George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Educational Psychology

EDRS 631: 001 – Program Evaluation
3 Credits, Fall 2021
Tuesdays: 4:30 – 7:10 pm | Innovation 327 – Fairfax Campus

Faculty
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Prerequisites/Corequisites:
EDRS 631: Course Restrictions: Not Repeatable for Credit; No prerequisites or Corequisites

University Catalog Course Description
Focuses on perspectives of existing and emerging issues, theories, and models of program evaluation. Involves implementation of program evaluation in related fields and school districts.

Course Overview
This course examines the theory, ethics, and practice of program evaluation. Areas of focus include understanding the nature of program evaluation, understanding applications of appropriate methods used in program evaluation, and using program evaluation in applied settings, including education, state or federal agencies, community health, nonprofits, etc. This course supports the mission of the Educational Psychology Program, which is "to develop professionals who: a. apply principles of learning, cognition and motivation to vital problems in the area of education in a variety of settings; b. develop a solid understanding of research, assessment, and evaluation methodologies; and c. develop an analytical and scholarly approach to critically assessing theoretical perspectives, research, and practice within and across content domains."

Course Delivery Method
Lecture and in-class activities that require students to be active and contribute to class and small group discussions. Individual reflection activities may be included.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives
This course is designed to enable students to do the following:
1. Understand the nature of program evaluation
2. Compare and contrast program evaluation and social science research
3. Apply the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles in planning and conducting program evaluations
4. Distinguish among the major models and methods of conducting program evaluation
5. Apply evaluation models and methods appropriately within a given evaluation context
6. Understand program evaluation questions, including but not limited to, satisfaction, program implementation, program outcomes, etc.

7. Understand how to develop, implement, and analyze evaluation data from a variety of evaluation tools
8. Understand the linkages between program evaluation, program design, and program implementation
9. Understand issues related to utilization of evaluation information
10. Understand the cultural, political, economic, and social justice implications of program evaluations

Program Professional Standards

Standard 2. Candidates will apply their knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including basic concepts, principles, techniques, and ethical issues, to read and critique relevant products of research.

Standard 3. Candidates will apply their knowledge and skills of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including basic concepts, principles, techniques, and ethical issues, to conduct research and/or inform practice in diverse applied settings.

Standard 4. Candidates will demonstrate oral and written communication relevant to educational psychology, including knowledge and use of APA style and professional formats (e.g., oral presentations, poster presentations, article abstracts, literature reviews, research proposals, reports).

Standard 5. Candidates will demonstrate professional dispositions relevant to educational psychology such as critical thinking, collaboration, interpersonal communication, intercultural competence, ethical leadership, professionalism, and technological skills.

Required Texts
Alkin, M. C., & Vo, A.C. (2011). *Evaluation Essentials: From A to Z (2nd ed.)*. NY: Guilford.

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (6th Ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Other readings will also be assigned for the course and made available on Blackboard.

Recommended Texts

Mertens, D.M., & Wilson, A.T. (2012). *Program evaluation theory and practice: A comprehensive guide*. New York, NY: Guilford

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, hard copy). **Late assignments will not be accepted without prior instructor approval**.

- **Class Participation (60 points, ~16 class sessions)**. Students are expected to participate in in-class activities that are individual or small group assignments. Assigned readings are to be completed. Attendance is required. Please contact the instructor if you plan to miss a class. Late submission of assignments will automatically deduct 10 points from participation points (all-or-nothing).
    - Attend all class sessions on time.
    - Use your MASON e-mail account for all correspondence with the instructor.
    - Complete readings in advance of the class and participate fully in discussions, group, or individual classwork.
    - Submit all assignments to the class blackboard on time.

- **Program Overview/Introduction (10 points)**: Prepare a brief overview of the program. Include a description of the program and provide justification for a program evaluation.

- **Mid-Semester Check-In Reflection (10 points)**: Approximately one month into the course, provide a reflection of your learning experiences that highlight your confidence in your skills initially, what has worked well so far, what have been the challenges, lessons learned, and your identity as an evaluator.

- **Logic Model (50 points):** Students will develop a logic model for a given program that includes all the key components. The model should clearly provide an illustration of the theory of the program by accurately listing the *input, activities, output, and outcomes* (short, intermediate, long-term).

- **RFP Individual Project (50 points):** Students will select a program of their choice (or one provided) and create a hypothetical request for proposal (RFP) seeking evaluation agencies and evaluators to respond with proposals to evaluate the program. The RFP will contain a description of the program, evaluation needs, budget parameters, and a description of expected evaluator qualifications.

