

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

EDRS 820

Evaluation Methods for Educational Programs and Curricula

Spring, 2011

Thursday, 7:20-10:00; Innovation Hall 317

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Office hours: W/Th: 2:30 – 4:00 P.M./4:00-5:30 P.M. or by appt.

**Course Description:** This course explores the development and types of current systems and models for evaluating educational programs and curricula. The emphasis is on the needs and problems of public and private elementary and secondary schools, as well as colleges and universities, although the needs of government agencies, industry, and health-related organizations are also considered. *Prerequisites: Successful completion of EDRS 810 or permission of instructor. Prior completion to EDRS 811 and 812 is helpful, but not required.*

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, the students should be able to:

1. trace the distinctive history of educational evaluation and the purposes it serves.
2. compare and contrast the multiple approaches for evaluating educational programs and curricula.
3. learn to pose evaluation questions appropriate for their unique settings.
4. design and implement an evaluation plan for some aspect of their professional lives.
5. gain insight into the political, ethical, and interpersonal aspects of planning, implementing, and reporting program evaluations.

**Nature of Course Delivery**

Course work includes lectures, small group and whole class discussions of scheduled readings (see Appendix A). Students will engage in mini-evaluation case studies and developing evaluation plans to acquire practical knowledge of essential evaluation practices. When available, guest speakers will enrich the course by sharing their experiences in program evaluation and giving students insight into the world of the professional evaluator. I have placed resources supportive of both class discussions and independent project work on Blackboard Learning System.

**Course Requirements**

Students are required to conduct one field-based mini-evaluation study during the semester. The case study may be associated with projects or programs on or off campus. Students can select one of the following options for the mini-evaluation: a) needs assessment, b) evaluability assessment, c) a program theory development, d) a formative or process evaluation, or e) a proposed

summative evaluation. The implementation of the latter option (e) may not be feasible within the semester's time frame, therefore, a plan will be sufficient and where possible, with the approval of a field-based setting. Specific guidelines are located in Appendix B.

### **Assessment and Grading Policy**

Formative assessment of student work is based on the quality and timeliness of reports related to the mini-evaluation case study. The development of the mini-evaluation case study is segmented into a number of reporting phases, each receiving a progress grade (SP: Satisfactory Progress; SR: Satisfactory with need for some revisions; NR: Needs Revision) and a timeliness score (0, 1). I should be contacted prior to the submission date if you are unable to submit your report on schedule (see Appendix A).

The final report is assessed using a performance rubric relevant to the option you have selected for the mini-study. The quality points accrued on the rubric are transformed to letter grades based on the following scale:

A = 95-100%;	A - = 92-94%;	B+ = 88 -91%;	B = 84 – 87%;
B- = 81-85%;	C = 75-80%;	D = 70-74%;	F = < 70%

### **Required Course Textbooks:**

Fitzpatrick, J.L., Sanders, J.R. & Worthen, B.R. (2011). *Program evaluation: Alternative approaches and practical guidelines*. 4th edition. New York: Pearson.

Stake, R. E. (2004). *Standards-based & responsive evaluation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

### **Required Readings:**

Annie E. Casey Foundation. Real life lessons learned and resources in building capacity for advocacy and policy evaluation among KIDS Count grantees. Retrieved at:  
[http://www.innonet.org/resources/files/AEA2008\\_AECF\\_and\\_ORIS\\_10\\_Lessons.pdf](http://www.innonet.org/resources/files/AEA2008_AECF_and_ORIS_10_Lessons.pdf)

Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics and Computing. (2009). Analysis tools. College of Sciences, Georgia Tech. Retrieved at :  
[http://www.ceismc.gatech.edu/MM\\_Tools/analysis.html](http://www.ceismc.gatech.edu/MM_Tools/analysis.html)

Innovation Network (2005). *Logic model workbook*. Retrieved August 5, 2008 at:  
[www.innonet.org](http://www.innonet.org) (Requires registration)

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994). *The program evaluation standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.

McCawley, P. F. *The logic model for program planning and evaluation*. (2009). Retrieved at:  
<http://www.uiweb.uidaho.edu/extension/LogicModel.pdf>

Norris, J. (2009). Foreign Language Program Evaluation Case Studies. Foreign Language Program Evaluation Project. National Foreign Language Resource Center. University of Hawaii at Manoa. Retrieved August 27, 2009 at:  
[http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/evaluation/E\\_casestudy.htm#1](http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/evaluation/E_casestudy.htm#1)

Rouda, R. H. & Kusy, M. E. Needs assessment. The first step. Retrieved August 15, 2009 at  
[http://alumnus.caltech.edu/~rouda/T2\\_NA.html](http://alumnus.caltech.edu/~rouda/T2_NA.html)

Thomas, C. L. (2009). Guidelines for culturally centered evaluation. Fairfax, VA. George Mason University.

### **Recommended Readings**

Eisner, E. W. (1998). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mertens, D.M. (1999). Inclusive evaluation: Implications of transformative theory for evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation*. 20; 1-15.

Stufflebeam, D.L. (2001). *Evaluation models*. *New Directions*, 89, 89.

Smith, N. (2002). An analysis of ethical challenges in evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation*. 23; 200-207.

Scriven, M. (1991). *Evaluation thesaurus*. (4th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stufflebeam, D.L., Madaus, G.F., and Kellaghan, T. (eds.). (2000). *Evaluation models: Viewpoints on educational and human services evaluation*. (2nd edition). Boston: Kluwer.

## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STUDENT EXPECTATIONS**

### *Student Expectations*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- 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.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### *Campus Resources*

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

**APPENDIX A**

**SPRING 2011 CLASS SCHEDULE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class Topics/Learning Experiences</b>	<b>Preparatory Readings and Assignments</b>
Jan. 27	Orientation and Overview Introductory Lecture: <i>Origins, Purposes, and Conceptual Distinctions of Program &amp; Curriculum Evaluation</i>	Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen ( FSW) <i>Chapter , 1, Stake, pp ix – xxxix</i> Thomas (2009)
Feb 3	Discussion Theme: <i>How Did We Get Here, and What Must Be Considered in the Present?</i>	<i>FSW, 2&amp;3; Stake, 1, pp 278-284</i> <i>Stake, 2</i>
Feb 10	Discussion Theme: <i>What are the Major Perspectives on Program and Curricular Evaluation?</i>	<i>FSW, 4 &amp; 5; Stake, 2</i>
Feb 17	Discussion Theme: <i>Program-Oriented &amp; Decision Oriented Evaluation Approaches: How Do They Differ?</i>	<i>FSW, 6 &amp; 7; Stake, 3</i> Innovation Network (2005) McCawley, P. F. (2009)
Feb 24	Discussion Theme: <i>Participant-Oriented and Responsive Evaluation. Different or the Same?</i> Open Discussion on Research Paper	<i>FSW, 8 &amp; 9; Stake, 4</i> <i>Annie E. Casey Foundation paper</i> <b><i>Progress Report #1 (Phases a &amp; b)</i></b>
Mar. 3	Discussion Theme: How Can We Make Sense of All These Different Perspectives and Approaches to Evaluation:	<i>FSW, 10</i>
Mar. 10	Discussion Theme: I Have Just Been Asked to Manage a Program Evaluation Project. How Do I Start?	<i>FSW, 11; Stake 10</i> <i>Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics and Computing. (2009)</i> Rouda, R. H. & Kusy ( 2009)
Mar. 24	Discussion Theme: What are the Boundaries and Context of My Planned Evaluation?	<i>FSW, 12 &amp; 13</i>
Mar. 31	Discussion Theme: Planning the Evaluation	<i>FSW, 14, Norris, J. (2009).</i> <b><i>Progress Report #2 (Phase c)</i></b>
April 7	Discussion Theme: Designing the Evaluation Study: Choice of Methods and Sampling Procedures	<i>FSW, 15</i>
April 14	Discussion Theme: Choice of Data Collection and Analysis Procedures	<i>FSW, 16; Stake, 6</i> <b><i>Progress Report #3 (Phase d)</i></b>

April 21	Discussion Theme: Reporting: How, When & To Whom?	<i>FSW, 17; Stake, 7, 8</i>
April 28	INDEPENDENT RESEARCH DAY	
May 5	Discussion Theme: Future Themes and Challenges in Program Evaluation	<i>FSW, 18; Stake, pp. 285-287. Progress Report #3 (Phase e)</i>
<b>May 10</b>	<b>MAKE UP DAY FOR CLASS CANCELLATION ON 01/27/11</b>	<b><i>CONTINUATION OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS</i></b>
May 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral Presentation of <b>Phase e</b> and Submission of Final Report</li> </ul>	<b>Final Report Due</b>

## APPENDIX B

### Mini-Field Study Options

Students are required to conduct one field-based mini-evaluation study during the semester. The field-based study may be associated with the Professor's external evaluation projects or a project of the students' own choice. The mini-evaluation may involve addressing the answers to the subset of evaluation questions from the following options:

- A. **Needs Assessment:** *Is there a need for the program?* Students may seek to find evidence that the program is indeed meeting a social need. Can the resources and money involved be justified on the basis of meeting a social need? Methods of investigation include conducting literature searches, conducting focus group interviews, individual interviews, surveys, and content analysis of program documents.
- B. **Evaluability Assessment:** *Has the program sufficiently matured to the point that a formal evaluation is justified or possible?* For example, is everyone on the same page as to what the purpose of the program is? What are the objectives and expected outcomes of the program? Are they expressed in terms that are amenable to observation and measurement? Are there methods and tools available to reliably measure the objectives and expected outcomes? Do actual program actions, policies, and procedures correspond to intended plans? Students may select any subset of these questions (or others that they propose) to conduct their evaluability study.
- C. **Program Theory:** *What are the tacit assumptions expressed by program planners and staff about the connections between their actions and intended short-term and long-term outcomes?* What external resources are assumed to be supportive of program actions, activities, and intended outcomes? What is the logic model that reflects these connections?
- D. **Formative or Process Evaluation:** *What is going on in the program, and how can program features be improved?* How can we substantiate that program activities are carried out as planned (program fidelity study)? Are there program elements not functioning as planned? Why? What can be done to overcome the barriers? Are program targets being met in the fashion and time frame that was planned?
- E. **Proposed Summative Evaluation:** *What plan can be devised to assess whether the program has met its short-term outcome objectives?*

The Case study requires several steps (phases):

- a. Statement of the problem, evaluation need or issues
- b. Statement and justification of proposed evaluation approach

- c. ***Development of an assessment tool or technique to collect the relevant information.*** Tools refer to instruments devised to collect usually identical information across a number of evaluands (e.g., survey questionnaires, interview schedules, tests, etc.,) and techniques refer to methods, generally qualitative, that collect information from a relatively small number of persons at a time (e.g., informal interviews and focus groups).
- d. ***Data Collection and analysis plan***
- e. ***Debriefing Client Report:*** Students will provide a client-debriefing report (5 pages max) that summarizes the evaluation results to the virtual or actual client. A oral presentation of the debriefing will be presented in class.
- f. ***Final report (15-20 pages, APA format)***
- g. ***Active Participation in Progress Reporting:*** As follow-up to classroom feedback to presenters, each student will post a summary of their suggestions and observations to the presenters on Blackboard by the next week following the presentations.