

University of Illinois at Chicago

Department of Educational Psychology

Fall 2021 Course Syllabus

EPSY 565: Evaluation II: Theory and Practice
Thursdays, 6:00pm to 7:30pm via Zoom

Instructor Information

Instructor

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The best way to contact me is by email or posting a message to the course Blackboard site. My goal is to respond within 24 hours, Monday through Friday. During busy weeks, it may take me 48 hours to respond. Please send or post a follow up message if you don't receive a reply from me.

Office Hours

Thursdays, 5:00pm to 6:00 pm via Zoom and by appointment

I hold office hours as a space for us to get to know each other, discuss course material and assignments, provide and receive feedback, and discuss your interests and goals. I invite you to drop in to my regularly scheduled office hours or suggest a time that fits with your schedule.

Course Overview

Description

Conducting high-quality evaluation studies requires evaluators to possess the knowledge and skills to carry out evaluation activities, as well as understanding of the theoretical and conceptual basis for evaluation practice. This course addresses the relationship between theory and practice by reflecting on our (formal or informal) experiences with evaluation of educational and social interventions, critically analyzing major categories of approaches to evaluation, examining evaluation studies illustrative of each category, and identifying implications for evaluation practice. We will also explore scholarship that takes up key issues in the field such as the role of evaluation in advancing social justice, what constitutes credible evidence, and the use of evaluation by stakeholders and communities. Students will develop foundational knowledge of evaluation theory and explore the application of that theory to guide and strengthen evaluation practice.

Course Structure

This is a hybrid class that includes both synchronous (real-time) sessions and asynchronous components you will complete on your own schedule. You will have readings and recorded lectures to review before each class session. We may adjust the mix of synchronous and asynchronous activities and remote and on campus interaction as the semester unfolds.

Prerequisites

EPSY 560 Educational Program Evaluation, EPSY 594 Evaluation Principles and Methods, or consent of the instructor.

Syllabus

This syllabus has been informed by courses developed by Drs. Ayesha Boyce, Emily Gates, Jennifer Greene, Tom Schwandt, and Jean King and shaped by conversations with Drs. Cherie Avent, Dana Wanzer, and Bianca Montrosse-Moorehead. The syllabus is intended to provide an overview of what will be covered during the semester. It is a dynamic document that may be adjusted as the semester unfolds.

Learning Objectives

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

- Discuss the nature of evaluation theory and the types of conceptual, empirical, and professional knowledge that provide the basis for evaluation practice
 - Explain how evaluation theory can be applied to guide and strengthen evaluation practice
 - Compare and contrast various ways that evaluation is conceptualized and theorized, including differences in understandings about the:
 - Purpose and function of evaluation in organizations, communities, and society
 - Role and responsibility of evaluation and evaluators for advancing equity and social justice
 - Nature of evaluative evidence and what “counts” as credible evidence
 - Role and influence of values and the centrality of the valuing process in evaluation
 - Intended use of evaluation processes and findings
 - Identify commonalities, distinguishing features, and underlying assumptions of the major categories of evaluation approaches
 - Examine and specify how each major category of evaluation approaches addresses key issues, tensions, and choices that arise in evaluation practice
 - Identify and analyze current and emerging themes in evaluation theory and determine their relevance and implications for evaluation practice
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Course Materials

Textbooks

Mertens, D. M., & Wilson, A. T. (2019). *Program evaluation theory and practice: A comprehensive guide* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford.

Schwandt, T. A. (2015). *Evaluation foundations revisited: Cultivating a life of the mind for practice*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (This book is available as an e-book through the UIC library.)

Other Readings

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

Lectures

Lectures will be recorded and posted on the Blackboard course site. This will allow us to focus on discussion and small group activities during our synchronous class sessions. We may adjust this plan as the semester unfolds.