- **Evaluation Project Report (120 points):** You have one major project in this course, which is to conduct a program evaluation. The evaluation project has four parts. Parts are due throughout the course. This is a performance-based assessment.

    - **Program Overview/Introduction (20 points)**: Prepare a brief report about a program. Include a description of the program. Provide a justification for the program evaluation. The justification should include a discussion of past or current monitoring, assessment, or evaluation efforts and any key findings pertinent for your evaluation of the program; a discussion of issues, concerns, or challenges that the program faces, and potential factors related to the issues. Include draft evaluation questions. Include a reference list. Include a logic model.
    - **Evaluation Plan (20 points):** Develop an evaluation plan based on the program overview and evaluation questions. The plan should include a revised program overview/introduction with any revised evaluation questions (if applicable),

evaluation design, data sources and sampling plan, methods and measures used to collect and analyze the data, data analysis plan, a timeline, and references.

- **Results & Discussion (20 points)**: Write an evaluation report. The report should include the introduction, a review of relevant literature, methods, findings, a discussion that interprets the findings in terms of the research or best practice literature and includes recommendations based on strengths and opportunities for program improvement, and references.
- **Evaluator Recommendations (20 points)**: Provide a list of recommendations addressing strengths and opportunities for program improvement. The recommendations should be appropriate given the extent to which the data and results address the evaluation questions.
- **End of Course Reflection (20 points)**: Provide a reflection of your learning experiences that highlight your confidence in your skills initially, what worked well, what were the challenges, lessons learned, and your identity as an evaluator.
- **Adherence to APA Style (20 points)**

Grading

There are a total 300 points for the course distributed among the five assignments listed above.

Grading scale:

A+	293 – 300
A	279 – 292
A-	270 – 278
B+	264 – 269
B	249 – 263
B-	240 – 248
C	210 – 239
F	Below 210

Professional Dispositions
See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/

Class Schedule

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

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS DUE
1	Aug 24	Course Overview Introduction to Evaluation	Sections A-B AEA Guiding Principles AEA Evaluator Competencies
2	Aug 31	Understanding Evaluators, Evaluand, and Stakeholders	Sections C-F Schwandt (2018)
3	Sept 7	Evaluation Theory Evaluation & Research Models	Leeuw & Donaldson (2015) Frye & Hemmer (2012)
4	Sept 14	Understanding Program Evaluation Models (contd.)	Section G-I **Project/Program Description Due – Bring to Sept 14th class for discussion**
5	Sept 21	Framing Evaluation Questions Evaluability	Section J, N **Logic Model Due – Sept 24, 2021 11:59 pm**
6	Sept 28	Evaluation Plan and Design	Sections O, P, Q
7	Oct 5	**Asynchronous Class Meeting** Data Collection in Evaluation	Section K, L, M **Check-In Reflection Due – Oct 8, 2021 11:59 pm**
8		**No Class Meeting – Optional Group Project Office Hours (week of Oct 11th)** **Evaluation Plan Due – Oct 15, 2021 11:59 pm**	
9	Oct 19	Data Analysis & Interpretation	Sections R, S, T
10	Oct 26	Data Analysis & Interpretation	Sections R, S, T **RFP Assignment Due – Oct 29, 2021 11:59pm**
11	Nov 2	Reporting Findings Evaluator Recommendations Use of Evaluation Results	Sections U, V, Appendix A **Data Analysis Drafts Due (optional)** **Nov 5, 2021 11:59 pm**
12	Nov 9	Managing Evaluations Data Analysis (In-Class Work)	Sections W, X, Y
13	Nov 16	Evaluation Lessons Becoming an Evaluation Professional Evaluation Resources	Section Z American Evaluation Association Washington Evaluators Western Michigan University Center for Evaluation ERIC Clearinghouse for Assessment and Evaluation Online Evaluation Resource Library
14	Nov 23	Project Presentations	
15	Nov 30	Project Presentations	
16	Dec 7	**Reading Day**	**Evaluation Project Report Due** **Dec 14, 2021 11:59 pm**

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 https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/).
- 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 silence all sound emitting devices 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/.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:
As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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

Rubric: Class Participation

Student participation is imperative to student learning and a successful class. The following rubric outlines how student participation scores will be determined in this course. All students are expected to demonstrate specific characteristics and actions throughout the semester. The quality and quantity of these actions will determine the points assigned for participation.

Students are expected to:

a) Be well prepared for class by completing assigned readings.
b) Participate fully in class activities and assignments – take an active part in small and large group discussions (without dominating the conversations).
c) Treat class activities and discussions as important components of the course, showing respect for fellow classmates and the course material.
d) Attend all class sessions. Arrive on time and stay for the duration of the session.

