www.sagepub.com/upm-data/13549_Chapter5.pdf

Czarniawska, Barbara. The 'narrative turn' in social studies. *Narratives in social science research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004. www.sagepub.com/upm-data/9690_023494Ch1.pdf

Daiute, Colette, & Cynthia Lightfoot. Introduction: Theory and craft in narrative inquiry. *Narrative analysis: Studying the development of individuals in society*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003. http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/4074_Introduction.pdf

Ellioitt, Jane. Narrative and new developments in social sciences. *Using narrative in social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005. www.sagepub.com/upm-data/9771_036613ch01.pdf

Ellioitt, Jane. Listening to people's stories: The use of narrative in qualitative interviews. *Using narrative in social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005. www.sagepub.com/upm-data/9770_036613ch02.pdf

Course Description

CE 462 is a practicum in conducting research related to spiritual development. As a class, we will be using narrative research—the research of the personal stories of a wide variety of Christians—to determine what are the common threads that represent a possible unifying theory of spiritual development. While such a theory is a possible outcome, it may also be that there are

multiple trajectories of development that will be described, possibly varying by denomination, theology, personality, social context, or other possible influences.

This particular class will focus on personal accounts related to prayer and worship by people in the middle and elder years, age 40 and older [although there is room for flexibility in the age studied]. Students will interview a selection of such individuals, either in their own churches or in other settings, asking them to tell their stories of how prayer and worship have changed as they have matured in the Christian life. The accounts will be summarized and the summaries and recordings of the interviews will be analyzed as a group during class periods. Thematic analysis and other qualitative analytic approaches will be used, with the goal of finding either a unified theory or perhaps a typology of spiritual development journeys. The ultimate outcome desired from the class is at least one manuscript, coauthored by all students in the class and the instructor. Ideally this manuscript will be published, but of course that cannot be guaranteed.

Objectives

The competencies described below are reflected in student activities and products, as assessed by the instructor. Students can expect assignments that foster:

1. the ability to conduct interviews effectively, producing narrative accounts.
2. analysis of interview data individually and in a group context.
3. interaction regarding research activities in a mentoring relationship.
4. increased understanding of individuals in ministry and educational contexts.

Course Requirements

1. Regular interviewing, reporting on those interviews, and both individual and group analysis of those interviews are required. These will be verbally reported, as will notes related to these.
2. Ongoing writing, and revision of writing, is expected, culminating in a final paper describing and analyzing your work, comparing and contrasting these with the descriptions and analysis of peers.
3. It is expected that students will regularly meet with the instructor individually in a mentoring relationship, regarding the progress of interviews and analysis.
4. Reading and discussion of readings.

The final paper is the designated assignment that can be part of your degree portfolio. In some cases, you may want to revise the optional exam and include it in your portfolio. This portfolio—a representation of work from all CE core classes—will be collected in its entirety during Senior Seminar (CE 494). As a way to keep from losing these assignments, you may email a copy as an attachment to the following address: cfm.portfolio@gmail.com. Place your name and the name of the assignment in the subject heading of the email.

Grades

Grades are determined using a covenant grade approach. The student will decide within the first week of class the desired final course grade, using the specified form. The covenant is not valid until approved by the instructor. The four requirements will each be approximately 25% of the final grade.

94-100	A	80-83.9	B-	67-69.9	D+
90-93.9	A-	77-79.9	C+	64-66.9	D
87-89.9	B+	74-76.9	C	60-63.9	D-
84-86.9	B	70-73.9	C-	< 60	F

Readings

C=Clandinin & Connelly [Other readings from customized textbook or internet]

Aug 31 The Syllabus

Sep 7 C—"Preface" and "Prologue"

Sep 10 C—"Why Narrative?"

Sep 14 McAdams & Bowman—"Narrating Life's Turning Points: Redemption & Contamination"

Sep 17 C—"Thinking Narratively: A Case at the Boundaries"

Sep 21 [retreat]

Sep 24 Garland—"Faith Narratives of Congregants and their Families"

Sep 28 Hopewell—"Storytelling"

Oct 1 C—"Thinking Narratively: Reductionistic and Formalistic Boundaries"

Oct 5 Collins—"Congregations, Narratives, and Identity: A Quaker Case Study"

Oct 8 C—"What Do Narrative Inquirers Do?"

