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# *Introduction to Qualitative Research in Education*

16:300:509:01

Fall 2012; Mondays, 4:50-7:20

Murray Hall, room 112

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the theories and practices of qualitative inquiry. Qualitative researchers are interested in constructing in-depth descriptions of educational phenomena by spending time in the field and eliciting the meanings individuals give to different educational contexts, issues, and problems. From this course students will develop the skills both to critically read qualitative studies of education and design their own research studies.

This course is structured to provide students with opportunities to understand the nature of qualitative inquiry, the kinds of questions addressed, and the various types of research designs used to answer them. During this semester, the aim is to provide students with a sense of the ideas and disciplinary contexts that have contributed to the development of this field of inquiry as well as what makes qualitative research a valid and reliable form of research. Students will be introduced to core qualitative data collection methods, including interviews, observations, and document analysis, and will have opportunities to practice these methods. The course will conclude with the development of a proposed research study, including the rationale for the study, some discussion of the conceptual framework and related research literature, and a section on the methodology (including data collection and analysis).

This course can be continued in Spring 2012. The next semester (Qualitative Research Methods II) is intended to deepen and strengthen students' familiarity and comfort with doing qualitative research work. It is organized to provide students with more opportunities to refine their research design and data collection tools and to actually implement the research study proposed during Qualitative I. Students will collect data in the field, analyze this data and construct a research report. They will also further develop their skills as informed consumers of qualitative studies. Both classes are structured to develop students' abilities to advise and support their colleagues in their research efforts. The emphasis on collegiality is intended to facilitate students learning from one another, enhance their ability to critique each other's work in a constructive way and utilize critique in their own work, and develop a "research community" that can provide support as students continue in their doctoral programs.

## REQUIRED READINGS

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### BOOKS

- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G, & Williams, J. M. (2008). *The craft of research* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Books are available at the Rutgers bookstore. You may also get an electronic version of the Booth text and/or rent the Creswell text via Amazon. Be sure to get the most recent editions.

### SCHOLARLY ARTICLES

*These will be provided on our course Sakai site, under Resources.*

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

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The activities required as part of your preliminary fieldwork include getting certified to conduct research involving human subjects, developing a research focus and identifying a research site, conducting observations, writing a field journal and fieldnotes, preparing for and conducting an interview, and doing some data analysis. These activities will be ongoing from the start of the course. These assignments are meant to introduce you to methods of data collection and analysis and help you learn more about your research site and the issues that you might study in the spring. The following assignments are meant to guide you as you engage in preliminary fieldwork and develop a proposal for your spring semester research study.

### I. Getting Ready to Conduct Qualitative Research

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- A. *Group analysis and presentation of research article.* For this assignment you will be assigned to a group. Your group will meet before your assigned class to create an analysis of the week's qualitative research reading and to prepare to present this analysis to the rest of the class. All students are responsible for reading the qualitative research readings each week and participating in the discussion led by the presenting group. **Various due dates.**
- B. *Human subjects certification program (HSCP) training.* You must complete this training to engage in any kind of human research. You can access the training materials and exam online at <http://orsp.rutgers.edu/Humans/hscpletter.php>. Please give me a copy of your human subjects certificate once you have completed the training.

### II. Field Activities and Analysis

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- A. *Field Activities - Observations.* You need to complete two observations by mid-semester. When you go to your site, you will make jottings documenting things such as what is

happening at the site, specific phrases people use, and a map of the site. Note these in your “field journal” (typically a bounded notebook), which you will carry around with you at your site. The field journal jottings will serve as the raw material for your more polished and complete fieldnotes. Fieldnotes need to be typed and will extend what you jotted in your field journal. These will be used in class for discussion. To each set of fieldnotes attach a 1-page reflection paper that addresses what you learned from the experience, what you might do differently next time, and your positionality in the field during this activity.

