**Positionality Statement**

**(20 points possible)**

**Instructions: Write a 4 to 6 page positionality statement, articulating and exploring your role as a qualitative researcher.**

Behind the theory, method, analysis, ontology, epistemology, and methodology of

qualitative research stands your personal biography (particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspectives). You, as researcher, become the primary research instrument, thus making it of no small matter for your readers to have an understanding of the relationship you have with the subject. Data collection is mediated through you, as a human instrument, complete with your assumptions, biases, and blinders (which can and will cause researchers to fail to observe data even though they are present). You must therefore wrestle to identify and describe your perspectives and recognize your biases.

Explain your role as the researcher in qualitative research. Describe your own education/schooling, personal and professional experiences, and identify any advantages or problems these might create. Bring to light your own cultural systems of coming to know, knowing, and experiencing the world.

**1. Self?**

What is your cultural heritage? How do you know? In what ways do you think your background influences how you experience the world, and what you emphasize in your research, and how you evaluate and interpret others and their experiences? What class/race/gender and other cultural experiences have shaped your research decisions, practices, approaches, epistemologies, and agendas?

**2. Self in Relation to Others?**

What is the cultural heritage and the historical landscape of the participants in your proposed study? How do you know? In what ways do your research participants’ race/class/gender and other cultural backgrounds influence how they experience the world? How do you negotiate and balance your own interests and research agendas with those of your proposed research participants (which may be inconsistent with or diverge from yours)?

**3. From Self to System?**

What is the contextual nature of race, class, and gender in your proposed study? How do you know? What is known socially, institutionally, and historically about the communities and peoples under inquiry? Does your literature review reveal anything about the communities and peoples under inquiry? What systemic and organizational barriers and structures shape the communities’ and peoples’ experiences, locally and globally?