



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Educational Studies

Faculty of Education

EDST 525

Program Evaluation in Adult and Community Education

Section 22

(Online course with occasional synchronous conference sessions)

Winter Session 2017-18

Term 2

January 3-April 6, 2018

Note: Reading Break is February 19-23 (no class activities)

Instructor:

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Purpose and Structure of the Course

This course is designed to introduce you to the various conceptual lenses that shape the practice of program evaluation and build a bridge between those lenses and evaluation practice. It is structured in six modules distributed over the 13-week term:

Module 1: Framing and Defining the Evaluation Landscape

Module 2: Worldviews, Paradigms, Assumptions

Module 3: Planning Evaluations/Evaluation Plans

Module 4: Evaluation Plan Brainstorming

Module 5: Working with Examples

Module 6: Negotiating Uses and Excuses

Evaluation is a rich and evolving field that overlaps with many other social science disciplines such as sociology, psychology, education, community development, business, political science and many more. Similar to some of these other disciplines, evaluation is far more than an academic area of study and research. It takes place in real-world conditions confronting real-world challenges. This course adopts an inductive approach to exploring evaluation, inviting you to examine what evaluation “looks like” in your own context of practice, and working with examples of evaluation from diverse sectors, nations, populations, and disciplines.

The overall purpose of this course is to deepen your understanding of evaluation purposes, theories, practices, and challenges, and provide you with practical guidance in mobilizing your learning about evaluation beyond the classroom into your professional practice.

Learning Objectives

The primary goal of this course is for you to be able to develop a reasonably-detailed evaluation plan suited to your particular interests and context of practice. You may or may not go on to implement this evaluation plan after the course is completed. For the purposes of the course, the primary goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the elements involved in designing an evaluation plan and the contextual factors that introduce challenges and limitations to the planning process.

Module 1. After completing this module, you should be able to:

- Understand the contemporary social context shaping how program evaluation is viewed and valued
- Recognize at least three common definitions of program evaluation, how they overlap, and how they differ
- Explain why there is no single definition of evaluation
- Describe the general distinction between evaluation and research
- Identify which definition of evaluation you identify with the most and why (or come up with a working definition of your own);
- Describe the context of your current (or former or desired) work, and what evaluation looks like in that context

Module 2. After completing this module, you should be able to:

- Describe some of the tensions in the relationship between evaluation theory and practice
- Provide a general definition of each of the four evaluation branches discussed in this module, according to the four sets of assumptions that characterize the view of evaluation in each branch

- Explain why an understanding of these branches and assumptions is helpful for the practice of evaluation
- Identify which branch you find most in alignment with your own thinking and the thinking of others within your context (and whether or not they are the same or different)

Module 3. After completing this module, you should be able to:

- Identify the major elements in an evaluation plan – evaluand, stakeholders, evaluation designs and data collection strategies, implementation strategies, interpretation strategies, communication strategies,
- State what you hope to achieve in doing your own evaluation
- Identify the resources that are necessary in order to implement the evaluation
- Identifying some of the major internal and external limit factors that influence the possibility for the evaluation to be done (or to achieve the desired results)
- Recognize which paradigm underlies the evaluation approach you have in mind.

Module 4. After completing this module, you should be able to:

- Articulate your thinking about an evaluation plan you would like to carry out (what you have in mind at this point, what you still need to clarify/decide)
- Have a deeper understanding of the components of the evaluation plan template being used in this course.

Module 5: After completing this module, you should be able to:

- Review and synthesize the main features of evaluation research, working backwards from the finished evaluation to consider the components of an evaluation plan
- Extract essential ideas from evaluation documents that may be lengthy or unclear and put the main ideas you have extracted into your own words
- Prepare an example evaluation plan using the evaluation plan template as an organizing tool.

Module 6: After completing this module, you should be able to:

- Understand the politics and limits of evaluation planning and implementation
- Think about reasons (both positive and negative) for resistance to evaluation and why even the best evaluations can languish from lack of use
- Finish your evaluation plan assignment.

Course Format

This course is designed as a fully online (with occasional “live” video conferences), 3-credit course to be completed during the 13-week term. Course participation consists of the following activities:

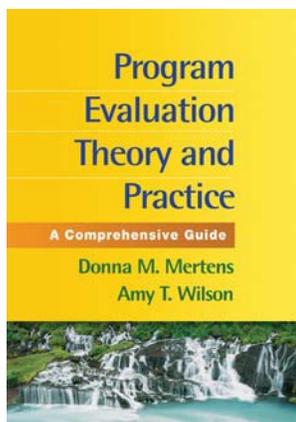
- Asynchronous self-paced readings, activities, and slide presentations.
- Synchronous online meetings via the web conference platform Collaborate, in pairs, small group, and full class formats. Recordings of full class Collaborate sessions will be available for anyone whose schedule does not accommodate synchronous participation.
- Participation in online *Canvas Discussions* using both text and video formats. This also involves preparing and posting several short videos using Kaltura.

Please note that online courses require a significant amount of independent reading and writing, as well as regular class participation using distance communications technologies. It is important to be aware that learning at a distance requires self-discipline, persistence, time management and organizational skills.

Readings and Website Resources

Required Textbook

- Mertens, D. M. & Wilson, A. T. (2012). *Program evaluation theory and practice: A comprehensive guide*. Guilford Press. ISBN: 978-1462503155. (available at the UBC Bookstore and can be ordered online)



Other Required Readings

Links to these are found within Canvas.

- Chelimsky, E. (2013). Balancing evaluation theory and practice in the real world. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 34(1), 91-98.
DOI: 10.1177/1098214012461559
- Dahler-Larsen, P. (2012). Modernity and its 'evaluation imaginary.' *The Evaluation Society* (pp. 99-119). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
ISBN: 9780804776929
DOI:10.11126/stanford/9780804776929.003.0004
- Liket, K., Rey-Garcia, M., & Maas, K. (2014). Why aren't evaluations working and what to do about it: A framework for negotiating meaningful evaluation in nonprofits. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 35(2), 171-188.
DOI: 10.1177/1098214013517736
- Mertens, D. (2015). Philosophical assumptions and program evaluation. *SpazioFilosofico* 2015, 75-85. ISSN: 2038-6788
<http://www.spaziofilosofico.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Mertens.pdf>
- Poth et al (2014). Toward a definition of evaluation within the Canadian context: Who knew this would be so difficult? *Canadian Journal of Evaluation*, 29(1), 87-103. DOI: 10.3138/cjpe.29.1.87
- Schwandt, T. (2003). "Back to the rough ground!" Beyond theory to practice in evaluation. *Evaluation*, 9(3), 353-364.
DOI: 10.1177/13563890030093008
- Weiss, Carol (1998). Have we learned anything new about the use of evaluation? *American Journal of Evaluation*, 19(1), 21-33.
DOI: 10.1016/S1098-2140(99)80178-7

Recommended Readings

Additional recommended readings are specified via the "Library Course Reserve" link within Canvas, especially in relation to Assignment #2.

Web Resources

There is a sizable and growing number of academic journals, organizations, and internet resources that deal with program evaluation theory and practice. In addition to the course readings, the resources listed below will provide supplemental learning materials useful for your work in the course.

Websites/Agency Documents

- Amnesty International (international human rights), Evaluation: A Beginners Guide: <http://www.policynl.ca/policydevelopment/documents/Evaluation-A-Beginners-Guide.pdf>
- BetterEvaluation.org (public sector evaluation). Steps in planning and managing an evaluation: <http://betterevaluation.org/en/managers-guide>
- Centers for Disease Control (health care). Developing an effective evaluation plan. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/cdc-evaluation-workbook-508.pdf>
- MEERA (environmental education): <http://meera.snre.umich.edu/evaluation-what-it-and-why-do-it>
- United Nations Development Programme, Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning (1997). Who are the question makers? A participatory evaluation handbook. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/who.htm>
- Work Group for Community Health and Development (community health): <http://www.ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation/framework-for-evaluation/main>

Professional Organizations

- American Evaluation Association (<http://www.eval.org>)
- Canadian Evaluation Society (<http://www.evaluationcanada.ca>)
- International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (<http://www.ioce.net>)

Academic Journals (all available in full text through the UBC Library)

- *American Journal of Evaluation*
- *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*
- *Evaluation and Program Planning*
- *Evaluation Review*
- *New Directions in Evaluation*

Requirements and Expectations

There is no pre-requisite for this course although it is a graduate-level course with relatively heavy reading and writing requirements.

You are expected to participate in the synchronous online meetings—when your schedule permits—and to complete all other course requirements. You will be expected to contribute to group discussions and complete assignments by the stated due dates (see the Course Calendar).

Assignments

1. Context Description (25%)
2. Example Evaluation Plan (25%)
3. Participation (20%)
4. Evaluation Plan (30%)

NB: Check the Course Calendar for due dates of all assignments

1. Context Description (25%)

One important skill in program evaluation is the ability to clearly describe the context in which an evaluation is situated. Many agencies and institutions in which evaluations are carried out develop specialized language for their programs and activities, which are meaningful internally but may not be easily understood by outsiders. Even what is meant by the term “evaluation” is vague without being tied to the specific evaluative attitudes and practices within a given setting.

The first assignment is to write a clear description of your current work or learning context as if you were describing it to someone who is not familiar with that context. Your description should address three underlying questions:

- What is your organizational/agency/institutional context and your role within that context?
- What does evaluation look like within that context?
- What is your involvement/familiarity with the evaluation practices within that context?

For people who are currently working in an agency/institutional setting, the focus of these questions may be relatively straightforward. For others who may be unconventionally employed or full-time students, you may have to stretch a bit to think of a “context” that fits. Please talk to me if you straddle multiple contexts or are otherwise drawing a blank. We are all in a context of some sort, and some kind of evaluation probably takes place within it, even if it isn’t called evaluation as such.

Format: Length 3-4 pages (750 to 1000 words) double-spaced, size 12 font, indent first line of paragraphs ½ inch, 1 inch margins, include page numbers (bottom right), make

sure to include the name of the assignment, your name and the course number at the top of the first page, and section headings for each question.

2. Example Evaluation Plan (25%)

It is important to be a good consumer and interpreter of evaluations as a part of increasing one's own evaluation capacity. In this assignment students will be working with descriptions of evaluations that have already been completed and written up, working backwards from the final write-up to consider what an evaluation plan for that project might have looked like. I would also like you to submit a written version in completion of this exercise, working with the evaluation plan template introduced at the beginning of the class, based on one of the articles/summaries provided (more information will be provided during the relevant week).

Write your example evaluation plan working with the material provided. Sometimes this information will be too much or too little. You may have to condense in some places and do further internet research in others, depending on the quality of materials you are working with (I have provided an example to give you an idea of the result I have in mind). In some places you may have insufficient or unclear information, in which case you may feel free to state this in your example evaluation plan. What I am looking for is your ability to read and synthesize information from other evaluation plans and offer your own assessment of their strengths and weaknesses.

Format: Length 4-6 pages (1000-1500 words) using the same page layout as with the first assignment. For this assignment, you are primarily synthesizing and distilling information from other sources rather than composing the paper from scratch. You are expected to write the evaluation plan in your own words, correctly citing any material quoted directly from the original.

3. Participation (20%)

The ability to do insightful self-evaluation is a critical competency in the practice of program evaluation. Therefore your participation in this course will include a self-evaluation component. In each of the areas listed below please write five or six sentences addressing the following four questions: 1) How much did I put into it (and what was the nature of my effort)? 2) My best strength in this area. 3) My weakest aspect in this area. 4) Where I would like to grow/develop in this area.

- Participation
- Written assignments
- Readings

- Overall effort in this course

In addition to these comments, assign yourself a rating following the grading rubric provided below. My grading of your participation will include an evaluation of your evaluation. My assessment will not necessarily reflect your own.

4. Evaluation Plan (30%)

Using the evaluation plan template introduced at the beginning of class, prepare a written evaluation plan for an evaluation you would like to conduct in your workplace or organizational context (or one where you would like to work). Remember that the goal of this assignment is not to do the evaluation but to write a plan that, when carried out, would answer important evaluation questions about a non-trivial program in your context.

The goal of this assignment is to prepare the most complete, detailed evaluation plan you can that demonstrates what you have learned about program evaluation. Feel free to refer to the textbook and other literature covered in the course if it helps you justify or explain any part of your plan. The plan should be detailed enough so that someone else could take your written plan and, with a bit of technical assistance, implement the plan as you intended. Any data collection instruments (like evaluation forms, tests or interviews) that you propose in your plan should be either attached in draft form, or you should provide a detailed description of either the questions that will be asked or the kind of data that will be collected.

Format: Length 6-8 pages (1500-2000) words using the same format as previous assignments.

Grading Rubric

Evaluative criteria for these assignments include:

- demonstration of adequate preparation, with all requirements met;
- accuracy of understanding and analysis of content;
- insight and appropriateness of application to practice;
- attention to detail, organization and preparation;
- sources and quotes must be properly cited in all written work, and a reference list included at the end when relevant (see <http://help.library.ubc.ca/evaluating-and-citing-sources/how-to-cite/> for details on citing correctly, or contact me immediately if you are unfamiliar with this).

“A” level work (80-100%)

This category is for strong work that has, at most, only minor shortcomings.

“A+” is from 90-100%. It is reserved for assignments that are exceptional and greatly exceed course expectations. In addition, the work must satisfy all the conditions below.

“A” is from 85-89%. A mark of this caliber indicates a very high level of quality in all aspects of your assignment. Work deserving of an A is distinguished in virtually every aspect. It shows the individual (or group) has gone well beyond what was provided and has demonstrated thorough analysis and accurate understanding of materials.

“A-” is from 80-84%. It is awarded when the quality of work is high, but slightly uneven. For example, A- work may be of high quality on all but one criterion. There should be no problems or errors of significance.

“B” level work (68-79%)

This category of work is typified by adequate performance on most criteria. The distinction between levels is a matter of degree.

“B+” (76-79%) will be awarded if the assignment is generally adequate in most regards, but not exceptional in any category.

“B” (72-75%) will be assigned if the assignment has one or two significant problems, e.g., (1) superficial understanding, (2) errors in understanding, (3) lack of demonstrated initiative, (4) lack of clarity in argumentation, or (5) multiple problems with attention to details.

“B-” (68-71%) will be awarded if the assignment has three or more significant problems (as per B above).

“C/C+” level work (60-67%)

A mark below 68% will be assigned to work that is more seriously flawed, e.g., serious lack of attention to requirements or consistent significant problems across criteria.

NB: If you receive a grade below 60% you can negotiate with me for one opportunity to redo any written assignments that might contribute to an improved grade.

Technologies to be Used in EDST 525

Internet. This course requires you to have access to a reliable high-speed internet connection. During the synchronous online meetings and video conferences, you will also need to have a microphone/headset and a webcam. If you are connecting to any of these sessions via a smartphone, you will need headphones/ear buds and must be able to mute your phone’s microphone.

Canvas. EDST 525 is a new online course that will be delivered using a variety of technologies. UBC recently adopted a new learning management system (LMS) called “Canvas” which will be the primary tool for course delivery. We will all be learning to use

Canvas and, as a newly implemented platform, we can expect a few technical problems during the term. If solving problems you encounter on your own is not working, please bring them to my attention and let other students know as well. Often, we can help each other resolve issues that are “local” in nature. If there is a more systemic/system problem with Canvas or any of the other technologies we will be using, please let me know and we will report them.

Note that many UBC technology websites still refer to “Connect” which is the soon-to-be-retired LMS.

If you wish to learn more about Canvas, a useful website to visit that has links to multiple resources, including the Canvas FAQ, is: [Student's Guide to Canvas](#).

A very useful feature of Canvas is that it is *mobile friendly*. You can download the **Canvas Student** app to your smartphone and use your phone for nearly everything required in the course.

Kaltura. Kaltura is a video production and sharing platform that will be used several times during this course. Using it requires a webcam and microphone. Watch for the Kaltura icon within Canvas to access this easy-to-use tool. The following link will take you to information about Kaltura: [Kaltura for Canvas](#).

Collaborate. Collaborate (aka Blackboard Collaborate and Collaborate Ultra) is a web conferencing tool we will be using several times during the term. We will use it to conduct small group “live” discussions as well as whole-class sessions. I have scheduled live whole-class web conference sessions at the beginning of each module of the course. These will be held in the evenings (Pacific Standard Time) to accommodate as many students as possible. See the tentative schedule and Calendar for these sessions for the days/times and the two ways you can participate. For those of you who cannot participate, these sessions will be recorded and posted within Canvas.

Here is the link you should use to join a Collaborate session via your browser:
<https://ca.bbcollab.com/collab/ui/session/guest/228dc7f928a94b2d944170ff313243f6>

To learn more about using Collaborate, you can watch several short videos at:
[Using Collaborate as a Participant](#).

EDST Statement on Academic Honesty

“The integrity of academic work depends on the honesty of all those who work in this environment and the observance of accepted conventions such as acknowledging the work of others through careful citation of all sources used in your work. Plagiarism - including self-plagiarism - and other forms of academic misconduct are treated as serious offences at UBC, whether committed by faculty, staff or students. You should be aware of the sections of the University Calendar that address [Academic Honesty](#) and [Academic Misconduct](#).

The UBC Learning Commons also has useful information that explains what plagiarism is and [how to avoid it](#). If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies or conventions in relation to how they apply to the work you do in this course, please discuss them with your instructor.”

Maintaining a Respectful Teaching/Learning Environment

All members of the UBC community are entitled to a respectful environment and we all have a role in maintaining such an environment. If you experience communications or interactions you feel are harmful to or inconsistent with a respectful environment, let your instructor know. Please read the [UBC Statement on Respectful Environment](#) for more information, or read the [FAQs for Students](#).

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Tentative Course Calendar (subject to revision)

Dates	Theme	Readings (see LCR list for details)	Activities
Prior to start date	Course Preparation	See Module 1 below	Pre-reading (scan) of Module 1 class readings
Weeks 1 & 2 (January 3-14)	Module 1: Framing and Defining the Evaluation Landscape	Mertens & Wilson (2012), 5-8 Poth et al (2014), 87-103 Dahler-Larsen, P. (2012), 99-119	Review syllabus and assignments; provide self-introduction on discussion forum (Kaltura); respond to two colleagues; begin reflecting on evaluation plan
Weeks 3 & 4 (January 15-28)	Module 2: Paradigms, Branches, and Theories	Mertens & Wilson (2012), 33-47 Mertens, D. (2015), 75-85 Chelimsky, E. (2014), 91-98 Schwandt, T. (2003), 353-364	Do assigned readings; submit assignment #1 by 5pm PST, Sunday, January 28.
Weeks 5 & 6 (January 29-February 11)	Module 3: Planning Evaluations/Evaluation Plans	Mertens & Wilson (2012), 219-221 (scan ToC) See website links on course website	Sign up for website group and review website; Collaborate meeting with partner and report back; prepare to talk about your evaluation plan
Weeks 7 & 8 (February 12-18 & February 26-March 4) Reading Break February 19-25)	Module 4: Evaluation Plan Brainstorming	Mertens & Wilson (2012), 49-217 (for reference only) Website links on course website	Select article and summary to review; review evaluation plan example for Module 5.

Weeks 9 & 10 (March 5-18)	Module 5: Working with Examples	Mertens & Wilson (2012), 49- 217 (for reference only) Selected articles as per activity	Interactive discussion of examples in small groups; submit assignment #2 by 5pm PST, Sunday, March 18.
Weeks 11-12 (March 19-April 1)	Module 6: Negotiating Uses and Excuses	Mertens & Wilson (2012), 473- 509 Weiss, C. (1998), 21-33 Liket, Rey-Garcia & Maas (2014), 171-188	Do assigned readings; watch posted videos, Collaborate discussion and report back; submit assignment #3 by 5pm PST, Sunday, April 1.
Week 13 (April 2-6)	Complete assignment #4		Submit assignment #4 by 5pm PST, Monday, April 9.

Tentative Schedule for “Live” Video Conferences

The Collaborate sessions scheduled below will introduce each module and provide an opportunity for students to ask questions of the instructor about readings, assignments and other aspects of the course...and to provide feedback on how the course is going!

Date	Time	Focus	Location
Wednesday, January 3	7:30-8:45pm PST	Introduction to the course; Q&A on assignments & Module 1	These live video conference sessions will be held in Room 1306A on the lower level of Ponderosa Commons-Oak House (under the grand stairway); online participation will be via Collaborate. Attend in person or connect using instructions that will be provided.
Tuesday, January 16	7:30-8:45pm PST	Module 2 intro; questions & assignment #1	
Tuesday, January 30	7:30-8:45pm PST	Module 3 intro. & questions	
Tuesday, February 13	7:30-8:45pm PST	Module 4 intro. & questions	
Tuesday, March 6	7:30-8:45pm PST	Module 5 intro; questions & assignment #2	
Tuesday, March 20	7:30-8:45pm PDT	Module 6 intro; questions & assignments #3 & #4.	

Acknowledgements

The design of this course has benefitted from the work of several people. It was originally developed and taught as a face-to-face course by Dr. Judith Ottoson when she was a faculty member in Adult Education at UBC. She is now retired.

Dr. Jane Dawson developed the original framework for this online version of the course. Jane is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC and has taught in many graduate education programs across Canada, including at St. Francis Xavier University, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Victoria. Her research interests are transformative learning, reflective practice, and the social and political dimensions of professional practice.

The design of the online version has also benefitted greatly from advice offered by Ms. Sharon Hu, instructional designer, in Educational Technology Support (ETS) in the UBC Faculty of Education.

Modifications to Dr. Dawson's design have been made by the current instructor, Dr. Tom Sork, Professor in the Adult Learning and Education group in UBC's Department of Educational Studies, who you will learn more about during the course.

01 December 2017