- B. *Field Activities - Interview*. You need to develop an interview protocol that you will use to conduct one interview. This interview should be conducted with a person similar to one who will likely be part of your spring research study (e.g., if you want to study skateboarders at a local skate park, you might interview skateboarders who skate at a different skate park from the one you want to study). **Bring a draft of your interview protocol to class for review on 11/04/10.** You will need to audiorecord and transcribe your interview. This interview will help you practice the skills needed to conduct an effective interview and it should help you think about and design your spring research study interviews. It will be used in class for discussion. Please attach a 1-page reflection paper that addresses what you learned from the interview experience, what you might do differently next time, and your positionality in the field during this activity.
- C. *Analytic Memo*. For this assignment, you need to develop a preliminary analysis of your observations and interview. The purpose of this memo is for you to figure out what research questions and issues you want to explore in your spring semester research project. Towards this end, review the data you have collected over the course of the semester and write about themes you’ve identified, tensions or contradictions that you’ve noticed in relation to your interests, and questions about which you are curious. Class readings and exercises on interpreting and analyzing data should be helpful as you try to make sense of your data. (5 pages *maximum*, 12-point font, double-spaced. *Include fieldnotes and interview transcript as an appendix*).

### III. Creating a Research Proposal

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The final product for this class is a research proposal. I have broken down the task of writing a proposal into smaller chunks so that it can be completed with guidance and in a timely manner. Specific guidelines for the proposal will be discussed in class.

- A. *Proposal Paper 1: Research focus statement draft*. In order to begin your preliminary fieldwork, you will need to figure out what you are interested in studying. Towards that end, I want you to write a paper in which you identify a topic on which you want to focus your spring semester research study. This topic may emerge from a question of practice. What do you know about this topic? Why are you interested in studying it? What do you want to know about it? What ideas do you have about how you might go about studying this topic (i.e. what do you think you will have to investigate to learn more about it)? It is expected that as you read the scholarship on this topic during this semester, this research

focus statement will evolve. Explain what you think is the purpose of your study and your proposed research questions. Include a list of 8 articles, books and book chapters on this topic that you plan to read in preparation for proposal paper 2 (the literature review) (3 pages *maximum* plus the resource list, 12 pt. font, double-spaced).

*Note:* When you revise this section for Proposal Paper 3 you should write about the purpose and significance of your proposed research study along with the key concepts you will use to answer your research questions. Following your questions, identify and define the concepts that you intend to use in approaching your questions and discuss how they are related to each other. Be sure to articulate the assumptions that underlie your use of the concepts and if you're using concepts that rely on different fundamental assumptions, you must explain and justify how you are planning on using these different concepts in your study. As you write this paper, focus on aligning the purpose of your study, your research questions, and your emerging conceptual framework.

- B. *Proposal Paper 2: Literature review draft.* For this assignment, locate, read, and review 8-10 texts (empirical studies and conceptual pieces as appropriate) that are most relevant to your spring semester research study. (\*\*This is not meant to be an exhaustive review, but a focused review of the literature.) Based on your reading, develop a literature review in which you discuss issues such as how your topic has been investigated in prior research, what others have learned about your topic, and what questions about your topic still remain. As you review the literature, think about how to integrate the ideas from different sources so that they can help you figure out what you will study, the kinds of questions you might ask, and the kinds of data sources you might collect. (5 pages *maximum*).
- C. *Proposal Paper 3: Everything plus Methods.* For this assignment, revise and edit Proposal Papers 1 and 2 incorporating instructor and peer feedback and add your methods section. Your methods section should include the following: (1) a description of your site; (2) a discussion of your role as a researcher; (3) a description of your study participants and how they will be selected; (4) a detailed description of your proposed strategies for collecting data sources (e.g., What will you observe at your site? Why? When? Whom will you interview? Why? When? What will you ask them?); (4) a discussion of strategies for data analysis; (5) a section addressing questions of validity.

