COURSE SYLLABUS

RMTD 407: INTRODUCTION TO EVALUATION THEORY

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Office hours by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES: This course introduces students to program evaluation theory in the social sciences, including historical development of the field, various conceptualizations of evaluation, and social and political contexts of evaluation practice. Students will engage major theoretical concepts of the field—methods, use, values, and practice—from the perspectives of various evaluation theorists. Throughout course readings, discussion and assignments, students will have the opportunity to critically reflect on understandings of social justice, implicitly and explicitly, evident in the evaluation theories.

The goals of the course are that students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast major theories of program evaluation (Conceptual Framework 1),
- Understand how evaluation theories relate to evaluation practice (Conceptual Framework 2)
- Understand the issues of social justice and inequity within the field of evaluation (Conceptual Framework 3)
- Understand the ethical, political, and social aspects of program evaluation practice (Conceptual Framework 7).

IDEA Objectives for Course Evaluation

At the end of the course, you will have an opportunity to complete an Online IDEA course evaluation. The objectives from this evaluation that most closely align with this course include:

2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view

Required Readings:

Additional supplemental readings posted in Sakai.
Assignments and Evaluation:
What is Evaluation: Core Concepts Paper 20 pts
Class Leaders 20 pts
Final Exam Paper 40 pts
Class Participation & Discussion Board Posts 20 pts

Grading:
95-100 pts. A+
90-94 pts. A
85-89 pts. B+
80-84 pts. B
75-79 pts. C+
70-74 pts. C
< 70 pts. F

Late assignments: I strongly discourage turning in assignments after the due date. The assignments of the course closely relate to material that we have just discussed or will be discussing for a given week. As a result, turning in late assignments diminishes meaningful participation in class discussions. I will accept late assignments and do not reduce points for late assignments, but I will also provide less feedback and will not as rapidly return your graded assignment to you. If you know in advance that you will be gone when an assignment is due, please plan ahead and submit it early. If you have an unexpected personal circumstance, please talk to me about your concerns with completing course obligations.

Attendance: This course meets once a week, which makes attendance absolutely essential. You must be present to engage fully in the course content. I understand that sometimes life priorities can make this challenging. However, the expectation is that you will be present for the full class session each week. Should you miss a class, arrive late, or leave early, you are responsible for identifying and obtaining missed material from your peers and your classroom participation grade will be affected. Please notify the instructor via email prior to the start of class should you need to be absent.

