

CECS 6800.020/.026

Special Topics: Program/Project Evaluation

Syllabus – Fall 2013

Instructor:

- Prof. J. Michael Spector (mike.spector@unt.edu)

Texts:

- Required: *Program Evaluation in Practice: Core Concepts and Examples for Discussion and Analysis* by Dean T. Spaulding (Jossey-Bass, 2008)
- Recommended:
 - The Power of Proof: An Evaluation Primer – online introductory text located at <http://www.ttac.org/services/power-of-proof/index.html>
 - Evaluation Primer on Health Risk Communication Programs – online introductory text located at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/risk/evalprimer/index.html>
 - *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (3rd ed.), edited by Whole, Hatry, & Newcomer, published by Jossey-Bass, 2010.

Other Resources:

- National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, & Student Testing (CRESST at UCLA) – articles, guidebooks, briefs, reports and more - <http://www.cse.ucla.edu/products/articles.php>
- International Consortium for the Advancement of Academic Publications site with free resources for program evaluation and social research methods - <http://gsociology.icaap.org/methods/>

Pre-requisite(s):

- Graduate student status, or
- Permission of the instructor

Learn

This online course will use **LEARN** (<https://learn.unt.edu>) for course discussions, assignment postings and other course-related activities. Be sure to login into the site and select the course for which you are registered – be sure to indicate your current zip code when prompted to do so.

Course Description

This course will provide students with fundamental knowledge and skills in the theory and practice associated with project and program evaluation. Examples of effective methods and approaches will be elaborated for multiple contexts, including projects and programs in K-12, Higher Education, Business and Industry, Research, Government, and non-profit organizations. The focus will be on projects and programs involving educational technologies although students can apply their knowledge and skills on projects and programs that may be more directly relevant to their specific interests and needs. Topics to be covered include the following: (a) formative and summative evaluation, (b) needs assessment, (c) logic models, (d) fidelity of implementation, (e) impact studies, and (f) ethical issues in evaluation. A variety of qualitative and quantitative methods involved in evaluation will be presented. Students will be required to critique a representative evaluation report and to develop and submit a detailed evaluation plan for a project or program of their choosing. This is an online graduate course and requires regular participation in discussions and other online activities.

Course Requirements

To plan a minimum of six to nine hours a week of outside preparation is a safe time allocation for successfully completing this course. This is an advanced course that explores various theory, concepts, and technologies related to Program and Project Evaluation.

Course Topics and Objectives

The course is structured around weekly activities according to a 16 week long semester. The indicated topics and activities are subject to adjustment (check the course site frequently):

Week Dates	Topic & Objectives	Assignments & Activities
1 28 Aug – 3 Sep	Course introduction: students will be able to define and distinguish projects and programs, and formative and summative evaluation	Read chapter one in the required text <i>Program Evaluation in Practice</i> ; participate in the weekly discussion forum
2 4 – 10 Sep	Users, clients, and stakeholders: students will be able to identify and distinguish users, clients, and stakeholders for a variety of projects and programs	Read chapter two in the required text; participate in the weekly discussion forum
3 11- 17 Sep	Needs assessment: students will be able to define and distinguish needs, desires and solutions; students will be able to specify appropriate measures to evaluate different kinds of needs	Read the first 36 pages in the World Bank PDF book on needs assessment; read the Handbook chapter on cognitive task analysis PDF file; participate in the weekly discussion forum
4 18 –	Logic models part one: students will be able to identify five major components of a logic	Read chapters three and four in the required text; participate in the

24 Sep	model, describe each component, and give at least two examples of items that fall within major component	weekly discussion forum
5 25 Sep – 1 Oct	Logic models part two: students will be able to construct a simple but complete logic model for a representative problem situation and proposed solution approach	Read chapter five in the required text; participate in the weekly discussion forum
6 2 – 8 Oct	Developing alternative solution approaches: students will be able to distinguish high and low risk solution approaches, describe simple feasibility studies, and identify basic return-on-investment measures	Read chapter six in the required text; submit logic model EduSummit and NTLS meet in DC this week
7 9 – 15 Oct	Components of an evaluation plan: students will be able distinguish quality and assessment measures for each of the major components in a representative logic model	Read chapter seven in the required text; participate in the weekly discussion forum about submitted logic models
8 16 – 22 Oct	Planning an appropriate evaluation: students will be able to specify the components of a specific evaluation plan based on a representative case (note: students may use actual cases from current work environments so long as there are no violations of intellectual property or disclosure agreements)	Read chapter eight in the required text; participate in the weekly discussion forum The International Conference on Education Research meets in Seoul
9 23 – 29 Oct	Common deficiencies in evaluations: students will be able to identify multiple deficiencies in a realistic evaluation plan based on an actual case, including likely examples of false positive and negatives	Read chapter nine in the required text; participate in the weekly discussion forum The CELDA conference will be held in Fort Worth 22-24 Oct
10 30 Oct – 5 Nov	Ethical issues in evaluation: students will be able to identify potential conflicts of interest, state basic principles of professional conduct, and respond appropriately to sample scenarios of questionable evaluation practice	Read chapter ten in the required text; participate in the weekly discussion forum; submit evaluation critique AECT meets in Anaheim this week
11 6 – 12 Nov	Institutional review boards (IRBs): students will demonstrate knowledge of IRB requirements by completing a recognized CITI online tutorial and posting the completion certificate to the instructor – see https://www.citiprogram.org/Default.asp?	Read chapter eleven in the required text; complete the online CITI training and submit the completion certificate to the instructor via email
12 13 – 19	Measuring implementation fidelity: students will be able to generate appropriate implementation fidelity measures from the	Participate in the weekly discussion forum about evaluation critiques

Nov	outputs component of a logic model	
13 20 – 26 Nov	Impact studies: students will be able to generate appropriate impact measures from the proximal (near-term) outcomes of a logic model	Read the provided readings on interpreting and analyzing data; participate in the weekly discussion forum on the interpretation of data
14 27 Nov – 3 Dec	Responsible conduct of evaluation studies: students will be able to describe the primary and secondary roles for evaluators; students will be able to explain whether, to what extent, and how evaluators are responsible for the success of a project or program	Participate in the weekly discussion forum pertaining to the formative evaluation obligations of evaluators Thanksgiving holiday
15 4 – 10 Dec	From evaluation studies to research: students will be able to explain how and/or when an impact study can also serve or be transformed into a research study with somewhat generalizable outcomes; students will be able to indicate how both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in evaluation studies and evaluation research	Submit evaluation plan (final course project – worth 25% of the course grade) NO LATE PLANS ACCEPTED – BE ON TIME WITH ALL ASSIGNMENTS GALA evaluation in Luxembourg
16	Final Exam Week (no final exam)	None

Grading

A total of 100 points for the course are allocated as follows:

Online Discussions/Activities (Assignment 1 – ongoing and cumulative)	25 points
Logic Model (Assignment 2)	25 points
Evaluation Critique (Assignment 3)	25 points
Evaluation Plan (Assignment 4)	25 points
Total	100 points

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

90 or higher	A
80 - 89	B
70 - 79	C
60 - 69	D
less than 60	F

Assignments

Due dates for posting the logic model, evaluation critique, and evaluation plan will be posted in advance. Late postings will be subject to a minimum of one letter grade penalty, unless the

student's Internet provider and/or UNT's online system(s) prevent the student from submitting an assignment or participating in discussions. The student is responsible for contacting the instructor, providing evidence of the outage and submitting any missed work within 24 hours of resolution of any system outage. Criteria for the logic model, evaluation critique, and evaluation plan are as follows:

Outstanding in all aspects: Complete on time all aspects covered in appropriate detail, exceptionally clear and coherent, appropriately presented and well justified	25 points
Very good work: Complete, on time, with most aspects covered in appropriate detail, clear and coherent, and appropriately presented and justified	23 points
Good work: Mostly complete, on time, reasonable detail, minor deficiencies	21 points
Barely satisfactory: Partially complete, minor problems with clarity and coherence	18 points
Deficient in significant areas: Late and/or missing significant parts and/or not clear	12 points
Not submitted without prior justification	0 points

Regular and ongoing participation in discussion and other online activities is expected and comprises one of the four graded assignments for the course. Specific criteria for online participation are as follows:

Outstanding participation: Substantive (beyond yes/n, agree/disagree to include constructive comments, probing questions, and/or insightful elaboration) responses to 6 or more discussion postings, 2 or more logical models, and 2 or more evaluation critiques	25 points
Very good participation: Generally substantive responses to 5 or more discussion postings, and 2 or more logical models, and 2 or more evaluation critiques	23 points
Good participation: Generally substantive responses to 3 or more discussion postings and at least one logic model and one evaluation critique	21 points
Barely satisfactory participation: Occasionally substantive responses to at least 2 discussion postings, one logic model and one evaluation critique	18 points
Generally non-substantive and sporadic responses	12 points
No (or barely noticeable) active participation	0 points

Meeting Information

The course meets online in an asynchronous manner. There are assignments and activities scheduled each week. Regular participation is expected every week and timely submission of assignments is required for successful completion of this course.

Class Attendance/Online Interaction

Participation and punctuality are professional behaviors expected. Postings, comments, and all things conducted within the course context are expected to reflect professional standards of conduct. Abusive and derogatory language will not be tolerated. All course participants will be treated as professional colleagues, and their associated organizations will be given proper

respect. **Students who do not comply with professional standards of conduct will be appropriate advised; those who persist in non-professional conduct in the context of course activities may be dropped from the course. Students may also be dropped from the course, with notice from the instructor, due to lack of participation or non-attendance.**

Due dates, for all assigned materials, will be announced in advance. Changes to assignment requirements or due dates may be announced in class forums; therefore reading the class forums every week is required. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with these updates and to have all assignments ready on time. Help with data analysis is available in the College's IRA Lab.

UNT POLICIES

Academic Dishonesty and Integrity

Refer to the UNT Student Rights and Responsibilities [Academic Dishonesty and Integrity](#). These include:

- **Cheating** intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term 'academic exercise' includes all forms of work submitted for and related to course credit.
- **Plagiarism** the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgement.
- **Fabrication** intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty** intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

You are encouraged to become familiar with the University's Policy of Academic dishonesty found in the [Student Handbook](#). Grievances should first be brought to the attention of the instructor, then the Program Coordinator, and then the Department grievance committee (in writing) if not yet satisfied.

ADA Policy

The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. **Student responsibility** primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found

[here](http://www.unt.edu/oda/apply/index.html) (see <http://www.unt.edu/oda/apply/index.html>). Also, you may visit the Office of Disability Accommodation in the University Union (room 321) or call them at (940) 565-4323.

Add/Drop Policy

Refer to the UNT Office of the Registrar concerning [Add/Drop Periods](#) for this semester.

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website](#). The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at "Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G)" and can be found buried within this document: <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/get-cfr.cgi?TITLE=8&PART=214&SECTION=2&TYPE=TEXT>

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

An F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course to maintain compliance.

It is the student's responsibility to do the following:

1. Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
2. Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office using appropriate ISSS form available.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.