Course Requirements

Graded Assignments

As part of this course, you will contribute to a collaborative encyclopedia of evaluation theory, complete a course project and share it with the class, and lead and participate in class discussions. Each assignment is briefly described below, and full instructions and rubrics are posted on Blackboard. You will assess your own contributions to the encyclopedia of evaluation theory and class discussions.

Collaborative Encyclopedia of Evaluation Theory (45 points)

As a class, we will create an encyclopedia of evaluation theory. You will write 3 entries in the encyclopedia (on topics of your choosing), provide and receive formative feedback on entries, and revise and refine your entries. You will leave class with the full encyclopedia, as a resource to support your evaluation practice and continued learning.

Student-Led Discussion (15 points)

During most weeks of the semester, students will take turns leading a discussion of how we might apply the week's theme to evaluation practice. You will determine the structure of the discussion and facilitate conversation among the full group or by supporting small group discussions.

Course Project

Students will complete a course project that addresses a contemporary theme in evaluation theory and its relevance and application to practice. You will choose one of four options (or talk with me to propose another option):

- A. Review an issue of *New Directions for Evaluation*
- B. Review a book focused on a particular theoretical or conceptual issue in evaluation, evaluation approach, or area of evaluation practice
- C. Review a set of articles or book chapters published by a particular evaluation theorist
- D. Design an empirical study of evaluation practice

Your project will include:

Part 1. Proposal (10 points)

You will describe your proposed project, including the option you have chosen, the theme in evaluation theory you plan to address, your reason for choosing this theme, and your planned steps to complete the project.

Part 2. Paper (45 points)

You will write a paper that addresses the theme in evaluation theory you have selected. If you choose Option A, B, or C, you will prepare a critical review that draws on course materials and discussions. If you select Option D, you will outline the background for your proposed study and review relevant literature (drawing on course materials and discussions) and present your proposed study design and methods. For all of the options, you will also discuss the relevance and application of the theme to evaluation practice.

Part 3. Presentation (15 points)

You will share an overview of your project with the class, summarize key takeaways to inform evaluation practice, and lead a class discussion.

We will set aside time in our synchronous class sessions to share ideas and provide and receive feedback to support your work on the course project.

Class Participation (20 points)

We will engage in class discussion each week during our synchronous sessions.

Due Dates

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Encyclopedia Entries	9/29, 10/20, 11/3	30
Feedback on Encyclopedia Entries	11/10	10
Revisions to Encyclopedia Entries	11/24	5
Project Part 1	10/6	10
Project Part 2	12/3	45
Project Part 3	Varies	15
Discussion Leader	Varies	15
Class Participation, 8/26-10/7	10/13	10
Class Participation, 10/14-12/2	12/3	10
		150

Late Submissions

The course schedule is designed to provide structure and scaffolding for completing the course requirements, providing and receiving timely peer feedback, and maximizing your learning throughout the semester. If you are unable to submit an assignment by the due date/time, contact me at least one day in advance to let me know that the assignment is likely to be late and negotiate an extension. There is no penalty to your grade for submitting assignments after the due dates; however, I encourage you to meet the deadlines whenever possible to maximize your learning and participation in the class community. You must submit all assignments by 11:59 pm on 12/3 in order for me to include the points for those assignments when calculating your final grade.

Letter Grade Assignment

Your final grade in this course will be based on the number of points you earn out of the total number of points possible. It is not based on your rank relative to other students, and grades are assigned without limits on the proportion of each letter grade given in the course. Course grades will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	90 - 100%
B	80 - 89%
C	70 - 79%
D	60 - 69%
F	0 - 59%

Learning Environment

It is my goal that participating in this class is a welcoming and inclusive experience for all students; that students' learning needs are addressed both in and out of class; and that the diversity of identities, experiences, backgrounds, and beliefs students bring to this course are welcomed as resources and strengths. If you encounter or anticipate aspects of the instruction or design of this course that present barriers to your participation, accurate assessment, or achievement, please contact me at your earliest opportunity.

Community Agreements

We will develop a set of community agreements that will serve as our ground rules for engaging in class discussions. Our aim is to foster an environment in which all members of the class feel safe, valued, respected, and supported. I will add those agreements to this section of the syllabus.

Students Feedback

Please let me know if there are ways I can improve the effectiveness or experience of the course for you personally or for other students. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. To share feedback, I invite you to schedule a meeting with me and/or provide anonymous comments through the end-of-course student evaluation survey.

Disability Accommodations

UIC is committed to full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of university life. If you face or anticipate disability-related barriers while at UIC, please connect with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at drc.uic.edu, via email at drc@uic.edu, or call (312) 413-2183 to create a plan for reasonable accommodations. In order to receive accommodations, you will need to disclose the disability to the DRC, complete an interactive registration process with the DRC, and provide me with a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). Upon receipt of an LOA, I will gladly work with you and the DRC to implement approved accommodations.

Academic Integrity

UIC is an academic community 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. In

this community, all members including faculty, administrators, staff, and students alike share the responsibility to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and quality of academic work so that such a collegial and productive environment exists. As a student and member of the UIC community, you are expected to adhere to the [Community Standards](#) of integrity, accountability, and respect in all of your academic endeavors. Please review the [UIC Student Disciplinary Policy](#) for additional information about the process by which instances of academic misconduct are handled towards the goal of developing responsible student behavior.

Resources

Technical Support

If you have technical problems with the course Blackboard site, please contact the Learning Technology Solutions help desk at its@uic.edu, 312-413-0003, or <https://acc.uic.edu/support/>. You can learn more about using Blackboard here: https://help.blackboard.com/Filter/Student/College_or_University

College of Education Resources

The [Graduate Student Interest Groups](#) (GSIGS) is a student-designed, student-led initiative to provide opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and socialization across the College of Education. GSIGS host group meetings, professional development activities, and signature events throughout the year. The BIPOC Collective is a collective of graduate students in the College of Education who come together around care and anti-racist work. By utilizing transformative justice, community-centered pedagogies, and anti-racist practices, the BIPOC Collective seeks to work with the College to support efforts to build learning communities where both students and faculty members can work together to create change through transformative learning spaces.

Campus Resources

UIC provides a variety of resources to support students' academic success—such as the [University Library](#), [Writing Center](#), and [Cultural Centers](#)—and students' personal wellbeing, such as the [Counseling Center](#), [Campus Advocacy Network](#) (assistance related to sexual assault and domestic or dating violence), and [Pop-Up Pantry](#) (free food for students facing hardship). You can also find links to these resources on Blackboard, and a comprehensive list of resources is available here: <https://today.uic.edu/resources/current-student-resources>.

Course Schedule and UIC Deadlines

Religious Holidays

I will make every effort to avoid due dates that fall on [religious holidays](#). If you wish to observe your religious holidays, please notify me by the tenth day of the semester of the date when you will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, please notify me at least five days in advance of the date when you will be absent. I will make every reasonable effort to honor your request and not penalize you for missing class activities. If an assignment is due during your absence, you will be given an assignment equivalent to the one completed by those students in attendance. Students may appeal through campus [grievance procedures](#) for religious accommodations.

Drop Deadline

Graduate students may drop courses via [my.UIC.edu](https://my.uic.edu) through the end of the 2nd week of classes for fall and spring semesters. Graduate degree-seeking students and non-degree students assigned to a program can drop classes during weeks 3 through 10 in the fall and spring semesters with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies of their degree program. The [UIC Academic Calendar](#) outlines deadlines and information about cancelling tuition and fees and receiving a W (Withdrawn) grade on your academic record.

