Course Overview

Course Description
This course provides students with an overview of program evaluation, particularly as it relates to the field of education. Throughout the course, students will be able to practice program evaluation. An assumption of this course is that “the pursuit of professional practice in evaluation requires developing a life of the mind for practice” (Schwandt, 2015, p. 143). Evaluation practices include considering the ethical issues surrounding the role of the evaluator, understanding the social and political dynamics of an evaluation context, determining which evaluation approach to use in a given context, identifying the various roles of the evaluator, developing an evaluation plan, generating and collecting data, valuing and making value judgments, and facilitating use of the evaluation.

Course Expectations
As this is a graduate level course, I perceive each of you as learners, professionals and scholars. As such, I expect that you view yourself in the same manner. You have chosen to be here and therefore are responsible for our own behavior, learning, and success. However, as a group we make up a class and as such are a professional and scholarly community. In order to succeed as individuals and as a group we must be willing to accept personal responsibility for our own learning, while activity supporting the learning process in order to contribute to others in the group.

The goals of the course are that students will be able to:
1. Understand the foundations of program evaluation practice (Conceptual Framework 1)
2. Identify, read, and meta-evaluate program evaluation reports (Conceptual Framework 1),
3. Understand culturally responsive evaluation practices (Conceptual Framework 2)
4. Understand the ethical, political, and social aspects of program evaluation practice (Conceptual Framework 3).
5. Carry out an aspect of evaluation practice, including working with stakeholders, identifying the evaluation purpose(s) and question(s), and designing the evaluation and data collection tools (Conceptual Framework 4)

As indicated, the goals of this course align with the Loyola University Chicago School of Education Conceptual Framework. Please see http://luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/ for a complete description of the Conceptual Framework.
selected assignments aligned to the conceptual framework via LiveText, as indicated in the assignment description http://luc.edu/education/admission/tuition/course-management-fee/

Required Texts
Additional readings will be posted on Sakai.

Recommended Texts
*Please note: This text is available as an ebook in the LUC library.

Additional Readings
http://journals.sfu.ca/jmde/index.php/jmde_1/article/view/496/444

Grading
Scale    Assignments                        Points
95-100   A Case Scenario Discussions      10
90-94    A- Evaluation Report Paper        10
86-89    B+ Final Evaluation Project      60
83-85    B Critical Reflection on Final Project 10
80-82    B- Class participation            10
Below 80 C

Dispositions and Class participation is based on the rubric, which is included at the end of the syllabus. Points for class participation will be allocated for professionalism, inquiry, and social justice. These dispositions also align with the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles for professional evaluators.

Late assignments: I strongly discourage turning in assignments after the due date. Given how assignments build on one another in the course, turning in assignments late will hinder progress
in the course. I will accept late assignments and do not reduce points for late assignments, but I will 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 obligation.

Assignment Descriptions and Class Participation
Please submit all assignments electronically via Sakai. I will repost your assignments with grades and comments in Sakai. If you have difficulties uploading the file, then please email it to me at densmin@luc.edu

Case Scenario Discussions (10 points; 1 point per case)
Most weeks in the course we will be working with a case of an evaluation project. We will use these cases to apply concepts we are learning in the course, provide opportunities to simulate evaluation practice, and discuss ethical issues in relation to evaluation practice. To engage in these exercises, you will need to read the case prior to class. I will also ask you to either 1) provide a brief forum post about the case prior to class, OR 2) contribute to a small group response to share with the whole class through an in-class activity.

Evaluation Report Paper (10 points) DUE Feb. 10
Locate an evaluation report in your own area of interest. You may want to refer to the list of evaluation organizations in Sakai, which often post reports on their websites. Be sure that I approve the report prior to your completion of the assignment.
Write a 2—3 page paper regarding the evaluation report. Your paper should focus on characterizing the evaluation report in relation to course readings and discussions during the first three weeks of the course.
Your paper will be graded on the following:
- Extent to which the paper summarizes the report in relation to course readings and discussions (5 points);
- Extent to which the paper integrates what you are learning from course readings to analyze the evaluation report (3 points).
- Well organized and developed narrative, proper spelling and grammar using proper APA citation (2pt).