Oct 12 Kang—"Reflections Upon Methodology: Research on Themes of Self Construction"

Oct 15 C—"Being in the Field: Walking into the Midst of Stories"

Oct 19 NAPCE

Oct 26 C—"From Field to Field Texts: Being in a Place of Stories"

Oct 29 C—"Composing Field Texts"

Nov 2 C—"From Field Texts to Research Texts: Making Meaning of Experience"

Nov 5 C—"Composing Research Texts"

Nov 9 C—"Persistent Concerns in Narrative Inquiry"

Nov 12 Elliott—"Listening to People's Stories" [download]

Nov 16 Elliott—"Narrative and New Developments in Social Sciences" [download]

Nov 19 Daiute & Lightfoot—"Theory and Craft in Narrative Inquiry" [download]

Nov 26 Czarniawska—“The ‘Narrative Turn’ in Social Studies” [download]

Nov 30 Clandinin—“Autobiographical Understanding and Narrative Inquiry” [download]

Dec 3 Clandinin—“Locating Narrative Inquiry Historically” [download]

Dec 7 completion of data collection and analysis

Dec 10 completion of data collection and analysis

Papers due Dec 14

Plagiarism, Cheating, and Dishonesty

Plagiarism is the act of representing the work of others as one's own. This and other forms of academic dishonesty are subject to strict disciplinary action, according to the following policy and procedure.

1. Students must avoid unauthorized collaboration, fabrication of data, unauthorized use of computer data, and excessive revision by someone other than the student.
2. Students are responsible to report to their instructor any dishonest behavior of which they are aware, or any circumstances that tend to encourage dishonesty.
3. If there are mitigating circumstances, lesser sanctions than those listed below may be applied with the concurrence of the instructor's superior (i.e. chair or dean).

Suspicion of Dishonesty

1. Students suspected of dishonesty will be confronted discretely and a response solicited.
2. If the student admits to dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action (as described below) will be applied and a report made to the Student Development Office. The student will also be informed of his or her right of appeal.
3. If the student denies dishonesty, but not to the satisfaction of the instructor, the matter will be referred to the petitions subcommittee of the Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee, who with the Dean of Students will hear both parties and submit their recommendations to the Vice President for Student Development, who shall make a determination.
4. Any further appeals will follow the College process of appeals.

Conformation of Dishonesty

1. A grade of zero will be assigned to any individual assignment or test on which a student has been dishonest.
2. In the case of inadvertent plagiarism, the instructor may at his discretion require that the assignment or examination be rewritten, and may assign a grade one letter grade lower than it otherwise would have been.
3. In the case of a second instance of dishonesty in a course, a student will be dropped from that course with a grade of F and placed on disciplinary probation.
4. Successive acts of dishonesty may result in expulsion from the College, subject to standard procedures of the Student Development Office.
5. A Student who knowingly assists another student in dishonest behavior is equally guilty and subject to the same degrees of sanctions.

--Adapted from the Wheaton College faculty handbook (section 3.1.16)

The information in this syllabus is subject to revision, as announced in regular class periods. Students are responsible for course content and any announcements made when absent, regardless of the reason for missing the class.

Classroom Covenant

Name: _____ I prefer to be called: _____

Preferred Email Address: _____ Alternate address: _____

You may contact me at this telephone number: _____

Alternate telephone number/s that can be used: _____

I will follow the policies regarding assignments and other syllabus details.

I would like to contract for the following final course grade in this class: _____.

I understand that the grade for which I am contracting is the maximum grade I can receive. I also understand that to receive a grade of A or A-, my work must be of exemplary quality.

I understand that regular attendance is expected, and that my grade can be lowered a full letter grade or more if I miss class even occasionally, and the reason is neither approved in advance nor due to personal illness or genuine emergency.

I understand that it is possible to revise this contract only if changed more than a week in advance of related assignments, and by mutual agreement of the student and instructor.

I understand that part of this class involves a professional mentoring relationship with the instructor, primarily focused on skills and thinking processes related to class content.

The details regarding my work for the class, as considered at present, include:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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