

IPT 661: Introduction to Evaluation in Education

Course website:

Instructor website: <http://www.the-wests.net/rick/evaluationclass>



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Office Hours: Virtually & face-to-face on Tuesdays, 11-2 p.m. or by appointment.

Class Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8-10:50 a.m. in MCKB 166

Note

The online version of the syllabus is the one more frequently updated. In the case of any discrepancy (i.e. changed deadlines or point totals), refer to the online version over this paper version.

Course Description & Objectives

Most of us choose to become instructional designers or teachers because we want to make a difference in the lives of others. However, how will we know if we have, in fact, made a difference? How will we know our impact? How will we know if we can improve?

These are questions that can be answered through evaluation. In this course we will study the development of evaluation as a professional field, alternative methods for conceptualizing and implementing evaluations, and practical guidelines for completing your first evaluation. It is my hope that by the end of this class, you will:

- Understand what an evaluation is, what various different methods of evaluation are, and which evaluation framework is most appropriate for your own work.
- Develop strategies for effectively working with stakeholders and clients.
- Recognize how to tailor an evaluation to meet the needs of a context and the stakeholders.
- Understand and be able to develop the various components of an in-depth evaluation proposal
- Successfully complete an evaluation project.

Course Policies

Course policies, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change according to our needs.

Late & Makeup Work

Due dates for assignments are listed on the calendar. A minimum 10% late penalty will be assessed for work submitted after the assignment deadline unless I have previously approved a later deadline due to extenuating circumstances. Work that is submitted over a week late will receive an additional 10% penalty for each week late. No late work is accepted after the last day of class.

Because we are doing a real project for a client within a tight timeframe, it will be critical that everyone completes their work on time.

Backing Up Work

It is your responsibility to back up all of the work you do in class, saving it in at least TWO locations until you receive your final course grade. To do this you can use: 1) your required USB key drive, 2) home computer, 3) email attachments, 4) free online space (such as <http://www.box.net>), or 5) external hard drive. If you need motivation for backing up your work, ask me about the time I lost over half of my literature review to a computer failure a few weeks before my thesis was due. Ah, the memories. ;-).

Course Grading & Honesty Policy

Final grades will be calculated with the following percentages. You must complete ALL assignments to get a passing grade. You must honestly complete all the work yourself. If you are working within a team, you must be able to show a significant contribution to the team project.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	F
94-100	90-93	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	0-69

Preventing Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education and pertains to admissions, academic and athletic programs, and university-sponsored activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours), or <http://www.ethicspoint.com>; or contact the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847.

Writing Quality Expectation

Evaluation is largely a job of communication—being able to communicate your findings to stakeholders in a way that is useful to them. Thus clean and concise writing is critical, and while this class is designed to help you develop your evaluation writing skills, it is not a class on basic grammar or writing. It is expected that when you turn in drafts to your peers and to myself, that we will be reviewing them based on their logical structure, argumentation, interpretation, etc. If there are grammar, punctuation, or blatant writing errors, it will make it more difficult for us to give you good feedback. If the errors are too much of an impediment to understanding your paper, it will be returned to you for corrections before I can read it. Remember to use the BYU Writing Center, which is a great resource for native and non-native speakers alike! Also, if you are an international student, consider enrolling in ESL 404, which is a graduate-level writing course for ESL students.

Electronic Devices

As a courtesy to everyone, please turn off cell phones during class and use laptops only for taking notes or looking up materials relevant to our discussion. Checking email, Facebook, and other off-task sites diminishes your ability to learn and my ability to teach, and is distracting to the other learners in class.

Course Readings

For this course we have one required textbook and one suggested textbook. We will also read articles or materials that I will provide on occasion. We will begin using the textbooks immediately and move quickly so please acquire your books as soon as possible.

REQUIRED

Fitzpatrick, J. L.; Sanders, J. R.; & Worthen, B. R. (2004). *Program Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines*. Boston: Pearson Education.

RECOMMENDED

Alkin, M. C. (2004). *Evaluation Roots*. Sage.

This book contains essays from the foundational evaluation scholars describing how they developed their different models. It's well worth owning if you seek to understand the field of evaluation.

Assignments

Gospel Insights (5 pts) — This is a short (3-5 minute) devotional on gospel applications of evaluation principles. Once you start looking, you'll see examples of evaluation throughout the scriptures and many Church activities! (or perhaps instances where evaluation *should* be used :-).

Evaluation in the Wild ("Meta-evaluations" - 10 pts) — In pairs, critique an existing evaluation according to Guiding Principles of the American Evaluation Association (<http://www.eval.org/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesPrintable.asp>). Your critique should be no more than 5 pages. You can find evaluation reports on the Web, from federal and state agencies, and from previous IP&T projects.

Paradigm Instruction (25 pts) — For this activity, take about 30-45 minutes to teach us about a particular paradigm for conducting evaluations. As part of your instruction, consider what will best help us understand how to do an evaluation following this approach. You may consider using:

- Role playing or carrying out a mini evaluation using this approach
- Video documentaries
- Leading us in an analysis of examples
- Presentation (but don't make it all presentation)
- Interview with evaluators utilizing this method
- anything else you can think of.

You may complete this activity individually or in pairs until all of the topics have been assigned. If done individually, use *Program Evaluation* to guide your learning of the paradigm. If done in pairs, one of you should use *Evaluation Roots* to provide additional insights to the *Program Evaluation* text. Paradigms: Objectives-oriented, Management-oriented, Consumer-oriented, Expertise-oriented, Participant-oriented.

Weekly Reading (5 pts each week) — Each week, you should read the chapters of the textbook related to our class topics, and think how you could apply the principles to your group project. Then write a short (1 page) reflection on the following questions:

1. What did you learn new this week from the readings?
2. What aspects of the reading could influence your group project or any other individual evaluation projects you have? In what ways?

You can turn in your weekly reflection papers by email or by setting up a blog and sending me your RSS link. This is preferred, and I think easier for you and me.

Team Evaluation Project (90 points) — You will be completing an evaluation in a group this semester. I have divided the evaluation project into 7 sections. For each section 15 points are possible through a peer evaluation of your contribution to that section as well as my evaluation of the overall team's score.

Course Calendar

Week	Due Dates	Assignment	Class Topics
1.1	Due the day before class	Purchase your textbooks, skim through chapters 1-3 of <i>Program Evaluation</i> (PE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to evaluation - Terms, trends, and issues - Introduction to the course and project
1.2	April 29	- Paradigm presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objectives-oriented evaluation - Management-oriented evaluation - Meta-evaluation
2.1	May 4	- Paradigm presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expertise-oriented evaluation - Consumer-oriented evaluation - Working with clients
2.2	May 6	- Paradigm presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participant-oriented evaluation - Product usability testing - Meet the client?
3.1	May 11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyzing the evaluation context - Identifying questions/criteria - Developing an evaluation plan - Logic models
3.2	May 13		Team meeting
4.1	May 18	- Evaluation context/Lit Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation methods - Aligning methods with questions - Data collection
4.2	May 20		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collection - Team meeting
5.1	May 25	- Evaluation questions & methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data Analysis - Conclusions and recommendations
5.2	May 27		- Team meeting
6.1	June 1	- Findings & conclusions	- Reporting & presenting strategies
6.2	June 3		- Team meeting
7.1	June 8	- Meta-analysis - Future evaluation plan	
7.2	June 10	- Draft of whole report to Rick	- Presenting
	June 15	No Class - Exam Preparation Day	
	final exam TBA	- Final Presentation to client	Presenting report to the client