Class participation. Student participation in discussions and learning activities is critical. However, it is important to note that how a student participates is often a function of their particular learning style. Therefore, participation is less about the frequency with which a student engages in class discussion and more about the quality of the contributions. For the purposes of this course, participation is valued in which students build upon one another’s comments, provide meaningful connections to practice, share critical observations and insights on a topic, and generally increase the complexity and richness of the discussion. Students are also discouraged to act as gatekeepers to the conversation and encourage the participation of others as well as pose questions to one another. To achieve this, a variety of pedagogical approaches are used to ensure that each individual’s preferred learning style is addressed over the course of the semester. A portion of the final grade is dedicated to participation and a rubric is provided that outlines how this will be assessed. The rubric for participation is listed on page 3:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATIVE DIMENSION</th>
<th>“A” GRADE</th>
<th>“B” GRADE</th>
<th>“C” GRADE</th>
<th>“D/F” GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROMPTNESS</td>
<td>Routinely arrives on time for class and is prepared to begin at the designated time as well as following any breaks; student does not leave class early.</td>
<td>Occasionally late to class, does not return promptly from designated breaks; OR occasionally leaves early.</td>
<td>Demonstrates a pattern of lateness or early departure that interferes with course objectives.</td>
<td>Consistently late to class, does not return from breaks in a timely manner, and/or leaves class early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUALITY OF CONTRIBUTIONS</td>
<td>Contributions are relevant and routinely integrate course reading and life experiences into the discussion; Arguments are evidenced-based and supported through course content and/or life experiences.</td>
<td>Contributions lean more toward either course readings or life experiences, but are relevant to the conversation; Arguments are generally evidence-based.</td>
<td>Contributions are not relevant to the conversation and rarely incorporate course readings; Contributions betray a lack of preparation for class; Arguments are rarely evidence-based.</td>
<td>No or minimal contributions or arguments are offered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTRIBUTIONS</td>
<td>Contributions add complexity to the conversation and support or build off of others’ contributions.</td>
<td>Contributions are generally substantive, but occasionally indicate a lack of attention to what others have shared.</td>
<td>Contributions repeat what others have shared and thus do not advance the conversation.</td>
<td>No or minimal contributions are offered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL ENGAGEMENT</td>
<td>Regularly contributes to the class in both large and small group formats; Routinely engaged with course activities and/or discussions.</td>
<td>Contributions generally favor either the small or large group; Does not consistently appear engaged in activities and/or discussions.</td>
<td>Minimal contributions are offered in either the small or large group; Appears disengaged from activities and/or discussions; Addresses core issues in activities and/or discussions quickly and shifts to personal conversations or off-topic material.</td>
<td>No contributions are offered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GATE-KEEPING</td>
<td>Does not dominate the conversation; Regularly encourages the participation of others by posing questions or asking for other students’ thoughts.</td>
<td>Student occasionally encourages the participation of others; recognizes the contributions of others.</td>
<td>Dominates the conversation; Does not engage other students in conversation; directs majority of comments to the instructor.</td>
<td>No or minimal contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LISTENING/ATTENDING SKILLS</td>
<td>Is considerate (verbally and nonverbally) of appropriately expressed feelings and opinions of others; Actively listens to both peers and instructor; Actively supports peers’ learning processes.</td>
<td>Generally considerate (verbally and nonverbally) of appropriately expressed feelings and opinions of others; typically displays active listening; generally supports peers’ learning processes.</td>
<td>Is dismissive (verbally or nonverbally) of others’ feelings and opinions; Displays a lack of interest; Does not actively support peers’ learning processes.</td>
<td>Inconsiderate of others’ feelings and opinions; Does not actively listen or support others’ learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Weekly Schedule with Course Readings & Assignments

**Week 1—May 18: What is Evaluation; History of Evaluation**

Overview Reading(s)

In-Depth Readings and Resources
Rog, Debra. (2014). Infusing Theory into Evaluation Practice. (39 minutes)
Schwandt, Thomas. (2013). On the mutually informing relationship between practice and theory. (21 minutes)


**Week 2—May 26: Role of Science; Methods (CL: ET and IDR)**

Overview Readings

In-Depth Readings and Resources
Donald Campbell

Huey-Tsyh Chen

*Cronbach*


Stewart I. Donaldson, *Thriving in the Global Zeitgeist of Accountability and Evidence-based Practice* (30 minutes)

Additional talks to be added

**Week 3 — June 1: Evaluation in a Political World; Social Justice (CL: IDR)¹²³**

**Overview Readings**


Just Readings: A Loyola University Chicago On-line Social Justice Reader


**In-depth Readings and Resources**


http://pegasus.luc.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=2080104


**House**


**Greene**


Interview with Jennifer C. Greene on Democratic Evaluation.

DUE 6/1: What is Evaluation: Core Concepts (Part 2)

Week 4—June 8: Capacity Building, Monitoring and Use (CL: ET and IDR)\(^{1,2,3}\)
Overview Readings

In-depth Readings and Resources

Weiss


Patton

Preskill

Patton [http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation](http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation)

Week 5—June 15: Learning, Discovery, and Valuing (CL: ET and IDR)\(^{1,2,3}\)
Overview Readings

In-depth Readings and Resources
Scriven

Stake
   Chapters 1 & 4.

Guba & Lincoln


**Overview**

**In-Depth**

EvalPartners
Marco Segone, Co-Chair, EvalPartners, and Unicef Evaluation Office, International Year of Evaluation

Additional videos at http://mymande.org/evalpartners/video-page

**DUE 6/29: FINAL EXAM PROJECT**

1 Discussion Post
2 Class Leaders: Discussion on In-Depth Resource
3 Class Leaders: Evaluation Theorists
ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

What is Evaluation: Core Concepts (20 points)

Part 1
With a partner, write a 3-5 page paper or develop a VoiceThread presentation in which you 1) define evaluation, and 2) discuss core concepts of evaluation theory. These core concepts can be used as a framework throughout the semester to compare and contrast evaluation theories. Be sure to cite and discuss course readings in the paper.

