Program Evaluation
EMR 6420

Course Syllabus

Fall Term 2009 (September 14, 2009 - December 14, 2009)
The course meets on Mondays from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
The course will meet in room 3310 in the center hallway on the third floor of Sangren

Instructor:
Gary Miron
Professor, Educational Leadership, Research & Technology
College of Education, WMU

Teaching Assistant
Nakia James
Doctoral Student, Evaluation, Measurement & Research

Office hours:
☑ 1 hour before class and one-half hour after class.
☑ I am very flexible to meet by appointment. You can usually find me in my office on the garden level of Sangren Hall (1404). Otherwise you are welcome to call my cell. If you wish to schedule a private conversation by phone, skype, or live chat, you can do this by e-mail or phone. If you think your question(s) have a wider appeal, please use the course discussion board so that all students can benefit from the exchange.

Contact information for Gary Miron:
1404 Sangren Hall     tel. 387-3883
Cell phone: 599-7965
E-mail. <gary.miron@wmich.edu>
Skype: gary.miron

Contact for Nakia James:
Cell phone: 260-719-6582
(No calls after 9 p.m.)

Course Description
3 credit hours

Course Catalog Entry
Emphasis is on the theory of program evaluation, on techniques used in program evaluation, and on the standards of quality professional practice. Students are expected to apply the principles of evaluation to design problems.

Instructor’s Description
The course will provide a comprehensive review of relevant theoretical and methodological knowledge related to program evaluation. Also the course will focus on specific skills that are
relevant and often used in conducting program evaluations. Group work, weekly written assignments, and course projects will provide opportunities to apply knowledge and skills. The course will start with a broad look at what evaluation is and how it is applied. Following this birds' eye view of the field, we will hone in and focus on specific evaluation approaches and models relevant to program evaluation.

Each class meeting will be divided into a few distinct components/segments that will allow us to switch between diverse activities and learning modalities, e.g., lecture, student-led discussion, group work, and occasional skill-building activities.

Critical thinking and writing skills are essential for success in this course. These are some of the most important skills you will need for success in your careers and they will be heavily emphasized in this course.

Course Objectives

The overall aim of the course is to acquire the knowledge and skills required to work as a program evaluator. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the major concepts and key elements of program evaluation
2. Understand the rationale and uses for program evaluation
3. Explain diverse approaches and models relevant to program evaluation
4. Be familiar with skills required in conducting program evaluation

Class participation is important to the student’s own learning experience as well as that of other students. Thus, class participation is encouraged, required, and rewarded.

Weekly Activities

Every student will have responsibility for constructing at least 1 question on the assigned readings each week. Questions should be sent to the class discussion board in Blackboard Vista no later than 11 a.m. on the Sunday prior to class. The posting of questions is designed to help you identify areas that are more difficult to understand, either conceptually (e.g., “why is this important?”) or technically (e.g., “I don’t understand what defines….or how this process resolves ….issue.”). Questions might be ones that puzzle over conclusions or comparisons across readings. If one student is puzzled over an issue, it is likely that others are as well. This weekly activity is designed to promote on-line discussion and to ensure that students are well prepared for discussion in class.

Each class session will devote some time to student-led discussions. Class participants can volunteer or will be randomly asked to lead the discussion over one or more topics that were covered in the previous week’s reading. Therefore, all students should be prepared to lead the discussion each week. Class discussions are critical to facilitate the learning of everyone in the group.

Each week, participants will have a writing assignment that will be 2-4 single-spaced pages in length (see separate attachment on writing assignments).
Grading

Course Participation
Participants are expected to be actively engaged in the class. Participation will be evaluated based on (i) attendance, (ii) level and quality of engagement in class activities and on-line discussions, (iii) electronic posting of questions each week on reading assignments, and (iv) role in leading classroom discussions. Total of 26 points (13 points assigned after mid-term, and 13 points for participation assigned at end of course).

Writing Assignments
Each week, except for mid-term and finals weeks, participants will be expected to deliver a writing assignment. There will be a total of 11 writing assignments. Each weekly assignment is worth 4 points. Total 44 points. Class participants may request to re-write no more than two writing assignment. (See more details on the separate handout regarding writing assignments.)

Examinations
Midterm and final exams will be completed in class on November 2 and December 14, respectively. Midterm exam is worth 10 points and final exam is worth 20 points for a total of 30 points.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 - 94</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>93 - 89</td>
<td>BA</td>
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<tr>
<td>88 - 84</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>83 - 79</td>
<td>CB</td>
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<tr>
<td>78 - 74</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 74</td>
<td>E</td>
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Incompletes will only be considered in the most dire of circumstances.

Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 14, 2009</td>
<td>Introduction, course overview, key concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 21, 2009</td>
<td>Evaluative criteria, identifying issues and formulating questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 28, 2009</td>
<td>Determining merit and importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 5, 2009</td>
<td>Key evaluation checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 12, 2009</td>
<td>Context/history of evaluation, Alternative views of evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 19, 2009</td>
<td>Approaches/models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 26, 2009</td>
<td>Approaches/models, Practical guidelines for planning evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2, 2009</td>
<td><strong>Mid-term exam</strong> Practical Guidelines for conducting &amp; using evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 9, 2009</td>
<td>Emerging &amp; future setting for program evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 16, 2009</td>
<td>Utilization-focused evaluation</td>
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November 23, 2009  Focusing Evaluation
November 30, 2009  Implementation eval and evaluating theories of change
December 7, 2009  Appropriate methodologies for evaluation and
realities of utilization focused evaluation
December 14, 2009  Final examination
(See separate handout with detailed topics and reading assignments.)

Expectations

- Students are expected to attend scheduled class sessions and to fully participate during the diverse classroom activities. If you are sick, snowed in, or away on business you are expected to participate electronically via Skype. If your health or other circumstances limit your ability to participate electronically, then contact the instructor via phone and/or email before class or as soon thereafter as possible.
- Please turn cell phones/pagers and other electronic communications devices to silent mode (or off) during class.
- When sending e-mails regarding the class, please include “EMR 6420” in the start of the subject line.
- The usual expectations exist regarding Academic Honesty, the Student Code of Honor (i.e., do not represent as your own work the work of others, cite all sources appropriately, etc.) and general academic policies on such issues as diversity, religious observation, student disabilities, etc. The policies can be found at <http://catalog.wmich.edu> under Academic Policies, Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- Written reports should follow guidelines from the American Psychological Association Publication Manual.
- Students with disabilities who foresee the need for accommodation or those with known conflicts with any course session should see me at the beginning of the course, or as needs/expectations change during the course.

Required Texts:

In addition to these texts, each participant is expected to have a computer with Skype capability. Preferably, you will need a headset with microphone and a digital video camera.
Weekly Writing Assignments

Course participants will receive plenty of opportunities to practice and apply critical thinking skills during the course. The best example of applying these skills is the weekly writing assignment. The weekly writing assignments will be structured writing assignments that will be short in length but will require thoughtful identification and defense of ideas.

The weekly writing assignment will be handed out in class each Monday evening. The assignment is due the following Sunday morning by 11 a.m. Each assignment is to be submitted electronically as an attached file to an e-mail. The file should be in WordPerfect or MS Word. If there is another format you prefer, please take this up with me before submitting your assignment.

The writing assignment should closely following the guidelines specified below:

- Do not exceed the maximum number of pages indicated for each specific assignment.
- Use 1.5 inch margins on all sides of the page.
- Only single space text, no space between paragraphs, and please indent the start of each paragraph.
- Font should be a Times 12 font or equivalent should be used.
- Your name, the number of the writing assignment (e.g., Writing Assignment #3) and due date of assignment should be upper right-hand corner of first page.
- References should be used sparingly; when used they should follow APA format.
- Unless otherwise noted, participants are required to submit assignments to the digital drop-box in Microsoft Word or WordPerfect file format. If you are unable to meet this requirement, please inform the instructor immediately. The Word or WordPerfect attachment requirement allows for easy handling from the course instructor back to the students (with feedback included within the attached document).
- The file names should identify the course assignment numbers as well as your first and last name; use the following file naming example as a guide: 1_Gary Miron.doc. Please do not e-mail the instructor to check on the status of an assignment placed in the digital drop box.
- All work will be evaluated based on accuracy, adherence to guidelines and due dates, thoroughness, and evidence of effort, professionalism, data integration, coherence, and appearance. Be sure to spell check, proof, and edit all work submitted.
- Class participants are encouraged to edit and advise one another, although each essay is expected to be unique.
- Timely completion and the quality of your work will contribute to your overall course grade. In fairness to all, a penalty will be imposed for any work submitted late (generally speaking, the penalty will be equivalent to one point or more). Re-writes will also be subject to a minimum 1 point deduction. Extenuating circumstances will be considered with proper documentation.

If you require help with your writing, please contact the WMU Writing Center [1060 Moore Hall. tel. 387-4615, e-mail: <meghan.m.dykema@wmich.edu>]. The Writing Center provides short courses and individualized support which can help strengthen your writing. This is an important and valuable service that is paid for with your tuition dollars.