Proposal Paper 3 (15-pages *maximum*, double-spaced, 12 point font) needs to include the following sections (with approximate page lengths in parentheses): Purpose and Significance of the Project (1-2 pages); Conceptual Framework (2-3 pages); Literature Review (4-5 pages); Research Methods (5 pages); Summary (1 page).

## GRADING AND DUE DATES

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Assignment Summary	Due Date	Credit
<b>Active Participation</b>		<b>10%</b>
- Face-to-face participation in class	- Ongoing	
- Attendance and preparation for class		
<b>Group Article Presentation</b>	- Various	<b>10%</b>
<b>Field Activities and Analysis</b>		<b>40%</b>
- HSCP Training	9/23	
- Observation 1	10/21	10%
- Observation 2	10/28	10%
- Interview Protocol	11/04	
- Interview Transcript and Reflection	11/18	10%
- Analytic Memo	12/2	10%
<b>Research Proposal</b>		<b>40%</b>
- Paper 1	10/7	- 10%
- Paper 2	11/11	- 10%
- Paper 3	12/17	- 20%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>

## COURSE OUTLINE

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Date	Questions, Readings, Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> 9/10/12	<b>Introduction</b> <i>What is qualitative research?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The nature of qualitative inquiry in education</li><li>• Socio-historical and philosophical foundations of qualitative research</li><li>• Identifying sources</li><li>• Overview of the class</li></ul>
<b>Week 2</b> 9/17/12 -	<b>Theoretical underpinnings and characteristics of qualitative research</b> <i>What views of the world are embedded in qualitative approaches?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Epistemologies and paradigms</li><li>• Influence of theory on research</li><li>• Critically analyzing qualitative research</li></ul> <p>READINGS: Creswell, J. W. (2013). <i>Qualitative inquiry &amp; research design: Choosing among five approaches</i>. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapters 2, 4, 5 Appendices B, C, D, E &amp; F (read your assigned appendix; more if you like)</p>
<b>Week 3</b> 9/24/12	<b>Conceptualizing and framing a qualitative study</b> <i>How do you set up a qualitative study that makes sense?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding a researchable problem</li><li>• Articulating research questions</li><li>• Clarifying the purpose</li></ul> <p>READINGS: Creswell, J. W. (2013). <i>Qualitative inquiry &amp; research design: Choosing among five approaches</i>. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapters 3, 6 Williams, L. (2008). Book selections of economically disadvantaged Black elementary students. <i>Journal of Educational Research</i> 102(1), pp. 51-63.</p> <p>ASSIGNMENTS: Complete HSCP training <del>Group 1 – Analysis and Presentation of Qualitative Research Reading</del></p>
<b>Week 4</b> 10/1/12	<b>Strengthening a conceptual framework and literature review of a qualitative study</b> <i>How do you communicate your study's framework, approach and place in the field to an audience?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positioning your study</li><li>• Mapping and reviewing the literature critically</li><li>• Rhetorical considerations</li></ul> <p>READINGS: Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., &amp; Williams, J. M. (2008). <i>The craft of research</i> (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 3, 4 &amp; 6</p>

Vagle, M. D. (2006). Dignity and Democracy: An Exploration of Middle School Teachers' Pedagogy. *Research in Middle Level Education Online* 29(8), 1-17.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Group 1 2 - Analysis and Presentation of Qualitative Research Reading

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**Week 5**  
10/8/12

**Research design**

*How do you design a qualitative study that will answer your questions?*

- Building the Study
- Sample and Setting
- Techniques of collecting data
- Researcher Role

READINGS:

Cresswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 7.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp. 228-246.

Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1999). The teacher research movement: A decade later. *Educational Researcher*, 28(7), 15-25.

Chance, P. & Segura, S. (2009). A rural high school's collaborative approach to school improvement. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 24(5).

ASSIGNMENT:

Proposal Paper 1: Purpose, Significance, and Conceptual Framework.

Group 2 3 - Analysis and Presentation of Qualitative Research Reading

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**Week 6**  
10/15/12

**Observation 1**

*How can observations help us "make the familiar strange?"*

- Paying attention to issues of context and culture
- Participant observation
- Fieldnotes
- Using audiovisual data

READINGS:

Patton, M. Q. (1987). Chapter 4 Field work and observation. In *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Auerbach, S. (2002). "Why do they give the good classes to some and not to others?" Latino parent narratives of struggle in a college access program. *Teachers College Record* 104(7), 1369-1392

ASSIGNMENT:

Group 3 4 - Analysis and Presentation of Qualitative Research Reading

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<b>Week 7</b> 10/22/12	<p><b>Validity, reliability and ethics in qualitative research</b></p> <p><i>What makes qualitative research trustworthy, ethical, and rigorous?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subjective, contextual and relational considerations</li> <li>• Equity and ethics</li> <li>• Bias and assumptions</li> <li>• Power and authority</li> </ul> <p>READINGS:</p> <p>AERA Code of Ethics  <a href="http://www.aera.net/AboutAERA/Default.aspx?menu_id=90&amp;id=222">http://www.aera.net/AboutAERA/Default.aspx?menu_id=90&amp;id=222</a></p> <p>Cresswell, J. W. (2013). <i>Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches</i>. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 10.</p> <p>LeCompte, M.D. &amp; Goetz, J.P. (1982). "Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research." <i>Review of Educational Research</i> 52(1), 31-60.</p> <p>Creswell, J. W., &amp; Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. <i>Theory into Practice</i>, 39(3), 124-130.</p> <p>Wrushen, B. &amp; Sherman, W. (2008). Women secondary school principals: Multicultural voices from the field. <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i>, 21(5), 457-469.</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT:</p> <p>Observation 1: Fieldnotes and Reflection  Group 4 5 - Analysis and Presentation of Qualitative Research Reading</p>
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<b>Week 8</b> 10/29/12	<p><b>Observation 2</b></p> <p><i>What makes for rigorous and reliable fieldnotes?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations as data</li> <li>• Ethnographic language</li> <li>• Validity claims</li> </ul> <p>READINGS:</p> <p>Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G, &amp; Williams, J. M. (2008). <i>The craft of research</i> (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 12 &amp; 13.</p> <p>Rubin, B. (2003). Unpacking detracking: When progressive pedagogy meets students' social world. <i>American Educational Research Journal</i>, 40(2), 539-573.</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT:</p> <p>Observation 2: Fieldnotes and Reflection  Group 5 6 - Analysis and Presentation of Qualitative Research Reading</p>
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<b>Week 9</b> 11/5/12	<p><b>Interviewing 1</b></p> <p><i>How can we draw out the opinions, worldviews, and experiences of participants?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposes and types of interviews</li> <li>• Interviewing techniques</li> </ul>
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READINGS:

- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park: Sage. Chapter 7.
- Galletta, A. & Cross, W. (2007). Past as present, present as past: Historicizing black education and interrogating "integration." In Fuligni, A. (Ed) *Contesting Stereotypes and creating identities*, p. 15-31. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Interview Protocol Draft
- Group 6 7 - Analysis and Presentation of Qualitative Research Reading

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**Week 10**  
11/12/12

**Interviewing 2**

*How can we become "conversational partners" with participants?*

- Focus groups
- Ethical considerations when interviewing individuals in educational settings

READINGS:

- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp. 385-418.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Proposal Paper 2: Literature Review

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**Week 11**  
11/19/12

**Document collection and analysis and other forms of qualitative data**

*What other methods of analysis are available to qualitative researchers?  
How can they complement interviews and observations?*

- Relationships between research questions, approaches, and methods
- Triangulation

READINGS:

- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Chapter 6.
- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G, & Williams, J. M. (2008). *The craft of research* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 14.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Interview Transcript and Reflection

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**Week 12**  
11/26/12

**Methods of Data Analysis 1**

*How can we make sense of our data?*

- Memos
  - Vignettes
  - Organizing and managing data
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READINGS:

Cresswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 8  
Graff, G. & Birkenstein, C. (2006). *They say/I say: The moves that matter in academic writing*. New York: Norton. Chapter 7 & 8.  
Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G, & Williams, J. M. (2003). *The craft of research* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 16.  
Additional Qualitative research readings: TBA

ASSIGNMENTS:

Group 8 - Analysis and Presentation of Qualitative Research Reading

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**Week 13**      **Methods of Data Analysis 2**  
12/3/12      *What is the difference between describing our data and analyzing it?*

- Software-facilitated coding
- Pattern coding
- Validation techniques

READINGS:

Cresswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 9  
Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Drawing valid meaning from qualitative data: Toward a shared craft. *Educational researcher*, 13(5), 20-30.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Analytic Memo

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**Week 14**      **Reflecting back and looking forward**  
12/10/12      

- Brief presentations of research plans/reports
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**Week 15**      **No Class**  
12/17/12      ASSIGNMENTS:  

- Proposal Paper 3: Everything plus Methods

**For students who are continuing next semester, a draft of the research plan will be required along with IRB materials ready for submission by December**

## PROGRAM AND PROFESSOR POLICIES

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### Written Assignments

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All assignments are due according to the course schedule. An assignment is considered late after 11:59 pm on the due date. If you need an extension for any of these projects you must negotiate with the professor personally, prior to the due date.

Assignments will be judged on the basis of responsiveness to the task or question, completeness, evidence of graduate level skills (clarity, depth, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) being applied, and overall quality. Specific evaluation criteria and descriptions are available for each project.

All graded papers need to be written and cited in APA format as summarized in the style guide that can be found at this link: <http://lib.trinity.edu/lib2/cite.php>

Additional information can be obtained from the APA website at [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org).

Your written assignments must be prepared as follows and submitted as an attachment:

- Prepare these assignments in Microsoft Word®, using Times New Roman, 12 point font, 1" margins.
- Save your work as a .doc file.
- **Submit your assignment to the appropriate place in the Assignments section of our course Sakai site.**
- Include in the subject line, in the following order: your last name, the name of the assignment, and the date (e.g., Mangin\_Analytic Memo\_10-25-12).
- If you do not have Microsoft Word®, please contact the professor.

### Rewrites

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All assignments turned in on the due date will be allowed one subsequent rewrite. That rewrite must be submitted within one week of you having received feedback. With each rewrite, you must submit the previous draft, including professor comments. Should you need to rewrite the final paper, you will receive an incomplete until the rewrite is completed.

### In-Class Expectations:

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- ✓ Be respectful of people and their ideas.
- ✓ Be open to new learning and perspectives.
- ✓ Be accountable for raising and resolving issues that occur, with classmates, with your professors, with the course content, with assignments.
- ✓ Be prepared to participate in class discussions, activities, and group assignments.
- ✓ Be responsible by being on time with your assignments, insightful about your comments, and active with your course readings.

- ✓ No texting, emailing or internet surfing while in class. Please leave class to take emergency calls or texts.

### **Problems**

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If personal, work or family problems arise that interfere with your ability to complete or continue this course, see the instructor immediately. We can work together to help you resolve the problems with the course.

### **Special Needs**

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If you have special learning needs please schedule a time to talk with Dr. Mangin so that we can work together for your success.

### **Absence from class:**

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Absence from class is occasionally unavoidable; however, given the hands-on nature of this course it is imperative that absences be kept to a minimum. Please alert Dr. Mangin if you have an unavoidable absence. You will be responsible for announcements made, topics covered, notes given and assignments due.

### **Academic Integrity**

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Rutgers prohibits conduct that is contrary to accepted principles of academic integrity. Violations of the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy include but are not limited to plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication. Evidence of any such violations can result in a failing grade for the assignment, the course, or sanctions imposed by the university. For information on the academic integrity policy, please go to: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>; a multimedia presentation on plagiarism can be found at: <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/integrity/realifeexamples.html>