Part 2
With a partner, based on the readings and discussion of social justice and evaluation theory, revise the paper that you wrote or your VoiceThread presentation for Part 1, so that it explicitly addresses social justice as part of the framework. How does the conceptual framework change?

Blog Posts (5 points)

Based on the in-depth readings, post a 400-500 word blog post based on one of the following formats:

1. Describe the evaluation theory using the core evaluation framework that we developed as a class, including the extent to which and ways in which the evaluation theory embodies social justice based on the evaluation framework; OR
2. Describe how you would conduct an evaluation for a scenario based on the evaluation theory; OR
3. Describe key issues or questions that you have about the theor(ies)

Evaluation theorists are grouped each week based on commonalities, although for some weeks these theorists still vary from one another. You may either do the assignment with all theorists in mind or choose one of the theorists that we cover in the week. Be sure that if you choose one theorist, you choose a theorist for whom there is a supplemental reading.

Use the link on the left-hand side. Be sure to title your blog based on the week and topic, and then be sure to click “All members of this site can see this entry” prior to publishing your entry. All entries must be posted by 7pm on Friday.

Forum Conversations (5 points)

Based on the in-depth resource(s), participate in at least one conversation in the Forum. All entries must be posted by 7pm on Friday.
Class Leaders: Evaluation Theorists (15 points)

With a partner, students will sign up for one of the evaluation theorists that we will be studying this semester. On the week that we read about and discuss this theorist, your group will prepare a 30—45 minute activity, and then develop a presentation where you demonstrate how the theorist would respond to a particular evaluation scenario, which will be provided. The presentations should address the following questions:

1. Tell us about your approach for doing the evaluation:
   ▪ What primary purpose for doing evaluation will this approach fulfill?
   ▪ Who is the primary audience of the evaluation?
   ▪ What methods will be used?
   ▪ What will be done to facilitate the use of the evaluation?
   ▪ What will the role of the evaluator be?
2. What are the benefits of using this approach?
3. What are the limitations of this approach?

Class Leaders: Discussion on In-Depth Resource (5 points)

Review or view the podcast or video for your assigned week. With a partner, prepare at least two discussion questions based on the provided lecture or dialogue. As you do so, be sure to also facilitate how this particular lecture or dialogue relates to our core evaluation framework and/or course readings. Start a new topic in the Forum to post a question by Tuesday at 10pm. Then, you will have approximately 20-30 minutes for the discussions in the following Monday face-to-face class.

Final Exam Paper (40 points)

Option A

This semester we have studied numerous evaluation theorists that had varying approaches to their understandings of program evaluation and its practice. For your final exam, draw from relevant theorists that we have studied to illustrate what has most influenced your thinking about program evaluation, and/or what you anticipate integrating into any future opportunities to practice evaluation. In other words, what evaluation theory or theories most influence your evaluation practice? And, why? To help you do so, consider the following questions to stimulate your thinking (In your paper you do not necessarily have to address all of these questions, but some combination of the questions.):

- We have learned that evaluation theories often developed in relation to or in reaction to previous theories. Considering what you have learned from the evaluation field this semester, what evaluation theories and approaches do you think will be most valuable to draw on in the future? What strengths and foundational elements of previous theories do
you see as essential to maintain? What ideas do you have for integrating various theorists in order to compensate for limitations in previous theorists?

- Throughout the course we have learned that the evaluation approaches are often related to the program contexts in which they are used. What program contexts do you encounter and/or anticipate encountering in your future career opportunities? What evaluation approaches are most appropriate for these contexts?

- We have learned that educational training, professional experiences, values and beliefs, professional colleagues, and so on, influence a scholar’s theoretical development. What theoretical approaches to evaluation are most consistent with your background, values, beliefs, experiences, etc.?

- We have learned that evaluation theories both implicitly and explicitly address social justice and have different conceptions of social justice. How does your theory of program evaluation integrate values of social justice?

Write a 10-15 page paper in which you discuss what has most influenced your thinking about evaluation, and what theoretical approaches you hope to draw upon in the future. Be sure to credit theorists and readings we have discussed in class appropriately. You are welcome to include figures, diagrams, case examples, etc. to illustrate your evaluation approach.

Option B
This semester we have studied numerous evaluation theorists that had varying approaches to their understandings of program evaluation and its practice. We have also considered the extent to which and ways in which these theories represent and value social justice. We have also learned that there is much space for expanding and enhancing an understanding of social justice for evaluation practice. For your final exam, choose a substantive area that you have interest in evaluating (e.g., STEM education, teacher professional development, preschool education, response-to-intervention, retention in higher education). Write a 10—15 page paper in which you discuss how to evaluate a program in this substantive area in a way that is socially justice. Given this substantive area, what are common ways in which social injustices occur? How can evaluation be a means of addressing these injustices? Draw upon and cite theorists we have discussed in class, as well as go beyond these theorists and suggest new directions for evaluation practice that are socially just. Incorporate into your paper existing examples of evaluations within your substantive area, as appropriate.
Learning Community at Loyola University Chicago and School of Education

Academic Honesty
Academic honesty is an expression of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care, applicable to Loyola University faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity. The School of Education’s Policy on Academic Integrity can be found at: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_integrity.shtml. For additional academic policies and procedures refer to: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_main.shtml

Accessibility
Students who have disabilities which they believe entitle them to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. To request accommodations, students must schedule an appointment with an SSWD coordinator. Students should contact SSWD at least four weeks before their first semester or term at Loyola. Returning students should schedule an appointment within the first two weeks of the semester or term. The University policy on accommodations and participation in courses is available at: http://www.luc.edu/sswd/

EthicsLine Reporting Hotline
Loyola University Chicago has implemented EthicsLine Reporting Hotline, through a third party internet & telephone hotline provider, to provide you with an automated and anonymous way to report activities that may involve misconduct or violations of Loyola University policy. You may file an anonymous report here on-line or by dialing 855-603-6988. (within the United States, Guam, and Puerto Rico)

The University is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct as an integral part of its mission of expanding knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith. To achieve this goal, the University relies on each community member’s ethical behavior, honesty, integrity and good judgment. Each community member should demonstrate respect for the rights of others. www.luc.edu/ethicsline

Conceptual Framework
The conceptual framework of Loyola’s School of Education is "professionalism in service of social justice." This course contributes to the realization of this framework by engaging students in the knowledge of program evaluation, skills of inquiry, and ethics necessary to be professional and just evaluators. Certain approaches to evaluation, which will be introduced in this course, also specifically aim to address social inequities.

The following is the exact wording of the School of Education’s Conceptual Framework:
The School of Education at Loyola University Chicago, a Jesuit and Catholic urban university, supports the Jesuit ideal of knowledge in the service of humanity. We endeavor to advance professional education in the service of social justice, engaged with Chicago, the nation, and the world. To achieve this vision the School of Education participates in the discovery, development, demonstration, and dissemination of professional knowledge and practice within a context of ethics, service to others, and social justice. We fulfill this mission by preparing professionals to serve as teachers, administrators, psychologists, and researchers; by conducting research on issues of professional practice and social justice; and by partnering with schools and community agencies to enhance life-long learning in the Chicago area.

