ED 521: Advanced Program Evaluation

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Course Description:
This course is intended for students who are pursuing an advanced degree in education. Students in this course will explore program evaluation within the context of education. The purpose of this course is threefold: (1) Develop an understanding of existing evaluation theory and practice; (2) Apply evaluation theory and approaches to the context of education evaluation; and (3) To develop an experiential base upon which to engage in evaluation in educational practice, and for many as a component of your dissertation study. Students will use course readings, assignments, in class activities, personal scholarly paper and the evaluation project to develop evaluation competency associated with the desired learning outcomes that include:

Desired Learning Outcomes:
• Develop an understanding of education evaluation theory and research.
• Be able to apply evaluation theory to the education context.
• Be able to articulate how evaluation theory and practice are inter-related with research methodologies.
• Develop a stance on the practice of evaluation within an educational context.
• Apply evaluation theory and practices to an education project.

Instructional Pedagogy and Expectations:
This course is designed to be a learning centered course with each student being responsible for maximizing their own experience. The instructional responsibility is to create a welcoming environment for all students where sharing differing views and intellectual intrigue are valued and respected. Our commitment is to bring our very best in terms of resources, course organization and facilitation to create a high-quality learning experience. We have high expectations of students as to their (1) preparation for class; (2) engagement with course content; and (3) performance on application assignments. We recognize that individuals learn and perform in a variety of ways and as such instructional approaches will be varied as well our appreciation for different learning and performance styles. In addition to this statement of instructional pedagogy and expectation we have found it useful to articulate the following expectations related to the class.
Attendance:
You are expected to be present at all sessions, should you not be able to be present please contact us in advance of class (e-mail is fine).

Assigned readings:
All class sessions will involve discussion of assigned readings; it is our expectation that you will have prepared these readings in advance of class. We will assign two to four articles/chapters that you must read for each class period, other reading will be recommended but not required.

Blackboard:
Class members are expected to check Blackboard (on-line course management software) several times each week for e-mail, discussion, announcements and to access PDF course readings. Students are expected to actively post and participate on Blackboard each week during the semester.

Group Activities:
Part of working in education is working with diverse individuals; as such this course will provide a practical forum for developing group functioning skills. Each class member is expected to participate in group discussions, activities and projects that will be a part of each class.

Assignments:
All assignments should be submitted on or before the due date. All papers will be submitted via Blackboard.

Required Books:


Assignments

1. **Class Participation and Preparation (15 points)** – At the end of the course you will self-assess your participation and preparation for the course. Your self-assessment of the extent to which you prepared and participated at a high-level will determine the points awarded in this assessment category.

2. **Reflection Blogs (30 points)** – Write six reflection blogs that are 250 to 350 words in length and write six 25-50 word reactions to classmates blog entries. The reflection blog should articulate what you learned from the student led learning component of class each of the six weeks that we have this forum. The blog entry should be written in formal academic style including citations as necessary (though not required). Please proofread your blog posts. Your reflection will be worth 4 points, your reaction will be worth 1 point for each entry. *See the week-by-week class schedule for due dates.*

3. **Peer Led Learning (15 points)** – The class will be divided into six groups. Each group will be responsible for helping the class learn about one of six ways of thinking about evaluation that will be covered in class. The group must provide three articles related to the theory or theories that they help the group to learn about (they must be provided to the instructor, but they may be provided to the class via Blackboard). The group should be creative in their approach to helping students learn about the category of theories for which they are responsible. *Due as assigned in first class meeting.*

For Students Entering the Program Evaluation Co-Hort Summer 2009

4. **Program Evaluation Dissertation Proposal (40 points total)** – You are to develop a program evaluation dissertation proposal that is defensible by the April 27th. The project will be due and examined in four phases. See attached outline for specific proposal format.
   a. **Chapter One and Two** – (10 Points) Due March 2nd
   b. **Chapter Three** – (10 Points) Due April 6th
   c. **Full Revised Proposal (20 Points)** Due April 27th.

For All Other Students

5. **Program Evaluation Project (40 Points total)** – You are to develop and implement an evaluation project from beginning to end as a part of an evaluation team. The project will be due in segments as follows:
   a. **Project Proposal and Tools** – (10 Points) Due March 2nd
      i. 10-15 page written proposal, plus data collection tool appendices. Example proposal will be posted on Blackboard.
   b. **Project Update** – (10 Points) Due April 6th
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i. 5-10 page project update for the instructor and key evaluation stakeholders.

c. **Full Revised Proposal (20 Points)** Due April 27th
   i. Full evaluation project report 25-40 pages (or other appropriate format) providing appropriate project representation.

