

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
PhD Education –
Research Methods Program

EDRS 820 002: Evaluation Methods for Educational Program and Curricula
3.0 Cr - Spring 2016
Mondays, 7:20 – 10:00pm Planetary 126

PROFESSOR(S):

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A. Prerequisites/Co-requisites

Admission to PhD program or permission of instructor. Successful completion of EDRS 810, or permission of instructor. Prior completion of EDRS 811 and 812 helpful but not required.

B. University Catalog Course Description

Explores development and types of current systems and models for evaluating educational programs and curricula. Emphasizes evaluation needs and problems of public and private elementary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities. Also considers needs of government agencies, industry, and health-related organizations.

C. Expanded Course Description

This course provides an introduction to program evaluation through theory, practice, method, and profession, using the organizational framework of the course (Smith & Brandon, 2007). The course will be designed to meet the needs of those who either wish to pursue program evaluation as part of their professional, practical, or research interests as well as to those who will or may supervise others who conduct program evaluations. Still, practically, the course intends to provide the learner with the rudiments of designing an evaluation to meet the needs of a volunteer client and grasp learning and applicability of program evaluation standards (and especially the revised 3rd edition) in the process. Areas of focus include understanding the nature of program evaluation and using program evaluation in applied settings, such as K-12 or higher education; local, state, or federal agencies; community health programs; nonprofits; or industry.

This course is one of the requirements for the Ph.D. professional specialization in Research Methods. For students not specializing in Research Methods, it is one of the electives within the 15 credits required of research methods for Ph.D. students.

LEARNER OUTCOMES or OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to enable students to:

- Understand the nature and purpose of evaluation;
- Distinguish between evaluation and research in the context of program evaluation studies and social science research;
- Apply the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (2011) Program Evaluation Standards in planning and conducting program evaluations;
- Distinguish among the major approaches and methods for conducting a program evaluation;
- Apply evaluation models and methods appropriately within a given evaluation context, such as public and private elementary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities, government agencies, non-profits, industry, and health-related organizations;
- Understand program evaluation questions, including but not limited to: program theory, stakeholder experiences and satisfaction, fidelity of implementation, randomized control trials, program impact and outcomes, cost analyses, etc.
- Develop a program evaluation plan (including appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative methods);
- Understand the linkages between program evaluation, program design, and program implementation and program theory (theory of change, theory of action, logic models);
- Understand the cultural, political, economic, and social justice implications of program evaluations;
- Understand issues concerning the evaluation industry, its social and political context and controversies about the ethical and moral responsibilities of evaluation practitioners.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

A. Competencies for the Doctoral Program

Students must demonstrate the following major competencies to be awarded a Ph.D. in Education degree:

1. Ability to communicate effectively in a variety of professional roles in both oral and written forms;
2. Knowledge of significant theory, developments and practices in one's professional specialization (e.g. teaching of mathematics, counseling, etc.), and one or more supporting areas of study;
3. Ability to understand, utilize and interpret basic principles and methodologies of educational research design and data analysis; and
4. Ability to organize efforts to solve problems, advance knowledge, test theories, and adapt information to meet professional goals.

Mastery of these competencies is demonstrated by successful coursework, successful completion of a comprehensive portfolio assessment preparation and acceptance of a dissertation, and successful completion of an oral defense of the dissertation.

B. **Program Evaluation Standards** (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 2011)

Students examine and develop competencies to adhere to the Program Evaluation Standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (2011) including:

1. **Utility Standards:** The utility standards are intended to increase the extent to which program stakeholders find evaluation processes and products valuable in meeting their needs.
2. **Feasibility Standards:** The feasibility standards are intended to increase evaluation effectiveness and efficiency.
3. **Proprietary Standards:** The proprietary standards support what is proper, fair, legal, right, and just in evaluations.
4. **Accuracy Standards:** The accuracy standards are intended to increase the dependability and truthfulness of evaluation representations, propositions, and findings, especially those that support interpretations and judgments about quality.
5. **Evaluation Accountability Standards:** The evaluation accountability standards encourage adequate documentation of evaluations and a metaevaluative perspective focused on improvement and accountability for evaluation processes and products.

