

Developing and Conducting Needs Assessments in Domestic & International Extension Settings

AEC 6905

Summer A, 409 Rolfs, M 1-5, 8:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

3 credits

Instructor: Dr. Amy Harder
Associate Professor
amharder@ufl.edu (E-mail is preferred)
117B Bryant Hall (across from the Hub)
352-273-2569

Office Hours: By appointment; E-mail is the fastest way to reach me.

Required Texts: Witkin, B. R., & Altschuld, J. W. (1995). *Planning and conducting needs assessments: A practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Additional Materials: Course assignment descriptions, additional readings, and other critical documents will be posted on the course Web site on Sakai.

Course Description:

This course is intended to help educators in the field of extension and other non-formal education organizations: (a) acquire an understanding of needs assessments from theory to practice and (b) strengthen or develop their skills in planning and conducting needs assessments within domestic and international extension settings.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to:

- Explain the relationship between conducting needs assessments and developing programs in domestic and international extension settings
- Determine the appropriate methods for conducting needs assessments based on context in domestic and international settings
- Evaluate the needs of clientele in domestic and international extension settings

Course Philosophy:

AEC 6905 is designed to provide you with a theoretical foundation and opportunities for applied practice that will help you to become an extension professional who thinks critically about what needs to be done and why. The assignments are meant to challenge you to think through each week's topic from a scholarly perspective. In order to be successful, you will need to search the literature beyond the required readings. This will take some time but is a necessary part of gaining mastery of a subject, which is a worthwhile goal for a graduate-level course.

Course Policies:

Since this is a blended learning course, use of the Internet, e-mail, and Sakai is essential. It is important for all students to access Sakai at least once a week in order to keep up with readings and discussion, as well as to check for any announcements. **It is your responsibility to make sure your assignments have been received by the instructor;** if you suspect you are having computer issues, you will need to submit a copy of a UF Help Desk ticket as proof of your technical issues. Otherwise, any missed assignments will receive zero points.

Attendance and Make-Up Work

You will find attending class on a regular basis provides the best opportunity for success in this course. You are expected to complete all assignments within the course during the time frame specified. Assignments are due on the dates listed in the syllabus.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Courtesy

Basic courtesy is expected from all the members of this course. Use of technology is permitted, as long as it does not become disruptive.

Course Assignments:

Component	Due Date	Total Point Value
Concept Checks	Weeks 1-5	20/100
Data Interpretation Discussions	Weeks 2-5	30/120
Reflexive Journal	Weeks 2-5	50/200
Results Presentation	Week 6 June 16	100
Total		520

Course Grading Scale:

A > 483	B+ = 452 - 467	C+ = 400 - 415	D+ = 348 - 363	E < 312
A- = 468 - 483	B = 431 - 451	C = 379 - 399	D = 327 - 347	
	B- = 416 - 430	C- = 364 - 378	D- = 312 - 326	

Grades and Grade Points:

For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Assignment Descriptions:

Concepts Checks (Weekly, 20 points each)

We will begin each week with an online Concept Check. The purpose of the Concept Check is to assess your *understanding of the content* you are assigned to explore as pre-class preparation. This will help you to assess your own understanding of the concepts, help your peers expand their understanding, and will ensure everyone is prepared to engage in the class activities for the week. To earn the full 20 points each week, every Monday you will need to use the discussion board in Sakai to post:

- a hard copy of a journal article, NGO publication, or government report related to the week's topic;
- two questions for promoting discussion related to your chosen publication;
- a list of any questions you may want answered to help clarify the out-of-class content; and ...
- responses to your classmates' discussion questions (by Wednesday of each week)

Data Interpretation Discussions (Weekly, 30 points each)

You will need to schedule 30 minutes to meet, call, or Skype with me following your community needs assessments in Weeks 2-5. The discussion will focus on *interpreting your data*. Be prepared to discuss your interpretation of the data collected during the preceding community needs assessment. Points will be awarded for your active participation.

Reflexive Journal (Weekly, 50 points each)

You will be responsible for writing in a reflexive journal in Weeks 2-5, which you'll use to reflect upon the *methods and techniques* you practiced that week. Each journal entry should be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday of that week (see Course Schedule for exact dates) using the Assignments feature in Sakai. Your entries need to address the following prompts:

- What technique(s) did you practice this week?
- What types of information were you able to collect with the technique(s)?
- How did the technique(s) impact the quality of information you received, compared to your prior experiences?
- How did the context influence the process?
- How did you feel during the process?
- What would you do similarly/differently in the future?

Results Presentation (Week 6, 100 points)

Communicating the results of a needs assessment to stakeholders is an important part of building positive relationships, and also serves as a form of member checking. Therefore, you will need to present the results from the needs assessments you conducted during the course to an external panel (TBD). A rubric will be used to assess the quality of your work. You will need to:

- Share the results of your work in a 15-20 minute oral presentation
- Create one communication product designed to be widely disseminated; e.g. press release, postcard, or YouTube video.

Helpful Information

Academic Honesty:

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."* You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, 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 assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.

Online Course Evaluation Process:

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open for students to complete during the last two or three weeks of the semester; students will be notified of the specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Students with Disabilities:

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation

0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

Campus Helping Resources:

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

- *University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575, www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/*
 - Counseling Services
 - Groups and Workshops
 - Outreach and Consultation
 - Self-Help Library
 - Wellness Coaching
- *Career Resource Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, www.crc.ufl.edu/*

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.

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Class Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings*	Assignments Due
1	<u>May 12</u> Three Phase Model of Needs Assessment	Ch. 1-4	Concept Check – May 12
2	<u>May 19**</u> Surveys, Interviews, and the Critical Incident Technique	Ch. 6	Concept Check – May 19 Reflexive Journal – May 23
3	<u>May 26**</u> Basic Group Processes	Ch. 7	Concept Check – May 26 Reflexive Journal – May 30
4	<u>June 2**</u> Future-Oriented Needs Assessment Procedures	Ch. 9	Concept Check – June 2 Reflexive Journal – June 6
5	<u>June 9**</u> Causal Analysis	Ch. 10	Concept Check – June 9 Reflexive Journal – June 6
6	<u>June 16**</u> Communicating Results with Stakeholders	See Sakai	Results Presentation – June 16

*Additional content can be found on Sakai in each weekly module.

**A portion of class time will occur off-campus during these weeks; details to be provided in class.