PLEASE UPLOAD THE REPORT IN SAKAI BY WED. FEB. 10.
Sources for Evaluation Studies/Reports
Examples of Evaluation Organizations
- Mathematica
- WestEd
- RAND Corporation
Examples of Foundations and other non-government organizations
- McCormick Foundation [https://www.mccormickfoundation.org/research-reports](https://www.mccormickfoundation.org/research-reports)
- Resources for the Future (environmental; more economic reports) [https://www.rff.org/topics](https://www.rff.org/topics)
- The Urban Institute (their housing policy work; they do other social policy) [https://housingmatters.urban.org/research](https://housingmatters.urban.org/research)

Examples of Government Organizations
- U.S. Department of Education [https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html)
- U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/research/eval.html](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/research/eval.html)

Examples of Local Organizations
- The Metropolitan Planning Council (Chicago) [https://www.metroplanning.org/work/project/39](https://www.metroplanning.org/work/project/39)

Examples of Academic Centers
- University of Chicago Consortium on School Research [http://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications](http://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications)
- Chapin Hall at U of Chicago [https://www.chapinhall.org/our-work/](https://www.chapinhall.org/our-work/)
Final Evaluation Project (60 points) May 5

Individually or in a group, you will engage in multiple (but likely not all) steps of planning and/or carrying out an evaluation. I encourage you to choose a program that supports your interests and career trajectory. For example, you may be familiar with a program or policy through your workplace or a research team. You may also reach out to stakeholders working in your area of interest. Many organizations would greatly appreciate your services, and these volunteer opportunities can lead to beneficial career connections for the future. You may also have colleagues in the course that have connections to projects that are of interest to you, and beyond the scope of what they can work on individually during the semester.

Based on an adapted checklist from the Alkin and Vo text, you need to engage creatively and substantively in selected tasks in an evaluation. Your final project for the course will either be 1) Evaluation Plan developed in collaboration with stakeholders involving tasks 1—7, or 2) Evaluation Report that you generate with and/or provide to stakeholders involving tasks 6—11 and using what others have developed previously for tasks 1—5. If you are in a Masters program, you MUST complete option 1 if you are doing the project individually. If you are in an EdD or PhD program and choose to do option 1 individually, I expect that the project has a large enough scope that it requires 3 months of planning. I strongly recommend piloting data collection as part of this process.

1. Identifying and working with stakeholders
2. Gaining understanding of the organizational/social/political context and Identifying Purpose of Evaluation
3. Describing and understanding the program
4. Developing initial evaluation questions
5. Considering possible instrumentation
6. Determining evaluable questions
7. Finalizing the Evaluation Plan, including the Evaluation Design and Sampling
8. Managing the Evaluation, including Collecting Data
9. Analyzing Data
10. Interpreting Data and Answering Evaluation Questions
11. Reporting Evaluation Results and Helping Stakeholders to Use the Results

Please note that accommodations to these requirements can be made based on the particular circumstances of your project. Please connect with Dr. Ensminger to discuss further.

Related Assignments

Proposal for Final Project
Propose how you would like to fulfill the final project requirements. If you will be involved in a group project, then you only need to provide one submission for the group. To do so, complete the information form, which will ask for the following information:

- Will you complete the evaluation project individually or in a group? If in a group, who will be the group members?
• What program or policy will you evaluate? Provide a 300 word description based on your current knowledge.
• Who are the key stakeholders?
• What contact have you already had with stakeholders? What contact might you have during the course of the semester?
• Using the reading from Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen and based on your current knowledge of the program, why is this program ready for evaluation at this time?
• Will you produce an evaluation plan or an evaluation report for this class?
  o If you choose an evaluation plan, why do you think this will be beneficial for the organization? Will they have capacity to implement the plan?
  o If you choose the final evaluation report, what resources do you have available to help you address tasks 1 through 5 (e.g., existing evaluation reports, program logic models)?

If you have multiple options for projects, please connect with me to help decide the most appropriate project at this time.

Meeting with Stakeholders
Meet with at least one stakeholder to learn about the program or policy and the information needs of stakeholders. Also, access as much background information as possible, such as from websites, brochures, presentations, etc.

For this assignment, submit what you prepared for the meeting (e.g., notes with background information, questions to discuss, agenda items), and notes from the meeting that demonstrate what you learned from the interaction and what additional questions you may have.

Also, provide a reflection after the meeting that addresses the following questions:
• Using the reading from Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen and based on your current knowledge of the program, why is this program ready for evaluation at this time?
• Based on the meeting, how would you begin to describe the program or policy?
• What are some possible evaluation questions of interest to this stakeholder (and possibly other stakeholders)?
• Drawing from the AEA guiding principles and/or the statement on cultural competence, critically reflect on your meeting in 1-2 pages. What went well? What might you do differently? What are appropriate next steps?

Program/Context Description and Evaluation Questions Draft
For the program you are evaluating, write a description of the program. This description may include the program goals, program activities, key stakeholders, program context, program theory or logic model, and so on. As you write the description, consider which key stakeholders will be the audience for the evaluation. Write the program description with this audience in mind. You are welcome to include tables and figures as appropriate, in addition to text. Next, given the description of the program and the key stakeholders, develop 1-5 initial evaluation questions that will guide your evaluation.
Evaluation Plan Draft
Utilizing the template provided in Sakai, complete the evaluation plan table for your evaluation. This assignment builds upon any feedback provided previously. It includes your evaluation question(s), indicators, sampling, evaluation methods, data sources, data collection, and analysis. Be sure to use concise, direct language and consistent easy to follow formatting, including effective use of merging rows and columns to assure understanding. Be sure to attach all data collection tools that you intend to use, and a management plan that details the remaining activities and who is responsible for them. You may want to reference the file “Evaluation Plan Table Sample” as an example. I will provide formative feedback on this assignment.

Secondary Data Analysis and/or Data Generation
If working on a team, complete all secondary data analysis and/or data generation assigned as your responsibility, and make it available to the rest of your team. If working individually, analyze and/or generate at least two data sources.

Project Presentation
Prepare a 10-minute presentation about your project. Assume the audience for your presentation are your primary stakeholders. Present your evaluation plan to them and/or your evaluation and preliminary findings. In a final slide, integrate a learning experience that you had in relation to the core areas discussed in the course. Please prepare a powerpoint presentation and/or handout to support your presentation, as relevant to the stakeholder audience.

Final Evaluation Report Due
Option #1: Evaluation Plan developed in collaboration with stakeholders involving tasks 1—7

For this final assignment, you will accompany your completed evaluation plan table with a written proposal with an explanation of your completed plan table. The narrative should include all previous work on your program description, evaluation questions, design, planned format for reporting findings, management plan, and so on, keeping in mind your stated purposes and feedback from previous assignments. Also, include electronic versions of the tools for collecting the data. The database in which you will enter your collected data should be prepared, explained, presented, and included as well.

- Description of the program you are evaluating and its context (4pt)
- Theory of change or logic model (3pt)
- Key stakeholders (4pt)
- Evaluation type(s) and purpose(s) (4pt)
- Evaluation question(s) (4pt)
- Design (4pt)
- Data collection methods and procedures (4pt)
- Data sources (3pt)
- Sampling (3pt)
- Analysis procedures (3pt)
- Indicators; Interpretation procedures and criteria (4pt)
- Communication and reporting plan (4pt)
- Management plan (3pt)
• Electronic version of tools (3pt)
• Written for intended audience with concise, direct language throughout narrative and consistent
easy to follow formatting, using proper APA headings that elaborates on the table (3pt)

Option #2: Evaluation Report that you generate with and/or provide to stakeholders involving tasks
6—11 and using what others have developed previously for tasks 1—5

You will integrate an evaluation report on the program into a single oral and/or written report to
stakeholder(s) of the course evaluation project, revising based on any input from stakeholders on the
preliminary report. The exact format of this report will be developed over the course of the semester
in collaboration with the stakeholders. At a minimum, it will include the following:

• Description of the program, such as logic model or theory of change (3pt) and its context (3 pt)
• Evaluation type(s) and purpose(s) (3 pt)
• Evaluation question(s) (4 pt)
• Overview of the evaluation plan (Note: It may be most appropriate to include this as an
appendix or addendum)
  o Evaluation Design (3 pt)
  o Data collection methods and procedures, including copies of all data collection tools
developed and/or utilized (4 pt)
  o Data sources (3 pt)
  o Sampling (3 pt)
  o Analysis procedures, including any databases or tools to facilitate analysis (4 pt)
  o Indicators; Interpretation procedures and criteria (4 pt)
  o Communication and reporting plan (3 pt)
• Findings (10 pt)
• Proposed recommendations and/or next steps (3 pt)

If you are completing a project in a group, individually, provide a bulleted list of the key contributions
you made to the project, in relation to the management plan for the list of tasks adapted from the
Alkin and Vo text. Be sure to include at least three times when you had direct interactions with a
program stakeholder (e.g., observing an activity, interviewing a participant, visiting the school,
stopping by to collect data). These contributions will be worth 10 out of 60 points for your final grade.
Points for each area will be distributed as follows:

• Took leadership role on developing products for the group and/or contributed more than 3
  hours to products for project (3 points)
• Attended meetings regularly with classmates outside of class and contributed products for
  evaluation project that took less than 3 hours (2 points)
• Provided meaningful contributions during meetings in class, and provided minimal
  contributions outside of class (1 points)
• Provided minimal contributions during class, and no contributions outside of class (0 points)
Critical Reflection on Final Project (10 points) DUE May 5
Provide a 3—4 page critical reflection on your experiences using the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles (systematic inquiry, competence, integrity/honesty, respect for people, responsibilities for general and public welfare), Statement on Cultural Competence, or AEA Competencies. Considering the following questions might facilitate your reflection. How did you (and/or the team) conducted yourself during the evaluation? Based on the principles/standards, what were the strengths of your project? What are areas for improvement? What could you do to help better address these principles/standards in practice? Are there principles/standards in conflict (i.e., practices that support one principle result in practices that also oppose another principle)? What is your rationale for which principles to compromise in the project?

