

Department of Educational Psychology  
University of Illinois at Chicago

EPSY 594: Special Topics in Educational Psychology  
**Evaluation Principles and Methods**

Fall 2020

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<b>Format</b>	Hybrid online course <a href="https://uic.blackboard.com">https://uic.blackboard.com</a>
<b>Schedule</b>	Synchronous sessions: Thursdays, 6:00pm to 7:30pm Central Asynchronous lectures and activities
<b>Office hours</b>	Thursdays, 5:00pm to 6:00 pm Central Additional online and phone meetings by appointment

**Course Description**

This course introduces the concepts and practices used to conduct evaluations of educational or social interventions such as programs, curricula, projects, and policies. Students will gain foundational knowledge of how to carry out evaluations with attention to context, stakeholder values and power relationships, and issues of equity and justice. Students will apply this knowledge to design an evaluation plan for a real-world intervention and also gain skills to critique completed evaluations as an informed, critical evaluation stakeholder.

**Course Objectives**

At the completion of this course, students will understand the:

1. Conceptual foundations that characterize the practice of evaluation and distinguish evaluation from research
2. Evaluation professional standards and ethical guidelines and implications for evaluation practice
3. Professional skills, knowledge, and attitudes (i.e., competencies) that contribute to competent evaluation practice and implications for their own professional development
4. Logic and flow of the evaluation process, the role of values at each stage of the process, and the choices evaluators make at each stage of the process
5. Relationship between evaluation, context, and stakeholders and how the practice of evaluation can advance equity and justice or reinforce inequities
6. Real-world constraints on evaluation and how evaluators navigate those constraints

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

7. Define and analyze an intervention and the problem it seeks to address
8. Analyze the intervention and evaluation contexts
9. Identify key stakeholder groups, examine their interests in the intervention and evaluation, identify their value stances related to the intervention, and analyze power relationships

- among stakeholders
10. Frame evaluation questions and evaluative criteria that reflect stakeholder value stances
  11. Select appropriate evaluation designs and methods for data collection and analysis to answer evaluation questions
  12. Select appropriate strategies to interpret results to reach evaluative conclusions
  13. Design a communication strategy that includes reporting mechanisms that are tailored to different stakeholder groups
  14. Assemble the above components to design a comprehensive evaluation plan for a given intervention with attention to context, stakeholder values and power relationships, and equity.
  15. Critique completed evaluations as an informed, critical evaluation stakeholder.

### **Course Format**

This is a hybrid online class that includes both synchronous (real-time) components and asynchronous components students will complete on their own schedule. Synchronous class sessions will be held on Thursdays, 6:00pm to 7:30pm Central. The Blackboard course site <https://uic.blackboard.com> is the starting point for all course components.

### **Readings**

Students will complete assigned readings each week before attending the synchronous class session. The textbook is available as an ebook through the UIC library:

Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P., & Wholey, J. S. (2015). *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Journal article, book chapters, and other readings are posted on the Blackboard course site.

### **Videos**

Lectures will be recorded as brief videos and posted on the Blackboard course site one week before class. Students will watch the assigned videos each week before attending the live class session.

### **Class Sessions**

Live class sessions will include small group and full class discussions about the readings and videos, as well as small group and full class activities focused on applying the course material. To prepare for class sessions, students will complete the assigned readings and videos and post discussion questions to Blackboard prior to each session. Active engagement in the live discussions and activities will contribute to the course participation portion of your grade in the course. Contact me in advance if a situation arises that makes it impossible for you to attend a class session.

Class discussions and activities will not be recorded, as this can stifle open, rich conversation. The recording feature for students will be disabled so that no one else will be able to record the class session, and recording by other means is not permitted. Students must receive permission from session participants in order to take screen shots or photos. Please contact me if you need copies of something shared on screen or would like information about a class session you are unable to attend.

## **Assignments**

Students will complete seven assignments as part of this course. Each assignment is briefly described below, and full instructions and grading rubrics are posted on Blackboard. Assignments should be formatted using APA style with 11- or 12-point fonts and 1-inch margins and be submitted as Word documents. The length of each submission is described in the instructions; however, please contact me if you have difficulty meeting those guidelines, as they can be adjusted based on the focus of your assignment. Assignments will be returned with feedback within a week, unless you are notified otherwise.

**1. Interest and background:** Overview of your interests related to learning about evaluation, your background in research and evaluation, and the type of interventions you are interested in evaluating.

**2. Evaluation report analysis:** Analysis of an evaluation report, identifying the purpose of the evaluation and characteristics of the study that are distinctly evaluation (rather than research).

**3. Context and stakeholder analysis:** Description of the context, stakeholder groups, and value stances associated with an intervention for which you will develop an evaluation plan.

**4. Evaluand definition:** Critical description of the intervention including the problem or need it seeks to address and its underlying program theory.

**5. Evaluation questions and criteria:** Summary of the evaluation questions and criteria you recommend for your intervention.