C. **Student Outcomes and Relationship to Professional Standards**

The student outcomes are informed by the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles (AEA, 2004) for professionals conducting program evaluation:

1. **Systematic Inquiry:** Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries.
2. **Competence:** Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.
3. **Integrity/Honesty:** Evaluators display honesty and integrity in their own behavior, and attempt to ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.
4. **Respect for People:** Evaluators respect the security, dignity, and self-worth of respondents, program participants, clients, and other evaluation stakeholders.
5. **Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:** Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of general and public interests and values that may be related to evaluation.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (6th Ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Hood, S., Hopson, R., and Frierson, H. (Eds.) (2015). *Continuing the journey to reposition culture and cultural context in evaluation theory and practice*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Mertens, D. M., & Wilson, A. T. (2012). *Program evaluation theory and practice: A comprehensive guide*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Newcomer, K.E., Hatry, H.P., & Wholey, J. S. (2010). *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Yarborough, D. B., Shulha, L. M., Hopson, R. K., & Caruthers, F. A. (2011). *The program evaluation standards: A guide for evaluators and evaluation users* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Additional readings can be found on the indicated website, Blackboard, or will be distributed by the instructor in class. The purposes for these readings are to augment the text with important concepts for the beginning evaluator. The instructor reserves the right to assign additional readings based on “teachable moments” or to no longer require a reading based on discussions. Changes will be invoked minimally and discussed with the class.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:

You will be expected to complete several assignments that will constitute your course grade. They include an evaluation project plan/design and presentation, weekly responses and/or discussion board postings, quizzes, and class participation. Each of the following is described briefly below, with more discussion and additional specifics in the ensuing days:

1. Evaluation Project Plan and Presentation. You will be expected to design an evaluation plan around a topic or program of interest. A poster presentation to your clients and colleagues will be required at the Educational Psychology, Research Methods, Education Policy Division Graduate Colloquium (Friday, 18 March) utilizing class feedback for the final presentation and write-up. Presentations should be displayed on poster along with a written executive summary of the evaluation project plan of between 5-7 (single spaced) pages. The evaluation project plan executive summary and poster presentation will constitute 30% and 10% of your course grade, respectively.

2. Annotated Bibliography or Book/Journal Special Issue Review. An annotated bibliography of readings or book/journal special issue review relevant to the context of educational evaluation or the broad field of evaluation should be completed. In general, (non-course required) books, journal and chapter articles are appropriate. You will be expected to review evaluation-related readings of your choice, potentially relevant to your professional career, research, or course experience. Format for the annotated bibliography write-up should identify i) the problem statement identified by the author, ii) the purpose for writing the book/article, and iii) an

analysis/summary of the book/article. The bibliography of readings should include at least seven journal/chapter articles (three of which can be from the list of readings from the course) and be between 1-2 single spaced pages each.

The book/journal special issue review should also obviously be related to some issue of interest to you and your professional, course or research interests. The format of the book/journal special issue review should include i) the relevance and timeliness of the book to the evaluation field, ii) an outline and summary of the chapters of the book/journal, and iii) implications to the changing nature of evaluation. The book/journal special issue review should be between 7-10 pages double-spaced. Your annotated bibliography or book/journal special issue review will constitute 20% of your course grade.

3. Comparative chapter summaries/critique presentation. Compare two chapters in the course texts: Newcomer, et.al text or the Hood, et.al text assigned for class. Prepare a brief summary, review, and critique of each chapters in the form of a class presentation. Provide a handout for everyone who attends and send a copy to the instructor before the session at which you present. Presentations will take place during semester beginning in February through the end of class. The comparative chapter summaries/critique presentation will constitute 20% of your course grade.

4. Class Participation. Important parts of the course include being responsible for assigned readings and taking part in class discussions through small and large groups. Class participation accounts for 20% of your course grade and is important in maintaining an informed and critical analysis of issues that arise in the course. Early in the semester, your input will be needed to identify appropriate criteria (i.e. rubric) for a class participation grade.