**Grading**

1. Class Participation and Preparation (Self-Graded) 15 points
2. Reflection Blogs (6 x 5 points each) 30 points
3. Peer Led Learning 15 points
4. Project Submission 1 (Due March 2nd) 10 points
5. Project Submission 2 (Due April 6th) 10 points
6. Final Project Submission (Due April 27th) 20 points

**Total** 100 points

A = 93 to 100 points
A- = 90-92
B+= 87 to 89
B = 83 to 86 points
B- = 80 to 82
C = 70 to 79 points
D = 60 to 69 points
F = 59 points or less
Course Schedule

Class 1.1 – Introduction
January 26 – Setting the Stage for Learning About Evaluation

- Evaluation Definitions and Overview
- Focus Group and Pre-Survey
- Course set-up
  - Student Led Learning
  - Group Work
  - Application Assignments


Class 2.1 – Examining Methods I: Quantitative Overview
February 2

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


*In Class Activity - Case Study #1: Developing a Quantitative Evaluation Project*

Class 3.1 – Examining Methods II: Qualitative Overview
February 9

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


*In Class Activity - Case Study #2 – Developing a Qualitative Evaluation Project*

Class 4.1 – Examining Methods II: Mixed Methods Overview
February 16

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


*In Class Activity – Reviewing a Mixed Method Evaluation Study*

**Class 5.2 – Evaluation Theory – The Methods Branch – An Experimenting Society**

February 23

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


*Student Led Learning #1 – Applications of the Experimenting Society Idea*

**Class 6.2 – Evaluation Theory – The Methods Branch – Educative Evaluation**

March 2

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


*Student Led Learning #1 – Application of a Idea of Educative Evaluation of Cronbach and Wiess*

Blog Entry #1 Due
Chapter 1 and 2 or Proposal for Evaluation Due

**Class 7.2 Evaluation Theory – The Methods Branch – Theory Driven Evaluation**

March 9
Andrew and Judy will be absent from class

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


*Student Led Learning #3 – Application of the Theory Driven Evaluation*

Blog Entry #2 Due

**Class 8.3 – Evaluation Theory – The Use Branch – Utilization Focus**  
March 16

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


*Student Led Learning #4 – Applications of Utilization Focused Approach to Evaluation*

Blog Entry #3 Due

**Class 9.4 – Evaluation Theory – Valuing Branch – Responsive Evaluation**  
March 23

Judy will not be in class – She is attending a conference.

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


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Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA. Pages 309 to 319 and 403 to 426.

Student Led Learning #5 – Application of Stake’s Responsive Evaluation

Blog Entry #4 Due

Class 10.4 – Evaluation Theory – Valuing Branch – Democratic Deliberative Evaluation

March 30

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


See Blackboard for supplemental reading.

Student Led Learning #6 – Application of Democratic Deliberative Evaluation

Blog Entry #5 Due

Class 11.4 – Evaluation Theory – Valuing Branch – Goal Free Evaluation

April 6

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


In Class Application Activity: Case Study on Conducting a Goal Free Evaluation

Class 12.4 – Evaluation Theory – Evaluation Reconsidered

April 13

Please read for class discussion/lecture:

See Blackboard for articles by Thomas Schwandt.
Discussion-Activity led by Teaching Assistants Alfred Vitale and JB Rodgers

**Class 13.5 – Pragmatic Issues in Evaluation – Contracting. Budgeting etc.**
**April 20**

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


*In Class Activity - Estimating the cost of your evaluation project*

**Class 14.5- Analysis and Representation of Evaluation Findings**
**April 27**

Please read for class discussion/lecture:


*Final Projects Due*

**Class 15.6- Final Class Meeting**
**May 4th**

*Class Presentations*
Program Evaluation Dissertation Outline

Title Page
Abstract
Acknowledgements
Table of Contents
List of Tables and Figures

I. Introduction to the Report (approximately 2 pages)
   a. Brief introduction to the evaluation, including rationale and discussion of audience

II. Focus of the Evaluation (approximately 15 pages)
   a. Descriptive information about the organization where the program is located
   b. Program description, goals and objectives, and scope of activities
   c. Logic model (program theory or theory of action)
   d. Purpose of the evaluation (including evaluation questions) and research stance (i.e. role of researcher in study context)
   e. Literature review of prior work that grounds the study including an overview of research on topic, an exploration of the gaps of prior work and limitations, and a forward thinking discussion of how this body of knowledge sets the context and provides direction to this new study

III. Methodology (Evaluation Plan and Procedures) (approximately 15 pages)
   a. Choice of evaluation design and discussion of measures (including reasons for selection) grounded in program evaluation and methods literature.
   b. Costs/benefits of selected design with a focus on anticipated threats to validity of overall design and methods to address these (reliability and validity of particular instruments may be discussed under d or f)
   c. Study instruments: Development (or selection) and design of instruments
   d. Data collection: Detailed discussion of study participants, sampling process, data collection procedures, etc.
   e. Data analysis
   f. Discussion about how safeguards taken to ensure confidentiality of participants during data collection, analysis, and reporting of results. Include a statement about RSRB approval.
   g. Study timeline (present in table) including proposal development (including research instruments), proposal defense, RSRB approval, piloting of data collection instruments, data collection, data clean up, data analysis and interpretation, and writing and revision of dissertation.
   h. Limitations of study
IV. Evaluation Results (approximately 25 pages)
   a. Summary of findings
   b. Interpretation of findings

V. Conclusions and Recommendations (approximately 5 pages)
   a. Criteria and Standards Used to Judge Program (if appropriate)
   b. Judgments about program (Strengths and Weaknesses)
   c. Recommendations about program (relating to evaluation purpose only)

VII. Minority Reports or Rejoinders (if appropriate)

VIII. Appendices (Each item has its own appendix A-Z)
   Things that you may include here:
   o Description of Evaluation Plan/Design, Instruments (questionnaires, focus group/interview protocols, observation instruments, consent forms), and Data Analysis and Interpretation
   o Detailed Tabulations or Analyses of Quantitative Data and Transcripts or Summaries of Qualitative Data
   o Other Information, as Necessary.