George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Educational Psychology

EDRS 631: 001 – Program Evaluation
3 Credits, Fall 2023
Tuesdays: 4:30 – 7:10 pm | Innovation 203 | Fairfax Campus

Faculty
Name: Dr. Divya Varier
Office Hours: By appointment
Office Location: West Suite | 2106 - Fairfax Campus
Office Phone: 703-993-5047
Email Address: dvarier@gmu.edu

Prerequisites/Corequisites

Required: B or better in EDRS 590 or equivalent experience; EDRS 620 or equivalent experience
Recommended: EDRS 621; EDRS 620 concurrent enrollment possible with instructor permission.

University Catalog Course Description
Focuses on perspectives of existing and emerging issues, theories, and models of program evaluation. Involves implementation of program evaluation in related fields and school districts. Offered by School of Education. May not be repeated for credit.

Course Overview

This course examines the theory, ethics, and practice of program evaluation. Areas of focus include understanding the nature of program evaluation, understanding applications of appropriate methods used in program evaluation, and using program evaluation in applied settings, including education, state or federal agencies, community health, nonprofits, etc. This course supports the mission of the Educational Psychology Program, which is "to develop professionals who: a. apply principles of learning, cognition and motivation to vital problems in the area of education in a variety of settings; b. develop a solid understanding of research, assessment, and evaluation methodologies; and c. develop an analytical and scholarly approach to critically assessing theoretical perspectives, research, and practice within and across content domains.

Course Delivery Method

Lecture and in-class activities that require students to be active and contribute to class and small group discussions. Individual reflection activities may be included.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Describe the nature of program evaluation
2. Compare and contrast program evaluation and social science research
3. Apply the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles in planning and conducting program evaluations
4. Distinguish among the major models and methods of conducting program evaluation
5. Apply evaluation models and methods appropriately within a given evaluation context
6. Formulate program evaluation questions, including but not limited to, satisfaction, program implementation, and program outcomes
7. Demonstrate how to develop, implement, and analyze evaluation data from a variety of evaluation tools
8. Discuss the linkages between program evaluation, program design, and program implementation
9. Discuss issues related to utilization of evaluation information
10. Discuss the cultural, political, economic, and social justice implications of program evaluations

Professional Standards

Learner outcomes are consistent with the Educational Psychology Program standards (updated May 2021):

Standard 2. Candidates will apply their knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including basic concepts, principles, techniques, and ethical issues, to read and critique relevant products of research.

Standard 3. Candidates will apply their knowledge and skills of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including basic concepts, principles, techniques, and ethical issues, to conduct research and/or inform practice in diverse applied settings.

Standard 4. Candidates will demonstrate oral and written communication relevant to educational psychology, including knowledge and use of APA style and professional formats (e.g., oral presentations, poster presentations, article abstracts, literature reviews, research proposals, reports).

Standard 5. Candidates will demonstrate professional dispositions relevant to educational psychology such as critical thinking, collaboration, interpersonal communication, intercultural competence, ethical leadership, professionalism, and technological skills.

Required Texts

Alkin, M. C., & Vo, A.C. (2018). *Evaluation Essentials: From A to Z (2nd ed.)*. Guilford.

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (7th Ed.).

Other readings will also be assigned for the course and made available on Blackboard.

Recommended Texts

Mertens, D.M., & Wilson, A.T. (2018). *Program evaluation theory and practice: A comprehensive guide*. Guilford.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, hard copy). **Late assignments will not be accepted without prior instructor approval**.

- **Class Participation (50 points)**. Students are expected to participate in in-class activities that are individual or small group assignments. Assigned readings are to be completed. Attendance is required. Please contact the instructor if you plan to miss a class. Attend all class sessions on time.
  - Use your MASON e-mail account for all correspondence with the instructor.
  - Complete readings in advance of the class and participate fully in discussions, group, or individual classwork.
  - Submit all assignments to the class blackboard on time.

- **RFP Individual Project (50 points):** Students will select a program of their choice (or one provided) and create a hypothetical request for proposal (RFP) seeking evaluation agencies and evaluators to respond with proposals to evaluate the program. The RFP will contain a description of the program, evaluation needs, budget parameters, and a description of expected evaluator qualifications.

- **Logic Model (50 points):** Students will develop a logic model for a given program that includes all the key components. The model should clearly provide an illustration of the theory of the program by accurately listing the *inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes* (short, intermediate, long-term).

- **Evaluation Project (100 points)**

  You will work on an evaluation project. This is a performance-based assessment and will include interactions with program stakeholders, data collection, and analysis. Each student will identify a program to design and conduct a pilot evaluation of the program.

  - **Program Overview/Introduction (20 points)**: Prepare a brief report about a program. Include a description of the program and an organizational chart. Provide a justification for the program evaluation. The justification should include a discussion of past or current monitoring, assessment, or evaluation efforts and any key findings pertinent for your evaluation of the program; a discussion of issues, concerns, or challenges that the program faces, and potential factors related to the issues. Include draft evaluation questions. Include a reference list.
  - **Evaluation Plan (30 points):** Develop an evaluation plan based on the program overview and evaluation questions. Include the guiding theory/theories that inform the plan, evaluation design, data sources and sampling plan, methods and measures

used to collect and analyze the data, data analysis plan, limitations, a timeline, budget, and references.

- **Results and Recommendations (20 points).** Report findings and offer recommendations based on the findings.
- **Presentation of Evaluation Plan (10 points).** Present your evaluation proposal in class for feedback.
- **Individual Reflection (10 points)**: Provide a reflection of your learning experiences that highlight your confidence in your skills initially, what worked well, what were the challenges, lessons learned, and your identity as an evaluator. Discuss methodological limitations
- **Adherence to APA Style (10 points)**

- **Grading**

There are a total 250 points for the course distributed among the four assignments listed above.

Grading scale:
A+ = 245-250 points
A = 232-244 points
A- = 225-231 points
B+ = 220-224 points
B = 207-219 points
B- = 200-206 points
C = 175-199 points
F = 174 or fewer points

Professional Dispositions
See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/

Class Schedule

WEEK	READINGS/MULTIMEDIA	ACTIVITES/ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Aug. 22	Course Overview Introduction to Evaluation	Sections A-B AEA's Guiding Principles
Aug 29	Understanding Evaluators, Evaluand, and Stakeholders	Sections C-F
Sep 5	Evaluation Theory Evaluation – Research Distinction	Leeuw & Donaldson (2015) Frye & Hemmer (2012) **Checkpoint: Initial project decription due**
Sep 12	Understanding Program Evaluation Models	Section G-I
Sep 19	Evaluability Evaluation Plan/Design	Section J, N
Sep 26 (asynchronous online session)	Framing evaluation questions	Sections O,P,Q **Logic Model Due**

Oct 3	Data Collection in Evaluation	Section K, L, M **Checkpoint: Evaluation Plan due**
	Oct 10: Fall Break | No Class	
Oct 17	Data Analysis & Interpretation	Sections R, S, T
Oct 24	Reporting Findings	Sections R, S, T **RFP Assignment Due**
October 31	Use of Evaluation Results **Dr. David Marshall Guest Lecture**	Sections U, V, Appendix A
Nov 7	Evaluator Recommendations	Sections W, X, Y
Nov 14	Evaluation Lessons Becoming an Evaluation Professional Evaluation Resources	Section Z American Evaluation Association Western Michigan University's Center for Evaluation ERIC Clearinghouse for Assessment and Evaluation. Online Evaluation Resource Library
Nov 21	Peer feedback; technical writing workshop	**Checkpoint: Evaluation Results draft**
Nov 28	Project presentations	
Dec 6-8 No class meeting	**Evaluation Project Report Due**	

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and 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/.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/).

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see https://ds.gmu.edu/).

- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments . Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/.

- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/ .