The following grading scale will be used for all class assignments:

A	94 - 100
A-	90 - 93
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	70 - 76
F	Below 70

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code (See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>).
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it

regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>).

e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester (See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).

f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g. tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing (See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to

adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website <http://gse.gmu.edu/>

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE¹

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
January 25 – Class 1	Topic 1: Introduction to Course: History, Traditions, and Currency of Program Evaluation	Mertens & Wilson, Ch. 1
February 1 – Class 2	Topic 1A: Building a case for program evaluation in educational research and reform	Mertens & Wilson, Ch. 2 Newcomer, et.al Part 1 <i>HW: Prompt 1</i>
February 8 – Class 3	Topic 1B: Building a case for program evaluation in educational research and reform	Mertens & Wilson, Ch. 3 – 4
February 15– Class 4	Topic 2: Program evaluation theory	Mertens & Wilson, Ch. 5 – 6 Newcomer, et.al Part 2 <i>HW: Prompt 2</i>
February 22 – Class 5	Topic 2A: Program evaluation theory in applied program practice	Mertens & Wilson, Ch. 7 – 9
February 29 – Class 6	* Panel of evaluation practitioners, scholars, and experts *	Newcomer, et.al Part 3 Hood, et.al Section 1 <i>HW: Prompt 3</i>
March 14 – Class 7	Topic 3: Program evaluation theory and method * Presentation to Division Graduate Colloquium *	Hood, et.al Section 2 Yarbrough, et.al Part 1 <i>HW: Draft Paper Outline</i>
March 21 – Class 8	Topic 3A: Program evaluation theory and method in practice settings	Newcomer, et.al Part 4 Hood, et.al Section 3 <i>HW: Prompt 4</i>
March 28 – Class 9	Topic 4: Program evaluation theory, method, and practice I	Hood, et.al Section 4 Yarbrough, et.al Part 2
April 4 – Class 10	Topic 4A : Program evaluation theory, method, and practice II	Yarbrough, et.al Part 3 <i>HW: Prompt 5</i>
April 11 – Class 11	AERA Day/Site Visit to Agency in Washington, DC	Yarbrough, et.al Part 4
April 18 – Class 12	Topic 5: Program evaluation, theory, method, practice, and profession	Yarbrough, et.al Part 5 <i>HW: Final Papers Due</i>
April 25 – Class 13 (no class)	Writing/Reading Day	<i>HW: Final Presentations Due</i>
May 2 – Class 14	Course Summary	<i>HW: Final Presentations and Evaluations</i>

¹ The instructor reserves right to make periodic changes to syllabus during semester depending on course pace and unexpected events that occur during the semester. In the event of syllabus changing, instructor will update students as needed and post a final syllabus on or by the two months of class.

Grading Guidelines

	Levels of Performance			
	(F) Unsatisfactory	© Basic	(B) Proficient	(A) Distinguished
Quality of Work	Unacceptable	Undergraduate level and quality; unsophisticated; assignments show little or no connection to course content or concepts.	Competent; provides credible evidence of understanding and application; some lapses in organization, citations and/or writing clarity. Evidence of understanding presented but incomplete; writing indicates gaps in logic; grammar and/or spelling errors distract the reader. Weak or insufficient citations	Exceptional quality and insight; a rare & valuable contribution to the field. Convincingly on target; demonstrates evidence of understanding and application; clear and concise writing; the reader is not distracted by grammar and/or spelling and citation errors.
Completeness of Work	Difficult to recognize as the assigned task.	Insufficient evidence of understanding and application; important elements missing or difficult to find.	Moderate shortcomings; minor elements missing that distract the instructor's ability to see the product as a whole. Evidence of effort but one or more significant and important points are missed or not addressed.	100% complete and error free Accurate & seamless writing; virtually a complete product
Timeliness	Missed or not submitted. Incompletes not made up.	Excessively or repeatedly late.	Assignments late more than once or without prior conversation with instructor; not necessarily chronic. More than half the assignments are late, but none are excessively late.	100% on time. Almost always on time; rare but forgivable tardiness (such as serious personal or family illness). Instructor is notified in advance that a paper may be late.