Rubric: In-Class Assignments

Criteria	Unsatisfactory (0-2)	Minimal (3)	Competent (4)	Outstanding (5)
Connections to Coursework *Demonstrate connections to course concepts in the task*	Does not include connections to course concepts	Some connections to course concepts that may not be relevant.	Adequate connections to relevant course concepts	Clear and insightful connections to relevant course concepts
Analysis *For tasks that require analysis*	Analysis is incomplete or missing.	Analysis is general and addresses only some aspects of the task requirements	Analysis is complete and adequately addresses task requirements	Analysis is thorough and detailed; fully addresses task requirements
APA Style *Use APA style and formatting*	Uses concise, coherent, well-organized writing with correct APA style.	Writes with some lack of clarity and/or inconsistent APA style with some errors.	Writes with a lack of clarity and coherence, many errors, or incorrect APA style.	Writes with little clarity or coherence, many errors, and/or no use of APA style.

Note: The criteria will vary depending on the nature of the assignments/tasks.

Rubric: Project/Program Description

Criteria	Needs Improvement (below 6)	Satisfactory (6-8)	Exemplary (9-10)	Score
Program Description A brief 1-page description about a program of interest to include general background information about the program/organization and justification of the need for an evaluation. (10 points)	The description is unclear and/or too brief to completely communicate information about the program or the justification.	The description may have minor issues with clarity, extraneous text, or missing information. The description may lack information for the justification.	The description provides a clear and complete synthesis of the information about the program and justification for the evaluation.	

Rubric: Mid-Semester Check-In Reflection

Criteria	Needs Improvement (below 6)	Satisfactory (6-8)	Exemplary (9-10)	Score
Reflection A brief reflection on the key learning experiences, what worked well, and areas of improvement. (10 points)	The reflection on the learning experience is minimal.	Reflection demonstrates some evidence of the learning process: lacks some clarity of has minor problems with documenting what worked well, challenges, areas of improvement, evaluator identity, lessons learned.	Reflection is thoughtful in a way that reflects engagement with the learning process: clearly documents what worked well, challenges, areas of improvement, evaluator identity, lessons learned.	

Rubric: Logic Model

Criteria	Needs Improvement (below 6)	Satisfactory (6-8)	Exemplary (9-10)	Score
Comprehensiveness	Does not present a comprehensive picture of the program	Presents a comprehensive picture of the program	Presents a highly comprehensive picture of the program	
Placement of Components	Components are missing and/or not placed in correct columns	All components are placed in correct columns	All components are placed in correct columns The outcomes are horizontally and vertically places reflect	
Plausible connections	Outcomes are not plausible or unclear in their connection inputs and activities	Outcomes are plausible from the inputs and activities. Intermediate and long term outcomes are reasonably linked	Outcomes are highly plausible from the inputs and activities. Intermediate and long term outcomes are linked	
Logic	Outcomes and outputs are not logically linked to activities	Outcomes and outputs are linked logically to activities		
Brevity & Readability	Exceeds a page; language is confusing or highly technical with jargon	Fits one page; language is clear and free of jargon; understood by a non-technical reader		
			Total	

From: http://misalondon.ca/PDF/BIP/MeasuringImpact/Logic_Model_Assessment_Rubric.pdf

Rubric: Request for Proposal (RFP)

Criteria	Needs Improvement (below 6)	Satisfactory (6-8)	Exemplary (9-10)	Score
Program description - Background	Description of the program is unclear	Description of the program is provided: covers the major purpose, activities, and intended outcomes	Description of the program clearly communicates the major purpose, activities, and intended outcomes	
Evaluation Needs or Scope of Work	Description does not provide a clear understanding of evaluation requirements	Evaluation requirements provide a clear understanding of the scope of work and evaluation needs.	Evaluation requirements provide a clear understanding of the scope of work and evaluation needs.	
Evaluator Qualification/Capabilities	Incomplete or insufficient details on evaluator qualification	Evaluator qualification is described: includes question or bullet points seeking case studies/previous work, agency or individual capacity and qualification, and other restrictions as applicable	Evaluator qualification is described exceptionally well: includes question or bullet points seeking case studies/previous work, agency or individual capacity and qualification, and other restrictions as applicable	
Budget Considerations	Budget is not included	Budget is included that seems reasonable given the evaluation needs		
Grammar and Mechanics	Contains several errors that affect readability	The product is free from grammatical errors and evidences professional writing skills		
			Total	