**Dispositions**

All School of Education dispositions will be assessed in this course, with a particular emphasis on professionalism. The following table provides a rubric on how these dispositions are assessed. An asterisk(*) indicates that the disposition aligns with the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles for professional evaluators.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disposition Description</th>
<th>Target (0 pt)</th>
<th>Acceptable (0 pt)</th>
<th>Unacceptable (0 pt)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systematic Inquiry IL-LUC-DISP.1*</td>
<td>Candidate communicates effectively and appropriately with faculty and peers.</td>
<td>Candidate is working on communicating effectively and appropriately with faculty and peers.</td>
<td>Candidate is unable to communicate effectively and appropriately with faculty and peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare IL-LUC-DISP.1*</td>
<td>Candidate’s written work is appropriate and effective for the course.</td>
<td>Candidate’s written work is sometimes appropriate and effective for the course.</td>
<td>Candidate’s written work is inappropriate and ineffective for the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence IL-LUC-DISP.1*</td>
<td>Candidate provides appropriate assistance to tutoring or consulting clients.</td>
<td>Candidate sometimes provides appropriate assistance to tutoring or consulting clients.</td>
<td>Candidate does not provide appropriate assistance to tutoring or consulting clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness IL-LUC-DISP.1</td>
<td>Candidate is able to meet all deadlines.</td>
<td>Candidate is sometimes able to meet all deadlines.</td>
<td>Candidate is unable to meet all deadlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability IL-LUC-DISP.1</td>
<td>Candidate attends all classes and fulfills all professional obligations.</td>
<td>Candidate sometimes attends classes and fulfills professional obligations.</td>
<td>Candidate’s attendance to class is inconsistent and is unable to fulfill all professional obligations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiality IL-LUC-DISP.1</td>
<td>Candidate is able to work with peers.</td>
<td>Candidate sometimes respects the viewpoints of others.</td>
<td>Candidate has difficulty respecting the viewpoints of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity/Honesty IL-LUC-DISP.2*</td>
<td>Candidate respects the viewpoints of others.</td>
<td>Candidate sometimes respects the viewpoints of others.</td>
<td>Candidate has difficulty respecting the viewpoints of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Integrity/Honesty IL-LUC-DISP.2*</td>
<td>Candidate recognizes potential conflicts and handles them appropriately.</td>
<td>Candidate sometimes recognizes potential conflicts and handles them appropriately.</td>
<td>Candidate has difficulty recognizing potential conflicts and handling them appropriately.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Target (0 pt)</td>
<td>Acceptable (0 pt)</td>
<td>Unacceptable (0 pt)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Integrity/Honesty IL-LUC-DISP.2</strong></td>
<td>Candidates appropriately represent procedures, data, and findings – attempting to prevent misuse of their results.</td>
<td>Candidates represent procedures, data, and findings in a manner that is likely to allow the misuse of their results.</td>
<td>Candidates misrepresent procedures, data, and findings. There is minimal attempt to prevent misuse of their results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximizing Benefits &amp; Reducing Harm IL-LUC-DISP.3</strong></td>
<td>Candidate understands the cost-benefit ratio of particular research designs for addressing important research questions.</td>
<td>Candidate sometimes understands the cost-benefit ratio of particular research designs for addressing important research questions.</td>
<td>Candidate does not understand the cost-benefit ratio of particular research designs for addressing important research questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Equity IL-LUC-DISP.3</strong></td>
<td>Candidate demonstrates appropriate empathy for others.</td>
<td>Candidate sometimes demonstrates appropriate empathy for others.</td>
<td>Candidate has difficulty demonstrating appropriate empathy for others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respectful Communication IL-LUC-DISP.3</strong></td>
<td>Candidate communicates research in a manner that respects stakeholders’ dignity and self-worth.</td>
<td>Candidate attempts to communicate research in a manner that respects stakeholders’ dignity and self-worth.</td>
<td>Candidate makes no clear efforts to communicate research in a manner that respects stakeholders’ dignity and self-worth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect for People IL-LUC-DISP.3</strong></td>
<td>Candidate respects differences when planning, conducting, analyzing, and reporting research results.</td>
<td>Candidate attempts to respect differences when planning, conducting, analyzing, and reporting research results.</td>
<td>Candidate does not respect differences when planning, conducting, analyzing, and reporting research results.</td>
</tr>
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**Technology**

This course will expose students to technological resources available on evaluation theory and practice. Students may also learn new skills related to online learning due to the blended learning format (e.g., VoiceThread, blogs, discussion forums).

**Electronic Communication Policies and Guidelines**

The School of Education faculty, students and staff respect each other’s rights, privacy and access to electronic resources, services, and communications while in the pursuit of academic and professional growth, networking and research. All members of the university community are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, communication, and responsibility while accessing and utilizing technology, information resources, and computing facilities. A link to the Loyola University Chicago and School of Education official policies and guidelines can be found at:

- [http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Cyberbullying_Policy.pdf](http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Cyberbullying_Policy.pdf)