

COURSE SYLLABUS

RMTD 407: INTRODUCTION TO EVALUATION THEORY

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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 reflect critically 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 4).

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:

- #4 Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course
- #11 Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
- #1 Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories) (minor)

Required Readings

Dahler-Larsen, P. (2011). *The Evaluation Society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Ryan, K., & Cousins, J. B. (Eds.). (2009). *The SAGE International Handbook of Educational Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Available as Ebook through LUC library
<http://pegasus.luc.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=2080104>

Additional supplemental readings posted in Sakai

Weekly schedule with Course Readings and Assignments

Refer to Weeks 1—6 Lessons and Assignments posted in Sakai. See links on left-hand side of course.

Week 1: What is Evaluation Theory

Alkin, Marvin C. (2004). *Evaluation Roots: Tracing Theorists' Views and Influence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 3—65).

Schwandt, T. (2009). Globalizing Influences on the Western Evaluation Imaginary. In K. Ryan, & J.B. Cousins (Eds.), *The SAGE International Handbook of Educational Evaluation*, pp. 19—36. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Available as Ebook through LUC library http://loyola-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/01LUC:Library_Collections:01LUC_ALMA511417615000_02506

Shadish, W.R., Cook, T.D., & Leviton, L.C. (1990). *Foundations of Program Evaluation: Theories of Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 19—67).

[Kallemeyn, L.M., Hall, J., Friche, N., & McReynolds, C. \(2015\). Cross-Continental Reflections on Evaluation Practice: Methods, Use, and Valuing. *American Journal of Evaluation* doi:10.1177/1098214015576400](https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214015576400)

Week 2: Role of Science; Methods

Campbell, D.T. (1981). Introduction: Getting ready for the Experimenting Society. In L. Saxe & M. Fine, *Social Experiments: Methods for Design and Evaluation* (pp. 13-18). Sage: Beverly Hills.

Campbell, D.T. (1984). *Can we be scientific in applied social science?* In R. F. Conner, D. G. Altman, & C. Jackson, *Evaluation Studies: Review Annual* (Vol. 9). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

[Big Data for Social Innovation](#)

Mayer-Schönberger, V., & Cukier, K. (2013). *Big data: A revolution that will transform how we live, work, and think*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Ch. 1 (pp. 1-18).

Additional selected readings on theorists.

Week 3: Learning, Discovery, and Valuing

Stake, R.E. & Schwandt, T.A.. (2006). On discerning quality in evaluation. In I.F. Shaw, J.C. Greene, & M.M. Mark (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Evaluation* (pp. 404—418). London: Sage.

Scriven, M. (1993). Nature of Evaluation. In M. Scriven, *New Directions for Program Evaluation: Hard-Won Lessons in Program Evaluation* (pp. 5-48). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Additional selected readings on theorists.

Week 4: Evaluation in a Political World; Social Justice

[Ericson, D.P. \(1990\). Social Justice, Evaluation, and the Educational System. In K.A. Sirotnik \(Ed.\), *Evaluation and Social Justice: Issues in Public Education, New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 45, 5—21.](#)

[Levin-Rozalis, M. \(2015\). A purpose-driven action: The ethical aspect and social responsibility of evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*. Issue 146, p19-32. DOI: 10.1002/ev.20117.](#)

[Miller, R.L., King, J., Mark, M., Caracelli, V., and Oral history project team. \(2015\). The Oral History of Evaluation: The Professional Development of Ernest House. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 36\(2\), 270-282.](#)

House, E.R. (1993). *Professional Evaluation: Social Impact and Political Consequences*. Newbury Park: Sage. Chapters 7 & 8 (pp. 114—140).

Additional selected readings on theorists.

Week 5: Capacity Building, Monitoring and Use

Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapters 2 & 3.

Additional selected readings on theorists.

Week 6: The Evaluation Society

Dahler-Larsen, P. (2011). *The Evaluation Society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Grading	95-100 pts.	A
	90-94 pts.	A-
	86-89 pts.	B+
	83-85 pts.	B
	80-82 pts.	B-
	75-79 pts.	C+
	70-74 pts.	C
< 70 pts.	F	

Assignments and Evaluation

What is Evaluation: Core Concepts Paper	10 pts
In-Depth Study and Presentation of Evaluation Theorists (4 @ 5pts each)	20 pts
Final Exam Paper	50 pts
Class, Blog & Forum Participation	20 pts

Late assignment Policy: I strongly discourage turning in assignments after the due date. The assignments of the course closely relate to material that we have recently 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.

Class, Blog & Forum Participation (20 points)

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. Grade is based on a rubric.

I expect that you make one Forum or Blog post each week for the asynchronous portion of the course.

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.

What is Evaluation: Core Concepts (10 points)

With a partner or individually, 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.

In-Depth Study and Presentation of Evaluation Theorists (4 @ 5pts each)

You will sign up for one evaluation theorist to study in-depth for Weeks 2-5 in the course. You will complete these in-depth studies during the asynchronous portion of the week. For Weeks 3--5, you will use the core concepts framework that we identify as a class to summarize what you learn. For Week 2, I have posed some questions to consider. During the subsequent face-to-face class, you will have an opportunity to meet with colleagues who also studied the theorist in-depth for 20-30 minutes to prepare a 10 minute overview of the theorist that you share with your colleagues, as well as how your theorist might respond to an evaluation scenario, which I will be provided. As a group, or individually, you will then give an informal presentation on the theorist and the theorist's response to the scenario.

For Week 2, 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?
 - How will judgments be made?
 - What will the role of the evaluator be?
2. How will your theorist respond to the scenario?
 3. What are the benefits of using this approach?
 4. What are the limitations of this approach?

Grading Criteria

- Study one theorist in-depth and be prepared with thoughtful contributions to share with colleagues (2 point)
- Provides an overview of the theorist's approach based on the guiding questions provided (1 points)
- Provide a response to the evaluation scenario based on the theoretical approach (1 points)
Discuss benefits and limitations of approach (1 points)

Final Exam Paper (50 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.

**Loyola University Chicago
School of Education
Syllabus Addendum**

IDEA Course Evaluation Link for Students

Each course you take in the School of Education is evaluated through the IDEA Campus Labs system. We ask that when you receive an email alerting you that the evaluation is available that you promptly complete it. To learn more about IDEA or to access the website directly to complete your course evaluation go to: <http://luc.edu/idea/> and click on **STUDENT IDEA LOGIN** on the left hand side of the page.

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***.