Rubric: Evaluation Project

Project Component	Unsatisfactory (below 10)	Minimal (10-14)	Competent (14 -18)	Outstanding (18 -20)	Score
Introduction Include a synthesis of the most important elements describing the program, justification for the evaluation, and evaluation questions (20 points)	The introduction is unclear and/or too brief to completely communicate information about the program or the justification. The evaluation questions are vague, unclear, or missing.	The introduction has several issues with clarity, extraneous text, or is incomplete, lacking key information about the program or the justification. More than one evaluation question is general, lacks a clear relationship to information provided in the text, or is unclear. More questions are needed to address the issues identified.	The introduction may have minor issues with clarity, extraneous text, or missing information. The introduction may lack information for the justification. Most of the evaluation questions are related to information provided in the text, are clear and precise. The questions may also not be completely sufficient to address the issues identified	The introduction provides a clear and complete synthesis of the information about the program and justification for the evaluation. Evaluation questions are related to information provided in the text, are clear and precise, and are sufficient to address the identified issues. No extraneous text is included.	
Plan Develop a plan derived from the program overview and evaluation questions that includes a description of the evaluation design, data sources and sampling plan, methods and measures to collect and analyze the data and timeline. (20 points)	Methods do not address the criteria. Data sources, research design, and data analysis are not appropriate. The timeline is missing or not feasible.	Methods are missing sections parts. The evaluation design, data sources, collection or analysis methods are not fully appropriate for the issues or questions. The timeline is missing major sections or has major difficulties with feasibility.	Methods address all parts. There are methodological concerns the evaluation design, data sources, or data collection or analysis methods. OR methods are appropriate, but not fully described. OR, the methods are described but not fully aligned to or address the evaluation issue and questions. The timeline may not fully reflect the	Methods fully address all parts. Evaluation design, data sources, data collection methods and analysis are appropriate and thoroughly described. Selection and justification of methods reflects contemporary educational evaluation methods. The methods are well aligned and address the evaluation issues and questions.	

			plan or have minor issues related to feasibility	The plan and timeline is complete and feasible	
Results & Discussion Report of data analyses Description of findings. Interpretation of findings in relation to the evaluation issues, questions, and literature Identification of limitations (20 points)	Findings do not address the criteria. Data analyses are not appropriate. Sections of findings are missing. Discussion does not address the criteria. Interpretations and conclusions are not grounded in the findings, or are missing. Findings and their interpretations are not connected evaluation issue, questions or literature, or are missing major parts.	Findings inadequately address all criteria or a criterion is missing. Data analyses are not fully appropriate. Reporting is incomplete in parts. Discussion does not address all criteria. Some interpretations and/or conclusions are not grounded in the findings. Findings and their interpretations are not connected to the evaluation issue, questions, or literature.	Findings address all criteria. Data analyses are appropriate but are not complete or accurately described. Reporting of the findings are generally appropriate for the methods employed (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods). Discussion addresses all criteria. Interpretations and conclusions are grounded in the findings. Findings and their interpretations are generally connected to the evaluation issue, questions, and literature	Findings fully address the criteria. Data analyses are appropriate, complete, and accurately described. Reporting of the findings is appropriate for the methods employed (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods). Discussion fully addresses all criteria. Interpretations and conclusions are well grounded in the findings. Findings and their interpretations are meaningfully connected to the evaluation issue, questions, and literature. Limitations are addressed thoughtfully.	
Evaluator Recommendations Discussion of recommendations addressing strength and opportunities for program improvement (20 points)	Recommendations are missing or not justified Explanation is missing for one or more recommendations.	Recommendations are mostly not justified based on the findings and mostly disconnected from strengths and opportunities for growth. Explanation is sparse for the	Recommendations are mostly connected to strengths and opportunities for growth and are justified and mostly explained.	Recommendations are clearly based on strengths and opportunities for growth and are well justified and explained.	

		recommendations is sparse			
Reflection A brief reflection on the key learning experiences, what worked well, and areas of improvement. (20 points)	The reflection on the learning experience is minimal.		Reflection is thoughtful in a way that reflects engagement with the learning process: clearly documents what worked well, challenges, areas of improvement, evaluator identity, lessons learned.		
APA Style Use APA writing style, formatting, including citations within text and references. (20 points)	Writing lacks clarity, coherence, many errors, and/or no use of APA style. Citations and references are minimal or absent.	Writing has multiple problems with clarity, coherence, and organization. There are many errors in APA style, citations, and/or references. Multiple references are missing or incomplete.	Writing lacks some clarity or has minor organizational problems affecting the overall coherence, and/or there are some errors in APA style, citations, or references. There may also be a small number of missing citations or references	Writing is concise, coherent, well organized, and with correct APA style. Citations and references are correct and complete.	