

CECS 6800.020/.026/.001

Special Topics: Evaluating Educational Technology Programs, Projects, Products, Practices and Policies

Syllabus – Fall 2015

Instructor:

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

Texts:

- Required: *Educational Technology Program and Project Evaluation* (draft of new book – not to be circulated outside the course); available in Course Content
- 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.
 - *Program Evaluation in Practice: Core Concepts and Examples for Discussion and Analysis* by Dean T. Spaulding (Jossey-Bass, 2008)

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/>

Readings and resources can be found in the course site in the Course Content and Resources areas.

Pre-requisite(s):

- Graduate student status, or
- Permission of the instructor

Learn

This hybrid course will use [LEARN \(https://learn.unt.edu\)](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. Those registered for the on-campus section are required to meet with the instructor on a regular basis (e.g., weekly or biweekly).

Course Description

This course will provide students with fundamental knowledge and skills in the theory and practice associated with evaluating educational technology programs, projects, products, practices and policies. Examples of effective methods and approaches will be elaborated for multiple contexts, including educational technology efforts in K-12, Higher Education, Business and Industry, Research, Government, and non-profit organizations. The focus will be on efforts involving educational technologies although students can apply their knowledge and skills to 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

Plan a minimum of six to nine hours a week of outside preparation as a reasonable time allocation for successfully completing this course. This is a graduate course that explores various theory, concepts, and technologies related to evaluating educational technology programs, projects, products, practices and policies.

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 24 - 30 Aug	Course introduction: students will be able to define and distinguish programs, projects, products, practices and policies	Read chapters one and two in the draft book entitled “Educational Technology Program and Project Evaluation” located in the Course Content area; participate in the weekly discussion forum: introduce yourself and your interests

<p>2 31 Aug - 6 Sep</p>	<p>Types of evaluation: students will be able to identify and distinguish types of evaluation</p>	<p>Read chapters three and four in the required text; participate in the weekly discussion forum and indicate what you propose to evaluate</p>
<p>3 7 - 13 Sep</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Read chapters five and six in the required text, the “Needs Assessment – World Bank Book” and the Handbook chapter on cognitive task analysis PDF file in the Resources-PDFs area; participate in the weekly discussion forum</p>
<p>4 14 – 20 Sep</p>	<p>Logic models part one: students will be able to identify five major components of a logic model, describe each component, and give at least two examples of items that fall within major component</p>	<p>Read chapters eleven and twelve in the required text; read the papers entitled “Remarks on Logic and Mental Models,” and “Preliminary Evaluation Plan” in the Resources-PDF area; participate in the weekly discussion forum</p>
<p>5 21 – 27 Oct</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>View the examples of Logic Models in the Resources-Links area and the University of Wisconsin PDF on Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models in the Links area; post drafts of logic models to the discussion forum and participate in the weekly discussion forum</p>
<p>6 28 Sep – 4 Oct</p>	<p>Theory of change: students will be able to link goals and objectives to the solution approach and the logic model</p>	<p>Read the papers entitled “Remarks on a Theory of Change,” “Theory of Change,” and submit the logic model to the Assignments area; participate in the weekly discussion forum</p>
<p>7 5 – 11 Oct</p>	<p>Components of an evaluation plan: students will be able distinguish the basic components of a logic model and how each might be evaluated</p>	<p>Read chapters 13 and 14 in the required text and the paper entitled “Impact of Professional Development on Student Achievement” in the Resources area; participate in the weekly discussion forum about submitted logic models</p>

<p>8 12 – 18 Oct</p>	<p>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)</p>	<p>Review the Innovation Network’s Logic Model Workbook located at http://www.innonet.org/client_docs/File/logic_model_workbook.pdf; read the papersparticipate in the weekly discussion forum</p>
<p>9 19 – 25 Oct</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Read the papers entitled “Criteria for Assessing the Strength of Evaluations,” and “Measuring the Degree of Program Implementation” in the Resources area; Review the “Preliminary Evaluation Plan” in the Resources area as the focus of the graded evaluation critique; indicate strengths and weakness of the proposed evaluations of classmates in the weekly discussion forum</p>
<p>10 26 Oct – 1 Nov</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Read the paper entitled “Preliminary Evaluation Plan” again and prepare a critique of that evaluation plan; participate in the weekly discussion forum; post a near-final version of your evaluation critique to the weekly discussion forum; Participate in the weekly discussion forum about the evaluation critiques</p>
<p>11 2 – 8 Nov</p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>Read chapters sixteen and seventeen in the required text; complete the online CITI training and submit the completion certificate to the Assignments area (10 points); participate in the weekly discussion forum about ethical issues and obligations;</p>
<p>12 9 – 15 Nov</p>	<p>Measuring implementation fidelity: students will be able to generate appropriate implementation fidelity</p>	<p>Read chapters eighteen, nineteen and twenty in the required text; participate in the weekly discussion forum about impact studies; Post a final copy of the evaluation critique to the Assignments area;</p>

	measures from the outputs component of a logic model	participate in a synchronous GoToMeeting video-conference to be scheduled on the subject of evaluation plans
13 16 – 22 Nov	Impact studies: students will be able to generate appropriate impact measures from the proximal (near-term) outcomes of a logic model	Read “Quasi-experimental Impact Assessments” (see LINKS), Psychology World entry on Extraneous Variables (see LINKS), Implementation Science (see LINKS), and the National Implementation Research Network (see LINKS); participate in the discussion forum or a synchronous video-conference on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of evaluation data
14 23 – 29 Nov	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; post a near-final version of your evaluation plan to the weekly discussion forum; enjoy Thanksgiving
15 20 Nov – 3 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 to the Assignments area (final course project – worth 25% of the course grade) NO LATE PLANS ACCEPTED – BE ON TIME WITH ALL ASSIGNMENTS
16 3 Dec	End of Semester (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)	20 points
Logic Model (Assignment 2)	25 points
Evaluation Critique (Assignment 3)	20 points
Evaluation Plan (Assignment 4)	25 points
CITI Certificate of Completion	10 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.