This reflection will be graded as follows for each of the principles/standards:

- Exceeds Standards--The paper demonstrates the student is able to integrate the principle/standard into their professional decision-making of evaluation practice, facilitating critical, honest self-reflection with particular awareness of practices that promote social justice. (2.5 pt)
- Meets Standards--The paper demonstrates the student is able to integrate the principle/standard into their professional decision-making of evaluation practice. (2 pt)
- Partially Meets Standards--The paper presents a partial ability to integrate the principle/standard into their professional decision-making, but may have neglected critical principles/standards for the particular project or misunderstood some. (1 pt)
- Does Not Meet Standards--The paper does not demonstrate an ability to integrate the principles/standards into their professional decision-making (0 pt)

Schedule RMTD 406:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>Syllabus, Alkin &amp; Vo, Section A, B, and Rupas Case, p. 1-33</td>
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<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>What is Evaluation?</td>
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<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>First Spring Break: No Classes 4:00 PM Wednesday – 8:00 AM Monday February 15</td>
<td>Evaluation Report Paper Note: Report Due Wed via Sakai.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Depicting the Evaluand</td>
<td>Mertens &amp; Wilson, Ch. 7, pp. 229-243 <a href="#">Dhillon &amp; Vaca</a> Case Scenario</td>
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<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Purposes, Types and Questions</td>
<td>Mertens &amp; Wilson, Ch. 8 Alkin &amp; Vo, p. 155—162 Case Scenario</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Evaluation Designs: Quantitative</td>
<td>Mertens &amp; Wilson, Ch. 9, pp. 287-313</td>
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<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Evaluation Designs: Qualitative and Mixed Methods</td>
<td>Mertens &amp; Wilson, Ch. 9, pp. 314—334 Case Scenario</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Data Collection Strategies &amp; Indicators</td>
<td>Mertens &amp; Wilson, Ch. 10 Case Scenario—Morris Chapter</td>
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<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>Stakeholders, Participants, and Sampling</td>
<td>Mertens &amp; Wilson, Ch. 11 Case Scenario—Mathmatica’s Abstinence Evaluation</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Data Analysis and Interpretation</td>
<td>Mertens &amp; Wilson, Ch. 12 Case Scenario—Kallemeyn (2019)</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Meta-Evaluation &amp; Project management</td>
<td>Mertens &amp; Wilson, Ch. 14 Joint Committee Standards AEA Evaluator Competencies</td>
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<td>March 10</td>
<td>Project Meetings via Zoom (OPTIONAL)</td>
<td>No regular class meeting</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Program Description &amp; Evaluation Questions (Option #1) OR Draft Evaluation Plan (Option #2)</td>
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<td>March 17</td>
<td>Program Description &amp; Evaluation Questions (Option #1) OR Draft Evaluation Plan (Option #2)</td>
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<td>April 28</td>
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<th>Final Evaluation Projects</th>
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<td>Wrap-Up</td>
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<td>Dispositions and Class Participation</td>
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<td><strong>Professionalism</strong> (professional domain)</td>
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<td><strong>Professionalism</strong> (management domain)</td>
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<td>AEA Common Good and Equity</td>
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<td><em>(methodology domain)</em></td>
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<td><strong>AEA Systematic</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Inquiry</strong></td>
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Smart Evaluation
Towards the end of the course, students will receive an email from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness reminding them to provide feedback on the course. They will receive consistent reminders throughout the period when the evaluation is open, and the reminders will stop once they have completed the evaluation.

- The evaluation is completely anonymous. When the results are released, instructors and departments will not be able to tell which student provided the individual feedback.
- Because it is anonymous and the results are not released to faculty or departments until after grades have been submitted, the feedback will not impact a student’s grade.

Dispositions
All students are assessed on one or more dispositional areas of growth across our programs: Professionalism, Inquiry, and Social Justice. The instructor in your course will identify the dispositions assessed in this course and you can find the rubrics related to these dispositions in LiveText. For those students in non-degree programs, the rubric for dispositions may be available through Sakai, TaskStream or another platform. Disposition data is reviewed by program faculty on a regular basis. This allows faculty to work with students to develop throughout their program and address any issues as they arise.

LiveText
All students, except those who are non-degree, must have access to LiveText to complete the benchmark assessments aligned to the Conceptual Framework Standards and all other accreditation, school-wide and/or program-wide related assessments. You can access more information on LiveText here: LiveText.

Syllabus Addendum Link
- www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/
This link directs students to statements on essential policies regarding academic honesty, accessibility, ethics line reporting and electronic communication policies and guidelines. We ask that you read each policy carefully. This link will also bring you to the full text of our conceptual framework that guides the work of the School of Education – Social Action through Education.

Center for Student Access and Assistance (CSAA)
Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE Referral for yourself or a peer in need of support: www.LUC.edu/csaa. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf.