Evaluating Programs in Extension Education

Course/Section No: AEC 6552 / 101G
Instructor: Dr. Glenn D. Israel
Course Website: TBA
Office: 218 Rolfs Hall
Term: Spring, 2015
Office Hours: by appointment
Location: 306 Rolfs
E-mail: gdisrael@ufl.edu
Time: Monday, Period 7-9 (1:55 - 4:55 p.m.)
Telephone: 273-2586 (office)
Inform instructor about religious holidays 339-6429 (cell)

Course Description: Concepts and research drawn from the social sciences relevant to evaluating youth and adult extension programs.

Course Objectives: Upon completing the course, students should be able to conceptualize and carry out the evaluation of educational programs. Specifically, students should be able to:

1. Define evaluation and related concepts and describe the role of evaluation in educational programming.
2. Understand relationships among evaluators, stakeholders, program staff, and clientele.
3. Identify an evaluation problem for selected programs.
4. Identify appropriate evaluation designs for county and state-wide programs.
5. Understand and apply evaluation models for selected problems and designs.
6. Identify and compare data collection techniques for obtaining evaluation data.
7. Identify measures and develop instrumentation for collecting evaluation data.
8. Apply social science research methods to obtain evaluation data.
9. Analyze evaluation data.
10. Prepare a fact sheet summary of the evaluation results.

Texts: Students are expected to purchase the text (Available at the University of Florida Bookstores):


Highly Recommended:


Optional:

Additional Readings: Supplementary readings will be assigned. A photocopy and/or electronic copy will be distributed to students via email.

Participation: Your active participation is encouraged and expected. In addition to attending each weekly class, you should read assigned documents and review the lecture notes prior to class. Given the nature of the course, students are expected to participate in discussions for all scheduled classes.

Course Assignments: A project series, as well as evaluation abstracts, and a mid-term exam will comprise the assignments.

Project Series:
1. Select an educational program or research project to evaluate, interview a significant actor in the program, and prepare a description of the program and its evaluation needs. 90 pts.
2. Develop an evaluation plan with a description and rationale for the objectives, design and model, and data collection procedures. 120 pts.
3. Identify measures and draft instrumentation; include an explanation of measures and data collection instruments. 120 pts.
4. Collect and analyze data or conduct data analysis exercise; Develop a 1-2 page fact sheet summarizing the evaluation results. 100 pts.
5. Complete a comprehensive project report, using items 1-4 and supplementary material. 100 pts.

Evaluation Abstracts: Three evaluation studies will be provided for students to read and prepare an abstract. Each abstract should briefly review the study and provide a critique of the evaluation methodology (50 points each). 100 pts.

Mid-term Exam: The exam will be based on readings and lectures. The format is short answer and essay. 150 pts.

Course Pre-test: Multiple choice test to measure knowledge at the beginning of the course. Points are earned for completing the pre-test (not for the number correct). 20 pts.

Course Post-test: Multiple choice test to measure knowledge. Points based on the number of correct items. 100 pts.

Final Exam: Essay exam to measure application and synthesis. Points based on quality of the responses for two questions (50 pts each). 100 pts.

Grading: Final grades will be based on the scale shown below. Late assignments will be accepted only in the event of catastrophe at the instructor’s discretion.

A = 930 - 1,000 pts.  
A- = 900 - 929  
B+ = 870 - 899  
B = 830 - 869  
B- = 800 - 829  
C+ = 770 - 799  
C = 730 - 769  
C- = 700 - 729  
D+ = 670 - 699  
D = 630 - 669  
E = 629 or fewer pts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings for class:</th>
<th>Assignments:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>Introduction to Evaluation; Trends in accountability; Framework for accountability; Participants &amp; relationships in evaluation</td>
<td>Required: 1 - 4</td>
<td>Complete Pre-test; Student profile sheet</td>
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<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>Martin Luther King holiday – no class</td>
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<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>Evaluation situations &amp; designs: monitoring, impact assessment, efficiency analysis; Planning an evaluation</td>
<td>Required: 6 – 8</td>
<td>Select project topic</td>
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<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>SAAS Conference, Atlanta, GA – no class</td>
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<td>Project Part 1 due</td>
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<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>Extension models: Levels of evidence &amp; TOP; Logic and impact models; CIPP model</td>
<td>Required: 9 – 14</td>
<td>Abstract 1 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>Program monitoring: County program reviews; Departmental reviews; Program reviews Guest lecture by Dr. Amy Harder (2 – 3 pm)</td>
<td>Required: 17 – 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 23</td>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>Required: 23 – 27</td>
<td>Project Part 2 due</td>
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<td>Mar. 2</td>
<td>Spring break</td>
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<td>Mar. 9</td>
<td>Emerging issues in evaluation: Developmental evaluation &amp; Team Science evaluation</td>
<td>Required: 28 – 29</td>
<td>Mid-term exam due Mar. 13 by 11 p.m.</td>
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<td>Mar. 16</td>
<td>Data gathering designs &amp; methods</td>
<td>Required: 30 – 35</td>
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<td>Mar. 23</td>
<td>Instrument Design</td>
<td>Required: 36 – 37</td>
<td>Abstract 2 due</td>
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<td>Mar. 30</td>
<td>Analysis &amp; interpretation of data: description, elaboration &amp; statistical controls</td>
<td>Required: 39 – 42</td>
<td>Project Part 3 due</td>
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<td>Apr. 6</td>
<td>Analysis (cont.); Reporting</td>
<td>Required: 43 – 44</td>
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<td>Apr. 13</td>
<td>Sampling designs &amp; procedures</td>
<td>Required: 47 – 49</td>
<td>Project Part 4 due</td>
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<td>Apr. 20</td>
<td>Evaluation ethics; student assessment of instruction</td>
<td>Required: 51 - 53</td>
<td>In-class post-test</td>
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<td>Apr. 23</td>
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<td>Essay exam due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 27</td>
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<td>Project Part 5 due</td>
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AEC 6552 Reading Assignments


21. UF/IFAS Program Development & Evaluation Center’s County Program Review website: http://pdec.ifas.ufl.edu/program_reviews/ (optional)


35. Dillman, D. et al., 2009. *Internet, Phone, Mail and Mixed-mode Surveys*, Chap. 1, 2 & 4
36. Dillman, D. et al., 2009. *Internet, Phone, Mail and Mixed-mode Surveys*, Chap. 5 & 6


38. Dillman, D. et al., 2009. *Internet, Mail and Mixed-mode Surveys*, Chap. 7-12 (optional)


50. Dillman, D. et al., 2009. *Internet, Mail and Mixed-mode Surveys*, Chap. 3 (optional)


Evaluation Abstract Guidelines
AEC 6552

Evaluation abstracts should be a summary and critique of approximately two single-spaced pages. The following questions are intended as a guide for preparing the content of the abstract. Students should synthesize the information into a readable report.

Questions to Answer in Analyzing an Evaluation.

1. Is there a problem statement, and if so, what is it, is it clear?

2. (a) Is there a program description, and if so, (b) what is the need for the program, (c) what was planned, (d) was the logic of the program plan adequate to address the need, and (e) how did implementation correspond to the plan?

3. Is the literature review adequate in clarity, flow, relevance, recency, empiricalness, and independence? Is the literature review technically accurate?

4. Are implicit or explicit hypotheses or research questions offered, and if so what are they? Are they directional, clear, consistent with the problem, and supported?

5. What are the variables of the study: (a) independent (program variables), (b) dependent (outcome variables), and (c) confounding factors? What were the operational definitions?

6. Which program variables were manipulated and how successful was the manipulation?

7. What was the evaluation design and how adequate was it in terms of internal validity?

8. For each measure used, (a) what evidence of validity was provided, and (b) did it indicate adequate validity, (c) what evidence of reliability was provided, and (d) did it indicate adequate reliability?

9. Which statistics were used, were they the right ones to use (or should different ones or additional ones have been used), and were they done correctly?

10. What were the findings of the study and do they fit the problem statement? Were the findings adequately supported by text, tables, and figures? How important were the findings?

11. In the discussion, were conclusions drawn and were they consistent with the results? Were reasonable interpretations offered of why things did and did not come out, and were reasonable implications offered of what to do with the results?

12. Is the evaluation substantively significant?


Abstract Articles


Select an educational program or research project to evaluate, interview a significant actor in the program, and prepare a description of the program and its evaluation needs. Steps:

1. Select an Extension program, research project, or combined extension/research initiative. Consult listings of Extension focus areas and Ag. Experiment Station research projects. You may use any other instructor-approved topic.

2. Obtain a copy of relevant plans, reports or other relevant documents.

3. Prepare questions for an interview with a significant actor. Questions for Extension programs might include (you may identify others):
   - What information is available about the specific educational needs for audience segmentation?
   - What is the rationale for the educational program (i.e., its content and delivery methods) as it relates to the problem being addressed by the program?
   - What is the intended audience and what information do you have about reaching that it?
   - What indicators should be used to measure the effectiveness of the program?
   - How will you know if the program has been successful? How do you define "success"?
   - What plans have been made and what has been done to evaluate the program? If any, with whom will the evaluation information be shared?

4. Prepare a report of approximately 4-5 pages describing the program and evaluation needs. You should include:
   - A summary of the program plan of work and accomplishments to date (15 pts).
   - Whether an evaluation is needed and why. Also an assessment of the political context and identify the stakeholders (15 pts).
   - An assessment of the program's rationale and plan as it relates to the problem (i.e., have the sources of the problem been identified correctly and have appropriate solutions been proposed) (20 pts).
   - An assessment of what should be evaluated (overall purpose, indicators, criteria, and sources of evidence) and who should do it (20 pts).
   - An assessment of how program effectiveness can be determined (e.g., reaching the intended audience, carrying out activities as planned, estimating the impact and cost effectiveness or benefit-cost) (20 pts).
Develop an evaluation plan with a description and rationale for the objectives, design and model.

Steps:

1. Use the information collected for Project Part 1 as a foundation.

2. Develop a logic model for your program.
   - Prepare a "path diagram" of the relationships between outcome variables, program variables, and confounding and contextual variables.
   - Describe the relationships among these variables, i.e., provide a rationale to explain how the program works.
   - Prepare a diagram of the process model showing transactions between program staff and participants.
   - Provide adequate text to explain program processes and organization.

3. Identify the objective(s) of your evaluation and develop a rationale for selecting the objectives. If applicable, distinguish program objectives from evaluation objectives.

4. Select an evaluation design for your program.
   - Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the design with regard to the credibility of subsequent findings. Describe potential confounding factors and design effects.
   - Identify why the selected design is feasible for the program.

5. Prepare a report of approximately 6 pages. You should include:
   - A summary of Project Part 1 (1-2 paragraphs) for background (10 pts).
   - An impact model and explanatory text (30 pts).
   - A process model and explanatory text (30 pts).
   - Objectives for the evaluation and a justification (20 pts).
   - A description of the recommended evaluation design and an assessment of its strengths, weaknesses and feasibility (30 pts).
Specify the data collection procedures; identify measures and draft instrumentation; include an explanation of measures and data collection instruments. Steps:

1. Use the information collected for Project Parts 1 and 2 as a foundation.

2. Select one or more data collection procedures. Explain why the method(s) is appropriate vis-a-vis the impact model and evaluation design.
   - Identify when information is to be collected.
   - Identify how information is to be collected.
   - Identify what information is to be collected.

3. Identify existing measures and/or new measures needed to conduct the evaluation.
   - Review the existing measures to ensure that they are appropriate for the evaluation design.
   - Add appropriate measures after reviewing your impact model.
   - Explain why measures are included or excluded

4. Draft and/or revise data collection instruments, including interview forms, surveys, observation check lists, record keeping forms, etc.

5. Explain the rationale for your instruments
   - Identify why the instrument was drafted or revised.
   - Identify why each item is included, that is, justify including each question or item in your instrument.

6. Prepare a report of approximately 8 pages. You should include:
   - A summary of Project Parts 1 & 2 (1-2 paragraphs) for background (10 pts).
   - An overview of the data collection procedures. Include a table listing the indicators/measures to be used, when the data is to be collected, how to be collected and who will be responsible (30 pts).
   - Explain and justify the measures selected (20 pts).
   - A draft of a revised and/or newly created data collection instrument (e.g., questionnaire) (40 pts).
   - Drafts of associated materials for collecting data (e.g., cover letters or email messages for self-administered surveys, scripts for phone or face-to-face interviews, etc.) (20 pts).
Project Part 4
AEC 6552

Collect and analyze data or conduct data analysis exercise; Develop a 1-2 page fact sheet summarizing the evaluation results. Steps:

1. Obtain a data set for your analysis. If no data is available, then use the customer satisfaction survey data provided by the instructor (You will need to assume that your evaluation design includes measures contained in the survey).

2. Calculate descriptive statistics for each variable (independent, dependent, etc.). Descriptive statistics include frequency distributions, mean, standard deviation, skew, kurtosis, etc. You should select the appropriate statistics. If you use the customer satisfaction survey data, the following variables are available and a minimum of one from each category should be used for your analysis:

   **Outcome (dependent) variables**
   - Learning experience (Q1-4), information use and results (Q5 and Q5a), and general satisfaction (Q6-7)

   **Program (independent) variables**
   - Type of participation (planned program, etc.) and program area (e.g., 4-H)

   **Confounding and contextual variables**
   - Respondent’s age, gender, race-ethnicity, years experience with Extension, place of residence, educational attainment, employment status, and county

3. Describe the relationship between your dependent variables and program (independent) variables. Assess whether the dependent variable(s) are associated with the type of program or topical area.

4. Elaborate on the relationships to disaggregate program impacts among participant sub-groups by including at least one confounding and contextual variable in a tabular analysis.

5. If data is available, use one multi-variate method (e.g., regression, analysis of variance, logistic regression) to disaggregate program impacts among participant subgroups.

6. Prepare a report describing the results of your analysis of approximately 5 pages. Use tables or graphs to show the results of your analysis. Describe your procedures and explain your rationale for the procedures that you selected. You should also provide your interpretation of the findings.

7. Assume also that you must provide an accountability report about the program's impact to state-level stakeholders (e.g., legislative staffers, project funders, etc.). Information for these stakeholders must be brief and to the point.

8. Use either the results from the data analysis exercise or actual or dummy data from the program which you have used for project parts 1-3 as the basis for developing your report.

9. Prepare a fact sheet. The title should be descriptive and prominent (use a large font for the title). Use headings or bullets to organize the information. Include one simple table or a chart to illustrate the impact of the program. Given that reports are released to the public, appearance counts.
Complete a comprehensive project report, using items 1-4 and supplementary material. Steps:

1. Aggregate project parts 1-4 into a single document and remove any redundant information. If, in your judgment, project part 4 cannot be merged with parts 1-3 with any degree of logic, then treat as separate components. Edit as needed to facilitate a logical, organized flow of information (20 pts).

2. Address issues and concerns identified by the instructor when the individual parts were graded. If you disagree with specific points, the text or footnotes should provide a rationale supporting your view (30 pts).

3. Add a cover sheet with a brief description of the major changes from Project Parts 1-4 to Part 5 (20 pts).

4. Include a section at the end of the report which has a critical analysis. This should discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the program plan, evaluation design, instruments, and data collection and analysis procedures. The critical analysis should also include a personal statement about what you have learned as a result of the evaluation process (30 pts).
Additional References:


**Relevant Websites:**

*Courses & Data Analysis*

The World Bank’s Impact Evaluation in Practice

UCLA Statistics Resource Page (great stuff for SAS and SPSS)
http://www.atstat.ucla.edu/stat/

Research Methods Knowledge Base
http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php

Quantitative Research in Public Administration, PA 765, NCSU
http://www2.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/pa765/index.htm
   On-line text:
   http://www2.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/pa765/statnote.htm

Savvy Survey Series
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_series_savvy_survey

*Organizations*

American Evaluation Association
http://www.eval.org/

Program Development and Evaluation, University of Wisconsin
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/
   Online logic model course, *Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models*
   http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/pdf/lmcourseall.pdf

Program Evaluation and Accountability Resources, University of Kentucky
http://www.ca.uky.edu/agpsd/soregion.htm

UF Institutional Review Board (UFIRB) for research involving people
http://irb.ufl.edu/

Harvard Family Research Project
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/index.html

Children, Youth and Families Education and Research Network
http://www.cyfernet.org/

American Association for Public Opinion Research
http://www.aapor.org/

Program Evaluation, Pennsylvania State University
http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/
Policy on Disruptive Behavior:

Students are expected to arrive before class begins and stay until the instructor dismisses the class. Cell phones should be set to vibrate or turned off before class begins. Students are welcome to use a laptop or tablet device for course purposes during the class; Web surfing and checking email are prohibited.

Policy on Academic Honesty:

The University requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. Cheating, plagiarism, and other acts diminish the process of learning. When students enroll at UF they commit themselves to honesty and integrity. Your instructor fully expects you to adhere to the academic honesty guidelines you signed when you were admitted to UF. As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statements:

“I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.” Furthermore, on work submitted for credit by UF students, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

It is to be assumed that all work will be completed independently unless the assignment is defined as a group project, in writing by the professor. This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course. If the instructor determines that a student has not complied with the commitment to academic honesty on a course assignment, then the student will receive an ‘E’ for the final grade.

Policy on Software Use:

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

UF Resources for Students:

Students experiencing crisis or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university’s counseling resources. Both the Counseling Center and Student Mental Health provide confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. The Counseling Center is located at 301 Peabody Hall (next to Criser Hall). Student Mental Health is located on the second floor of the Student Health Services in the Infirmary. For further information on services and how to make an appointment, call the Counseling Center or Student Mental Health at the numbers below.

The Dean of Students Office provides individual assistance to students with documented disabilities based upon the need and impact of the specific disability. There is no requirement for a student to self-identify his/her disability. However, students requesting classroom accommodations must register with the Dean of Students Office in 202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261 (Voice) 392-3008 (TDD).

Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals which interfere with their academic performance. These resources include: