

Program Evaluation: An Introduction to Methods and Practice

Fall, 2016

15:291:520:90

3 Credits

Online Course at: www.ecollege.rutgers.edu

Instructor: Jennifer Gardella, Ph.D.	Email: Jennifer.gardella@gse.rutgers.edu
Phone#: (609) 647-5327	Virtual classroom and virtual office hours on Ecollege
Mode of Instruction: Online	Permission required: Not required

Learning Goals:

This is an introductory, graduate level course on the history, philosophy, and major approaches commonly used to systematically evaluate educational and social programs. The course topics include the basic uses and purposes behind program evaluation, taxonomy of evaluation models (or approaches), descriptions of several important evaluation approaches, and guidelines for planning, conducting, and using evaluations. In addition, you will learn about the guiding principles for professional evaluators as specified by the American Evaluation Association. You will also learn about the University's guidelines for the use of human subjects in research and evaluation studies.

Required Resources:

Course Text

Fitzpatrick, J.L., Sanders, J.R., Worthen, B.R. (2011), Program Evaluation: Alternative approaches and practical guidelines (4rd ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Additional Readings are can be found on the ecollege website under doc sharing.

Technology Requirements

You need very reliable access to the internet to successfully complete this course. Please make sure to have a reliable back-up plan in place (local library, friend's house, coffee shop) in case your primary access is not available when you plan to work on the class. Rutgers has a plethora of options for access on terminals (libraries, computing centers) and most buildings have wireless access for a laptop. The final project must be completed in powerpoint with a voiceover. Please make sure that you have access to powerpoint as well as the ability to record your voice.

Office Hours

As this is an online course, I have set-up a discussion area on our ecollege website called "Virtual Office Hours." Rather than email me questions regarding the course, please start a discussion thread and I will answer your questions right online so everyone can benefit from your inquiry. Of course, if your question is personal in nature (you would like explanation of a specific grade, you have a personal issue) please privately email me. I Please make sure that ecollege has your most updated email address. I frequently use email to communicate with students and pull email address directly from the ecollege system each time.

Requirements

% of Grade	Assignment Description
5%	Syllabus agreement, quick bio, and LinkedIn (due: 9/9)
5%	IRB certification (take the course, the test, and send me your confirmation) (due 9/19)

50%	Class discussions (based on text, assigned readings, and evaluation standards).
20%	Weekly final project prompts (recorded in your ecollege journal).
20%	Final project (powerpoint and voiceover) (due 12/21)

Weekly Schedule

Each week starts at 12am Monday.

The following will be required each week:

1. Text / article reading and discussion question
2. Program Evaluation Standards reading, lecture, and discussion
3. A prompt to build your final project that you start to build in your journal

By Wednesday at noon, you must respond to each discussion question.

Thursday – Sunday is time for you to actively participate in discussions responding to classmates and any follow-up questions that may be posted.

Final replies to your discussions and your journal entries are due on Sunday at midnight

Submitting Assignments

Please make sure to only submit assignments in the drop box on our ecollege website (located on the top navigation bar). If you submit an assignment in any other manner (another location on our site, via email) it will not be graded. We need a running record of submissions as well as progress.

Submitting assignments at the last minute never goes particularly well.

Should you submit an assignment after the due date, your grade will drop by 25% for each day late. Prior approval for a late assignment to receive full credit needs an acceptable reason: illness (with note from physician), family emergency, or religious holiday. In these cases, arrangements should be made with me as soon as possible for alternative due date. I realize that certain unexpected life situations are stressful, so the sooner I am informed of an unusual circumstance the greater my chances are of helping you navigate the course.

Please follow all directions for both completing and submitting assignments. Send only required information.

Grading:

A: 90-100 B+: 87-89 B: 80-86 C+: 77-79 D: 60-70 F: <60

All assignments are graded out of 100 and then final grades are computed on ecollege using the weights listed above.

Surviving the Course:

- 1) What you get out of this course (knowledge and your grade) depends on what you put into it. My best advice to you is to go in seeking knowledge and a good grade will follow.
- 2) I understand how hard it is to juggle many of life's demands of graduate school and the time you will need to put into our course to be successful. In my experience, students who put in about 15 total hours of work per week (reading, preparing, actively participating in online discussions and completing homework assignments) are the most successful. I make it as easy as possible as all work can be completed on your own time and there are no mandatory check-in times. However, there are deadlines for assignments and discussions.
- 3) We need to assume that we are all very very busy. I understand and can relate to those of you who work (full-time or part-time), have children, are taking other classes, caring for family members (and juggle other

things) and have developed the course with that in mind. If your schedule is packed, I suggest developing a master plan of your time for our four weeks together.

- 4) If you find yourself dealing with an unexpected personal situation, please let me know so we can work out a plan for you to complete the class. Please do not disappear for a length of time. And please do not push it with excuses, “I had too many parties to attend this weekend” or “you have no idea what it is like to be a busy student” will not go well.
- 5) Please do not wait until the last minute to ask questions if you are confused, find contradictory information, or if you think something is missing. Additionally do not wait until the last minute to get work completed.
- 6) You need very reliable access to the internet to successfully complete this course. Please make sure to have a reliable back-up plan in place (local library, friend’s house, coffee shop) in case your primary access is not available when you plan to work on the class. Rutgers has a plethora of options for access on terminals (libraries, computing centers) and most buildings have wireless access for a laptop.
- 7) Please understand that I am not qualified in any way to help you resolve any technical difficulties you may experience with ecollege. It is always best for you to contact the ecollege student hotline for assistance (most problems usually occur when students attempt to submit assignments and posts at the last minute)
- 8) At certain times throughout the semester the university will shut down ecollege access for students who have outstanding financial obligations. Please make sure you are in good standing at all times as sometimes I can help you gain access but other times I am unable to allow you back in without settling all issues.

Participation

As with any graduate level course, discussions are a critical part of your learning experience. You are expected to be an active participant in all discussion threads by bringing issues, questions, concerns, and experiences to all online discussions. There are no seats in the back of room!

Discussions will prompt you to first read some specified material and then ask you to post a single response to a question. Your goal is to demonstrate that you have read and pondered the material. Do not define any terms in your discussion posts and only use professional language. For each discussion please contribute one original post to these discussions and answer any follow-ups your original post receives (from me or your classmates) by Sunday at midnight. You should spend some time reading and commenting on the posts of your classmates. At the conclusion of each discussion I highly recommend you revisiting and reading all submissions as the ideas will be of great help to you. You will notice that many of our discussions are directly related to your final paper and the ideas of your classmates will be invaluable as you complete that project. Please be respectful and professional when responding to others.

****Important tip**** I highly recommend composing your posts in a word processing program first, then cutting and pasting on the discussion thread in ecollege. Writing directly to ecollege presents the risk of a technology failure or lock-up.

Each discussion has a deadline for your original post. All substantive comments (by me or your peers) to your original post need to be addressed when the week closes out. Late entries are not accepted. After the deadline each discussion should be in a “read only” state so you can review. Each discussion will be graded on a scale of 0-100. Full credit is given for original responses which demonstrate that you have read, studied and pondered the information and topic/question. I search for evidence that you have digested the applicable information. Initial posts should be no more than 300 words and all deadlines must be met. Your classmates and I may pose a question/comment under your original which must be addressed by the end of the week.

Assignments

1. Quick Bio: I really enjoy getting to know my students and learn what they bring to the class from previous experiences. Assignment: In our ecollege class, under the Course Home header you will see a Quick Bio tab. This is set up as a threaded discussion so please post a short bio.

2. Syllabus I put a tremendous amount of time into creating our syllabus and consider it our contact for the curriculum of our course, explanation of assignments, due dates, and grading structures. Please review the syllabus taking note of all details. Assignment: Copy our syllabus into a new word document. Read the blurb I have written at the bottom of the page. Type your name at the bottom of the last page. Save the document and drop it into the Syllabus drop box under the Drop box tab (off top navigation bar) on our ecollege web site. I will take this as evidence that you have read and understand the syllabus (and you will also get some practice using the drop box if you have not done so before).
3. Connect on LinkedIn While social media is beyond the scope of this course, I would like your career to benefit from my expertise starting immediately. LinkedIn is growing and can be a tremendous resource for job seekers. If you do not already have an account, please sign-up for one (it is free). Please find me: www.linkedin.com/pub/jennifer-gardella/2a/9b7/408/ and connect.
Grading: Grading: Quick bio, syllabus, and LinkedIn will be graded as completed by deadline (100 points) or not complete (0 points) and will be worth 5% of your final grade and are due by Sunday, September 8th.
4. IRB Certification An important pre-requisite before conducting any evaluation study or research project is to participate in education regarding the regulation, policies, and ethical standards governing the protection of human subjects. You are required to complete the Human Subjects Certification Program offered online by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. This is available at <http://orsp.rutgers.edu/Humans/hscpletter.php>. Take the online course, and submit a copy of the letter to the drop box by Sunday, September 15
5. Final Project Prompts: Almost every week you will have a prompt related to weekly topics and your final project. This is done so you can situate the learning in your project and receive feedback to improve your project before final submission. Your submissions are to be done in the electronic journal you each have in ecollege. Your submissions must be marked so that I have access to reach and comment.
6. Final Project: The final project is a fictitious evaluation management plan. This should be a cohesive plan encompassing all aspects of the course. You are submitting only a powerpoint presentation. Please follow directions for powerpoint presentation very carefully. Over the course of the semester you will be given the opportunity to share with the class parts of your project and receive feedback from your peers (and me!) with constructive suggestions as you start to plan. Use feedback and other things you have learned to build a cohesive project. You are expected to use your text, readings, and classroom experience to enhance your work. Please do not define terms but relate them to topics to demonstrate understanding. Most importantly, justify your rationale for each decision. Triple check and proofread your work ensuring appropriate and excellent writing and grammar is used. APA style must be strictly followed.
THE POWERPOINT: You should present your power point as if you were presenting your proposal to evaluate a program. You should not read your slides but they should layout as a guide to your thoughts. Audio for power point must be one continuous audio file (not one individual audio file for each slide). Please make sure that you have the capability (hardware and software) for the audio well in advance of sitting down to start the project. Your project must play like a movie. This can be accomplished by either downloading it to YouTube or recording it right in Ecollege. Final rubric for this assignment will be posted in doc sharing on our ecollege website Final Presentation Due by December 21st at Midnight. All presentations must be submitted to the drop box on our ecollege website or recorded directly in ecollege using the Live feature

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE
Please always check ecollege for our weekly plan

Date	Topic	Book Chapters
Week 1 Sept 6th	Introduction to Evaluation Alternative Views of Evaluation Evaluation Standards	Fitzpatrick pp 499-504, Chapters 1 -3
Week 2 Sept 12	Alternate Views of Evaluation First Approaches: Expertise and Consumer-Oriented Standards U1, U2	Fitzpatrick, Chapter 4&5
Week 3 Sept 19	Program Oriented Evaluation U3, U4	Fitzpatrick, Chapter 6
Week 4 Sept 26	Decision Oriented Evaluation U5, U6, U7	Fitzpatrick, Chapter 7
Week 5 Oct 3	Participant Oriented Approaches F1, F2, F3	Fitzpatrick, Chapter 8 Reading : House
Week 6 Oct 10	Cultural Competence & Capacity Building Comp Analysis of Evaluation Approaches P1, P2	Fitzpatrick, Chapter 9
Week 7 Oct 17	Comparative Analysis of Approaches P3, P4	Fitzpatrick, Chapter 10
Week 8 Oct 24	Clarifying the Evaluation Request and Responsibilities Setting Boundaries P5, P6	Fitzpatrick, Chapters 11, 12
Week 9 Oct 31	Identifying and Selecting the Evaluation Questions P7, P8	Fitzpatrick, Chapters 13
Week 10 Nov 7	Planning how to conduct evaluations A1, A2	Fitzpatrick, Chapter 14
Week 11 Nov 14	Collecting Evaluative Information: Design, Sampling... A3, A4	Fitzpatrick: Chapter 15 & 16
Week 12 Nov 21	Surveys A5, A6	Fitzpatrick, Pages posted
Week 13 Nov 28	Reporting Evaluation Results A7, A8	Fitzpatrick: Chapter 17
Week 14 Dec 5	Standardized Test Scores Steph's story A9, A10	
Week 15 Dec 12	Meta-Evaluation A11, A12	Fitzpatrick: Chapt 14 368-374
Week 16 Dec 19	Final project due December 21st by midnight	Fitzpatrick: Chapters 19- 21

Students with Special Needs

If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act and require academic accommodations or modifications, please notify me immediately. I will make every effort will be made to support your work and success in this class.

Here is the official University policy:

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>."

Academic Integrity

I expect that you have read and will comply with the university's standards on academic integrity. Appropriate action will be taken should you be caught submitting dishonest work. All assignments are to be completed on your own unless specified as a group activity. All references to another's work must be properly cited.

I have read and understand all requirements of the course. I understand it is my responsibility to find reliable internet access and to manage my schedule to accommodate all deadlines.

Signed:
