

EVAL 6010: Interdisciplinary Seminar in Evaluation

Fall 2011

Course Description

This seminar is a forum for the integration of core evaluation concepts across the program, developing an understanding of evaluation as a profession, and for exchange of ideas among evaluation students, faculty, and industry representatives from multiple disciplines. Topics vary each semester.

Fall 2011 topic: Contemporary trends in evaluation.

Credit and Course Hours

1 semester hours

This class meets from 3:00 PM – 4:50 PM every other Friday beginning September 9, 2011 and ending December 16, 2011.

The course meets in Ellsworth Hall, room 4410, in The Evaluation Center.

Instructors

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Course Website

The Website for this course is located at <http://www.wmich.edu/evalphd/courses/eval-6010-interdisciplinary-seminar-in-evaluation-2/>. From this site students can access assigned readings and other materials related to the course.

Office Hours

By appointment.

Course Description

This course is a graduate seminar designed to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to understand and debate current issues and the latest developments in evaluation. Topics covered include, but are not limited to, the use of experimental designs in international development evaluations, participatory evaluation methods, theory driven evaluation, using student performance data to assess teacher performance, research versus evaluation, and scientifically based research. Other topics may be introduced based on student interest. As part of this course, each student will be expected to develop and present an argument on a predetermined topic. Students will be assessed based on both presentation skills and the logic and coherency of their argument. This course will help prepare students for their comprehensive examinations.

Required Readings

The readings required for this course, and available from the course website, are:

- Claremont Colleges Digital Library. (2009). *Empowerment evaluation: Its promise (Fetterman) and Pitfalls (Scriven & Patton)*. Claremont, CA: Claremont Graduate College.
- Coryn, C. L. S. (2009, September). *Contemporary trends and movements in evaluation: Evidence-based, participatory and empowerment, and theory-driven evaluation*. Paper presented at The Evaluation Center's Evaluation Café, Kalamazoo, MI.
- Coryn, C. L. S., Noakes, L. A., Westine, C. D., & Schröter, D. C., (2011). A systematic review of theory-driven evaluation practice from 1990 to 2009. *American Journal of Evaluation, 32*(2), 199-226.
- Cullen, A. E., & Coryn, C. L. S. (2011). Forms and functions of participatory evaluation in international development: A review of the empirical and theoretical literature. *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation, 7*(16), 32-47.
- Cullen, A. E., Coryn, C. L. S., & Rugh, J. (2011). The politics and consequences of including stakeholders in international development evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation, 32*(3), 345-361.
- Duflo, E. & Kremer, M. (2003). Use of Randomization in the Evaluation of Development Effectiveness. Paper prepared for the World Bank Operations Evaluation Department (OED) Conference on Evaluation and Development Effectiveness. Washington, D.C.
- Evaluation Gap Working Group. (2006). *When will we ever learn? Improving lives through impact evaluation*. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.
- Jones, C. (2006). Save time, save money. A vendor's top 10 tips to improve the RFP process. Summit, 3-6.
- JPAL (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab) What is Randomization? Available at <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/methodology/what-randomization>
- Harrison, C. (2008). A decent proposal. CAmagazine.com
- Mathison, S. (2007). What is the difference between research and evaluation—and why do we care? In N. L. Smith & P. R. Brandon (Eds.), *Fundamental issues in evaluation* (pp. 183-196). New York: Guilford.
- Reeves, T., Apedoe, X., Woo, Y. (2005). Evaluating digital libraries: A user- friendly guide. University Corporation for Atmospheric Research.
- Rugh, J. (2011, March). *What's involved in "rigorous impact evaluation"? IOCE proposes more holistic perspectives*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation, Paris, France.
- Scriven, M. (2004). Michael Scriven on the differences between evaluation and social science research. Harvard Family Research Project. The Evaluation Exchange 9 (4).
- Swail, W. (2011). An open letter to all organizations in need of a program evaluator. Available: <http://etwus.wordpress.com/2011/03/08/an-open-letter-to-all-organizations-in-need-of-a-program-evaluator/>

Other readings will be assigned during the semester.

Course Schedule

Topics and readings tentatively follow the schedule below:

Date	Topic	Readings
September 9	Introduction	
September 23	Research versus evaluation	Mathison (2007) Reeves, Apedoe, & Woo (2005) p. 1-6 Scriven (2004)
October 7	TOR/RFP	Harrison (2008) Jones (2006) Swail (2011)
October 21	Participatory evaluation	Claremont Digital Libraries (2009) Cullen & Coryn (2011) Cullen, Coryn, & Rugh (2011)
November 4	<i>American Evaluation Association annual conference—no class</i>	
November 18	Theory-driven evaluation	Coryn (2009) Coryn, Noakes, Westine, & Schröter (2011)
December 2	Teacher assessment	TBD
December 16	The use of experimental designs in development evaluation	Duflo & Kremer (2003) Evaluation Working Group (2006) JPAL online Rugh (2011)

Grading

This class is highly participatory. You are expected to have read all of the required readings beforehand and arrive on time and prepared to discuss the readings during class. Each student is required to lead 4 discussions throughout the semesters. Discussions can take many forms, including debates about the pros and cons of an evaluation approach and presentations about the background of a topic. More details about the discussions will be provided during class.

This class is graded on a pass/fail basis and is based on the following weights:

Attendance	20%
Discussion #1	20%
Discussion #2	20%
Discussion #3	20%
Discussion #4	20%

Need for Accommodation

Any student with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the professor and the appropriate Disability Services office at the beginning of the semester. The two disability service offices on campus are: Disabled Student Resources and Services (269-387-2116) and the Office of Services for Students with Learning Disabilities (269-387-4411).

Diversity Statement

The IDPE maintains a strong and sustained commitment to the diverse and unique nature of all learners and high expectations for each student.

Academic Integrity

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. [The policies can be found at <http://www.wmich.edu/catalog> under Academic Policies, Student Rights and Responsibilities.] If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with your instructors if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

To access the Western Michigan University Code of Honor and general academic policies on such issues as diversity, religious observance, and student disabilities, please visit <http://osc.wmich.edu/> and www.wmich.edu/registrar.