**6. Evaluation design and communication:** Description of the study design and data collection and analysis methods you would use to answer your evaluation questions.

**7. Complete evaluation plan:** Compilation of excerpts from Assignments 3, 4, 5, and 6 into a comprehensive evaluation plan that addresses prior feedback.

## **Course Participation**

Each component of this course has been designed to maximize your learning, and class participation is a very important part of the learning process. A course participation grading rubric is posted on Blackboard. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about whether you are meeting the expectations for class participation or if a situation arises that makes you unable to participate fully.

## Course Grading

Assignment	Due Date by 11:59 pm	Points
1. Interest and background	Wed 9/9	5
2. Evaluation report analysis	Wed 9/23	15
3. Context and stakeholder analysis	Wed 10/7	15
4. Evaluand definition	Wed 10/21	15
5. Evaluation questions and criteria	Wed 11/11	10
6. Evaluation design and communication	Wed 11/25	15
7. Complete evaluation plan	Fri 12/11	15
Course participation		10

Course grades will be based on the following scale:

Course Grading Scale	
A	90 - 100%
B	80 - 89%
C	70 - 79%
D	60 - 69%
F	59% and Below

### Communication

Each week I will open a Blackboard discussion forum for the week with a thread for general comments and questions. Please post any questions in that thread, as other students are likely to have the same question or know the answer. If you are able to answer a question posted by another student, please do. I will also be available in our Zoom room before and after our class sessions on Thursdays. Please feel free to drop by early or stay after class to talk or ask questions. I will respond to email messages and discussion board posts within 24 hours, Monday through Friday.

If you do not understand an assignment, activity, or feedback from me, please ask for clarification. I will do my best to word my messages as clearly as possible, but in an online environment, it can be difficult "see" if my messages are understood.

### Late Assignments

Students will submit all assignments through the drop box on the course Blackboard site by 11:59 pm Central time on the day they are due. If a situation arises that makes it impossible for you to turn in an assignment by the due date, contact me at least one day before the due date to let me know that the assignment is likely to be late and negotiate an extension. In recognition of the extraordinary circumstances students are navigating this semester, there will be no penalty for assignments submitted after the due date. However, all assignments must be submitted by 11:59 pm Central time on Friday, December 11 in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

### Course Effectiveness

It is my intention that all students be well-served by this course; that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class; and that the diversity of beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences that students bring to this course be viewed as a resource and strength. Please let me know if there are ways I can improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or

student groups. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

### **Academic Integrity**

As an academic community, UIC is committed to providing an environment in which research, learning, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. All members of the campus community—students, staff, faculty, and administrators—share the responsibility of insuring that these standards are upheld so that such an environment exists. Instances of academic misconduct by students will be handled pursuant to the Student Disciplinary Policy: <https://dos.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/262/2018/10/DOS-Student-Disciplinary-Policy-2018-2019-FINAL.pdf>

### **Observance of Religious Holidays**

Students who wish to observe their religious holidays shall notify the faculty member by the tenth day of the semester of the date when they will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, the student shall notify the faculty member at least five days in advance of the date when he/she will be absent. The faculty member shall make every reasonable effort to honor the request, not penalize the student for missing the class, and if an examination or project is due during the absence, give the student an exam or assignment equivalent to the one completed by those students in attendance. If the student feels aggrieved, he/she may request remedy through the campus grievance procedure. A calendar of religious holidays and academic year dates of importance is available here: <http://oae.uic.edu/religious-calendar/>

### **Disability Accommodations**

The University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UIC. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome but must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). You may contact DRC at 312-413-2183 (v) or 773-649-4535 (VP/Relay) and consult the following: <http://drc.uic.edu/guide-to-accommodations>.

## Schedule

Note: This schedule may be adjusted over the course of the semester.

	Topics	Readings and Videos <i>Complete before the live class session</i>	Assignments <i>Submit by 11:59 pm on the due date</i>
Week 1 Thu 8/27	Course overview  Introduction to evaluation	No readings  Video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course overview</li> </ul>	
Week 2 Thu 9/3	Evaluation purposes  Origins of evaluation	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shadish et al. (1991), pp. 19-30</li> <li>• Hall, M. E. (2020)</li> <li>• Mathison (2008)</li> </ul> Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation purposes</li> <li>• Origins of evaluation</li> <li>• Values and evaluation</li> </ul>	Assignment 1: Interest and background due Wed 9/9
Week 3 Thu 9/10	Evaluation process  High quality evaluation	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 1, 12</li> <li>• LaFrance &amp; Nichols (2010)</li> </ul> Handouts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (2018)</li> <li>• American Evaluation Association (2018)</li> <li>• American Evaluation Association (2011)</li> </ul> Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evaluation process</li> <li>• Mental models and evaluation</li> <li>• High quality evaluation</li> </ul>	
Week 4 Thu 9/17	Context, stakeholders, and values	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 2</li> <li>• Chouinard (2013)</li> <li>• Ghanbarpour et al. (2020)</li> </ul> Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation and intervention context</li> <li>• Working with stakeholders</li> <li>• Identifying stakeholder values</li> </ul>	Assignment 2: Evaluation report analysis due Wed 9/23
Week 5 Thu 9/24	Defining the evaluand	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alkin (2011), pp. 60-79</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 3</li> <li>• Archibald (2020)</li> <li>• Funnell &amp; Rogers (2011), pp. 293-316</li> </ul> <p>Videos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem definition</li> <li>• Program theory</li> <li>• Boundaries for the evaluation</li> </ul>	
Week 6 Thu 10/1	Questions, criteria, and standards	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitzpatrick, et al. (2011), 314-339</li> <li>• Davidson (2015)</li> </ul> <p>Handouts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wingate &amp; Schroeter (2007)</li> <li>• Centers for Disease Control National Asthma Control Program (2013)</li> <li>• Teasdale (2020)</li> </ul> <p>Videos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining success</li> <li>• Evaluation questions</li> <li>• Criteria and standards</li> </ul>	Assignment 3: Context and stakeholder analysis due Wed 10/7
Week 7 Thu 10/8	Evaluation design, part 1	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rossi, et al. (2019), pp. 115-140</li> <li>• Mertens &amp; Wilson (2019), 314-330</li> </ul> <p>Videos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause and effect in evaluation</li> <li>• Descriptive designs</li> <li>• Purposive sampling</li> </ul>	
Week 8 Thu 10/15	Evaluation design, part 2	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 6, 26</li> <li>• Jabeen (2018)</li> <li>• Gates &amp; Dyson (2017)</li> </ul> <p>Videos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experimental designs</li> <li>• Quasi-experimental designs</li> <li>• Considerations for causal designs</li> </ul>	Assignment 4: Evaluand definition due Wed 10/21
Week 9 Thu 10/22	Data collection and analysis methods, part 1	<p>Video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selecting data collection methods for evaluation</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analysis in evaluation</li> <li>• Surveys in evaluation</li> <li>• Assessments in evaluation</li> </ul> <p><i>Choose among the following readings to learn about methods that are new(er) to you</i></p> <p>Readings about document analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 13</li> </ul> <p>Readings about surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 14</li> <li>• Fowler (2009), pp. 87-113</li> <li>• Bowen &amp; Tillman (2014)</li> </ul> <p>Readings about assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nitko (n.d.)</li> <li>• Rudner &amp; Impara (n.d.)</li> </ul> <p>Readings about quantitative data analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 23</li> </ul> <p>Readings about cost analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 24</li> <li>• King (2017)</li> </ul>	
Week 10 Thu 10/29	No class: American Evaluation Association virtual conference		
Week 11 Thu 11/5	Data collection and analysis methods, part 2	<p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations in evaluation</li> <li>• Interviews in evaluation</li> <li>• Focus groups in evaluation</li> </ul> <p><i>Choose among the following readings to learn about methods that are new to you</i></p> <p>Readings about observations and site visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 16-17</li> <li>• Patton (2015), pp. 336-344, 356-357, and 364-374</li> </ul> <p>Readings about interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Chapter 19</li> <li>• Rubin &amp; Rubin (2012), pp. 131-169</li> </ul>	Assignment 5. Evaluation questions and criteria due Wed 11/11



		<p>Readings about focus groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 20</li> <li>• Hall, J. N. (2020)</li> </ul> <p>Readings about capturing success cases and stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 21</li> <li>• Brinkerhoff (2005)</li> <li>• Whitmore et al. (2006)</li> </ul> <p>Readings about qualitative data analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 22</li> </ul>	
Week 12 Thu 11/12	Evaluative conclusions	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 27</li> <li>• Davidson (2005), pp. 131-146</li> </ul> <p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The valuing process</li> <li>• Reaching evaluative conclusions</li> </ul>	
Week 13 Thu 11/19	Communication and reporting	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text, Ch 28</li> <li>• Alkin et al (2006)</li> <li>• Kauffman Foundation &amp; Evergreen Data (2017)</li> </ul> <p>Handout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montrosse-Moorhead &amp; Griffith (2017)</li> </ul> <p>Videos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation use and influence</li> <li>• Communication planning</li> <li>• Evaluation reporting</li> </ul>	Assignment 6: Evaluation design and communication due Wed 11/25
Week 14 Thu 11/26	No class: Thanksgiving holiday		
Week 15 Thu 12/3	Developing as an evaluator	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Podems (2019), pp. 278-284</li> <li>• Christie &amp; Alkin (2013), pp. 11-18</li> <li>• Mertens &amp; Wilson (2019), pp. 40-42, 52-53</li> <li>• Hopson &amp; Cram (2018)</li> </ul> <p>Handout</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources for continued learning</li> </ul> <p>Videos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation theory</li> <li>Reflective practice</li> </ul>	
Week 16 Thu 12/10	To be determined by the class		Assignment 7: Complete evaluation plan due Fri 12/11