

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
PhD Education, Program in Research Methods

EDRS 820 001– Evaluation Methods for Educational Program and Curricula
3 Credits, Spring 2017
Mondays, 7:20 – 10:00pm Thompson 2022 – Fairfax Campus

Faculty

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Teaching Assistants

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

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

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.

Course Overview

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.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered using a lecture or hybrid format.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

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

- 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. (* recommended strongly)

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. (2015). *Handbook of practical program evaluation*, 4th edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Yarbrough, 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. (* recommended strongly)

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 Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor in hard copy or Blackboard as designated in class presentations and Blackboard.

- **Assignments and/or 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 paper or poster presentation will be required at the DC Consortium Student Conference on Evaluation and Policy (<http://blogs.gwu.edu/dcscep/>) on Friday, 5 May utilizing class feedback for the final presentation and write-up. A written executive summary of the evaluation project plan of between 5-7 (single spaced) pages will be expected as the final written product. The evaluation project plan executive summary and paper or presentation at the conference will constitute 25% and 15% 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. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation to upload in Bb 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.

- **Grading**

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

Professional Dispositions

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

Class Schedule

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
January 23 – Class 1	Topic 1: Introduction to Course: History, Traditions, and Currency of Program Evaluation	Mertens & Wilson, Ch. 1
January 30 – Class 2	Topic 1A: Building a case for program evaluation in educational research and reform <i>* Equity and Justice Seminar Series (Thompson 2007/8) *</i>	Mertens & Wilson, Ch. 2 – 4
February 6 – Class 3	Topic 1B: Building a case for program evaluation in educational research and reform <i>* Gumberg Library services and resources training (Fenwick 1014A)</i>	Mertens & Wilson, Ch. 5 – 9 <i>HW: Prompt 1</i>
February 13– Class 4	Topic 2: Program evaluation theory	Newcomer, et.al Part 1
February 20 – Class 5	Topic 2A: Program evaluation theory in applied program practice	Newcomer, et.al Part 2 <i>HW: Prompt 2</i>
February 27 – Class 6	Topic 3: Program evaluation theory and method	Hood, et.al Section 1
March 6 – Class 7	Topic 3A: Program evaluation theory and method in practice settings	Hood, et.al Section 2
March 20 – Class 8	<i>* Panel of (emerging) evaluation practitioners, scholars, and experts, Part 1*</i>	Newcomer, et.al Part 3 <i>HW: Prompt 3</i>
March 27 – Class 9	Topic 4: Program evaluation theory, method, and practice I	Hood, et.al Section 3
April 3 – Class 10	Topic 4A : Program evaluation theory, method, and practice II	Newcomer, et.al Part 4 <i>HW: Prompt 5</i>
April 10 – Class 11	<i>* Panel of (seasoned) evaluation practitioners, scholars, and experts, Part 2*</i>	Hood, et.al Section 4
April 17 – Class 12	Topic 5: Program evaluation, theory, method, practice, and profession	<i>HW: Evaluation Project Plans Due</i>
April 21 – Class 13 (no class)	Course Summary	<i>HW: Course Participation Assignment Due & Annotated Bibliography or Book/Journal Special issue Review Due</i>
May 1 – Class 14 (no class)	Writing/Reading Day in preparation class presentations on May 5 at the DC Consortium Student Conference on Evaluation and Policy @ Howard University	

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

Assessment Rubric:

	Levels of Performance			
	(F) Unsatisfactory	© Basic	(B) Proficient	(A) Distinguished
Quality of Work	Unacceptable	Lower graduate 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.

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 <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://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 <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- The Writing Center 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/>).
- The 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/>).
- The Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see <http://ssac.gmu.edu/>). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/>.

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