# Evaluation I: Theory Methods & Program Evaluation
# EMR 6420

## Course Syllabus

Fall Term 2017 (September 5 to December 16, 2017)
The course meets on Tuesdays from 6:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.
The course will meet in Sangren Hall, room 4715

*Instructor*:

Gary Miron
Professor, Educational Leadership, Research & Technology
College of Education, WMU

*Office hours*:
- ❑ 1 hour before class and one-half hour after class.
- ❑ I am very flexible to meet by appointment. You can often find me in the office in the ELRT Department Tues-Thurs, but I prefer scheduled appointments. If you cannot meet face-to-face, you are welcome to call my cell. If you wish to schedule a private conversation by phone, skype, or live chat, you can do this by e–mail or phone. If you think your question(s) have a wider appeal, please use the course discussion board so that all students can benefit from the exchange.

*Contact information for Gary Miron*
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e-mail. <gary.miron@wmich.edu>
Skype:   gary.miron

## Course Description
3 credit hours

*Course Catalog Entry*
Emphasis is on evaluation theory and methods and how these apply to the evaluation of programs. Skills addressed include effective verbal and written communication as well as critical thinking. Students will apply their knowledge to the design of program evaluations.

*Instructor's Description*
The course will provide a comprehensive review of relevant theoretical and methodological knowledge related to program evaluation. Also the course will focus on specific skills that are relevant and often used in conducting program evaluations. Group work, regular writing assignments, and course projects will provide opportunities to apply knowledge and skills.

Each class meeting will be divided into a few distinct components/segments that will allow us to switch between diverse activities and learning modalities, e.g., lecture, student-led discussion,

group work, and occasional skill-building activities.

Critical thinking and writing skills are essential for success in this course. These are some of the most important skills you will need for success in your careers and they will be heavily emphasized in this course.

*Course Objectives*

The overall aim of the course is to acquire a large portion of the knowledge and skills required to work as a professional evaluator, or to oversee an evaluation project or contract. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the major concepts and key elements specific to evaluation
2. Understand the rationale and uses for program evaluation
3. Explain diverse approaches and models relevant to program evaluation
4. Be familiar with skills required in conducting program evaluation
5. Design and plan evaluations

Class participation is important to the student's own learning experience as well as that of other students. Thus, class participation is encouraged, required, and rewarded.

*Weekly Activities*

Every student will have responsibility for constructing and posting (on the elearning site) at least one question or start at least one new thread related to the assigned readings each week. Each student is also expected to read the discussion boards and respond to at least 2 questions/threads each week. The posting of questions is designed to help us identify areas that are more difficult to understand, either conceptually (e.g., "why is this important?") or technically (e.g., "I don't understand what defines….or how this process resolves ….issue."). Questions might be ones that puzzle over conclusions or comparisons across readings.   If one student is puzzled over an issue, it is likely that others are as well. This weekly activity is designed to promote on-line discussion and to ensure that students are well prepared for discussion in class. For this reason, your postings and reading of the discussion board should occur by Monday evening each week (i.e., day before our class meets).

Some of our class sessions will devote some time to student-led discussions. Class participants can volunteer or will be randomly asked to lead the discussion over one or more topics that were covered in the previous week's reading. Therefore, all students should be prepared to lead the discussion each week. Class discussions are critical to facilitate the learning of everyone in the group.

This is a rigorous graduate level course. The readings required for each week will range from 70-150 pages of technical material. Every other week, participants will complete a writing assignment that will be 2 or more single-spaced pages in length. The mid-term and final exams are demanding and require students to recall and describe key concepts and ideas in their own words. The exams

also require students to apply knowledge by responding to questions about hypothetical cases.

Optional study sessions will be organized and hosted by either the instructor or one of his doctoral students. These will be arranged as needed or as requested by course participants. The scheduling of the optional study sessions will likely be scheduled for the lunch hour or early afternoon on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.

## Grading

The final grade is essentially comprise of three nearly equal parts: participation (30%), writing assignments (35%) and mid-term & final exams (35%).

*Course Participation*
Participants are expected to be actively engaged in the class. Participation will be evaluated based on (i) attendance, (ii) level and quality of engagement in class activities and on-line discussions, (iii) electronic posting of questions/responses each week on reading assignments, and (iv) role in leading classroom discussions. Total of 30 points (15 points assigned after mid-term, and 15 points for participation assigned at end of course).

*Writing Assignment*s
There will be a total of 5 or 6 writing assignments; basically that means a writing assignment will be due almost every week (except for the first week, a couple of weeks in the middle of the course, and the final two weeks of the course when you will be preparing for the final exam). Each of the writing assignments is worth between 5 and 8 points. Total 35 points. Class participants may request to re-write no more than two writing assignment. (See more details on page 5 regarding writing assignments.)

*Examinations*
The Midterm exam will take place on October 17 or 24. The final exam will be completed in class on December 12. Midterm exam is worth 8 points and the final exam is worth of 27 points.

| *Grading Scale* | 100 - 92.5 points | A |
| | 92.4 - 87.5 points | BA |
| | 87.4 - 82.5 points | B |
| | 82.4 - 77.5 points | CB |
| | 77.4 - 72 points | C |
| | Below 72 points | E |

Incompletes will only be considered in the most dire of circumstances.

## Expectations

❑ Students are expected to attend scheduled class sessions and to fully participate during the diverse classroom activities. If you are sick, snowed in, or away on business you are expected to contact a classmate with a laptop and arrange to participate electronically via Skype or AdobeConnect. If your health or other circumstances limit your ability to

participate electronically, then contact the instructor via phone and/or email before class or as soon thereafter as possible.

❑ Please turn cell phones/pagers and other electronic communications devices to silent mode (or off) during class, this includes online class sessions.

❑ When sending e-mails regarding the class, please use the eLearning site for the course.   If you need to use my university e-mail address, please include "EMR 6420" in the start of the subject line.

❑ The usual expectations exist regarding Academic Honesty, the Student Code of Honor (i.e., do not represent as your own work the work of others, cite all sources appropriately, etc.) and general academic policies on such issues as diversity, religious observation, student disabilities, etc. The policies can be found at <http://catalog.wmich.edu> under Academic Policies, Student Rights and Responsibilities. Unless I am advised otherwise, by an administrator in a supervisory position, these policies will all apply as they are presented.

❑ When citing research or including references in your writing assignments, please follow guidelines from the American Psychological Association Publication Manual. Otherwise, details for specific writing requirements will be listed in a separate handout that describes the writing assignments.

❑ Students with disabilities who foresee the need for accommodation or those with known conflicts with any course session should see me at the beginning of the course, or as needs/expectations change during the course.


**Required Texts**:

Bamberger, M., Rugh, J., & Mabry, L. (2011). *Real world evaluation: Working under budget, time, data, and political constraints*. 2nd Edition.   Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.   **[RWE]**

Russ-Eft, D., & Preskill H. (2009). *Evaluation in organizations: A systematic approach to enhancing learning, performance and change*. 2nd Edition.   New York, NY:   Basic Books. **[EIO]**

 *Optional Resources*:

Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M.W.; & Freeman, H.E. (2004).   *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. (7th Edition.   Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2008).   *Utilization-focused evaluation*.   4th Edition.   Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.

Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. (1994).   *The program evaluation standards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (hw.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc).

In addition to these books, all participates require access to a computer with reliable and fast Internet connectivity.   In addition to the computer, participates require a headset or headphones and a computer linked Web or video camera.   In many newer laptop computers the camera is already embedded.

# Weekly Writing Assignments

Course participants will receive plenty of opportunities to practice and apply critical thinking skills during the course. The best example of applying these skills is in the writing assignments. The weekly writing assignments will be structured writing assignments that will be short in length but will require thoughtful identification and defense of ideas.

The writing assignment will be handed out in class or posted electronically. The due date and time for each assignment is specified in the dropbox folder in the elearning system. Each assignment is to be submitted via the eLearning system.

The writing assignment should strictly following the guidelines specified below:

❑ **Do not exceed the maximum number of pages** indicated for each specific assignment.

❑ Use 1 inch margins on all sides of the page.

❑ Only single space text, no space between paragraphs, and indent the start of each paragraph.

❑ Font should be a Times 12 or equivalent.

❑ Your name, the number of the writing assignment (e.g., Writing Assignment #3) and due date of assignment should be upper right-hand corner of first page.

❑ References should be used sparingly; when used they should follow APA format.

❑ The writing assignment file should be in MS Word. If there is another format you prefer, please take this up with me before submitting your assignment. The Word format allows for easy handling and electronic feedback from the course instructors.

❑ The file names should identify the course assignment numbers as well as your first and last name; use the following file naming example as a guide: WA1_Gary_Miron.doc.   No spaces should be used in the file name!

❑ All work will be evaluated based on accuracy, adherence to guidelines and due dates, thoroughness, and evidence of effort, professionalism, data integration, coherence, and appearance.   Be sure to spell check, proof, and edit all work submitted.

❑ Class participants are encouraged to edit and advise one another, although each essay is expected to be unique. For some assignments, we may require that course participants conduct an initial review of a classmate's initial draft.

❑ Timely completion and the quality of your work will contribute to your overall course grade. In fairness to all, a penalty will be imposed for any work submitted late (generally speaking, the penalty will be equivalent to a minimum of 0.4 point or more).   Re-writes will also be subject to a minimum 0.4 point deduction.

If you require help with your writing, please contact the WMU Writing Center, tel. 269-387-4615 [https://wmich.edu/writingcenter]   The Writing Center provides short courses and individualized support which can help strengthen your writing.   This is an important and valuable service that is paid for with your tuition dollars.