Incompletes

UIC provides the option of requesting a grade of Incomplete for a course when a student is unable to complete the required work by the grading deadline for reasons that are beyond your control. If a situation arises that prevents you from submitting all assignments by 11:59 pm on 12/2, you need to email me prior to that deadline to request a grade of Incomplete. We will negotiate a schedule for completing the outstanding work, and I will then submit an "I" as your final grade in this course. Once you submit the remaining assignments, I will replace the "I" with your final letter grade. An "I" must be removed by the end of one calendar year after the term in which it was received. An "I" that is not replaced by a letter grade by the deadline will remain on your record as an "I", with no credit earned. You can find additional information on the [UIC Graduate College](#) website.

Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due on Wed
Week 1 8/26	Introduction to the course	No readings	
Week 2 9/2	Practice of evaluation	Textbooks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mertens & Wilson (2019) Chapter 1 Schwandt (2015), Prologue, Chapter 1 On Blackboard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hall (2020) Wanzer (2021) 	
Week 3 9/9	Evaluation theory and its relationship with practice	Textbooks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mertens & Wilson (2019) Chapter 2 Schwandt (2015), Chapter 2 On Blackboard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shadish, Cook, & Leviton (1991), pp. 36-68 Chouinard, Boyce, Hicks, Jones, Long, Pitts, & Stockdale (2017) 	
Week 4 9/16	Purpose and role of evaluation	Textbook: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schwandt (2015), Chapter 5-6 On Blackboard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greene (2005) Neubauer & Hall (2020) Case example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cardoza Clayson, Castañeda, Sánchez, & Brindis (2002) 	
Week 5 9/23	Credible evidence in evaluation	Textbook: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schwandt (2015), Chapter 4 On Blackboard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LaFrance, Kirkhart, & Nichols (2015) Mark (2009) Weiss, Murphy-Graham, Petrosino, & Gandhi, (2008) 	Encyclopedia Entry 1 due 9/29
Week 6 9/30	No class: Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment conference		Project Part 1 due 10/6
Week 7 10/7	Values and valuing	Textbook: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schwandt (2015), Chapter 3 On Blackboard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hassell, Gullickson, Boyce, & Hannum (2020) Teasdale (2021) Case example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hall, Ahn, & Greene (2012) 	

Week 8 10/14	Post-positivist approaches to evaluation	<p>Textbook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mertens & Wilson (2019) Chapter 3 <p>On Blackboard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rossi, Lipsey, & Henry (2019), pp. 141-156 Case examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heller, Shah, Guryan, Ludwig, Mullainathan, & Pollack (2017) Bruder, Polak, Guffler, & Scheinert (2020) 	Encyclopedia Entry 2 due 10/20
Week 9 10/21	Pragmatic approaches to evaluation	<p>Textbook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mertens & Wilson (2019) Chapter 4 <p>On Blackboard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patton (2013) Stufflebeam (2000) Case examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hakkola, Allan, & Kerschner (2019) Zhang, Zeller, Griffith, Metcalf, Williams, Shea, & Misulis (2011) 	
Week 10 10/28	Constructivist approaches to evaluation	<p>Textbook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mertens & Wilson (2019) Chapter 5 <p>On Blackboard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chouinard (2013) Shulha, Whitmore, Cousins, Gilbert, & Hudib (2016) Case examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kelley, Fatupaito, & Witzel (2018) Shaw, Campbell, Hagstrom, O'Reilly, Kreiger, Cain, & Nye (2016) 	Encyclopedia Entry 3 due 11/3
Week 11 11/4	Transformative approaches to evaluation	<p>Textbook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mertens & Wilson (2019) Chapter 6 <p>On Blackboard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thomas & Campbell (2021), pp. 135-168 Case examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarke, Douglas, House, Hudgins, Campos, & Vaughn (2021) Dhaliwal, Casey, Aceves-Iñiguez, & Dean-Coffey (2020) Thomas & Parsons (2017) 	Feedback on Encyclopedia Entries due 11/10
Week 12 11/11	Contemporary issues in evaluation theory: Student presentations		
Week 13 11/18	Contemporary issues in evaluation theory: Student presentations		Revisions to Encyclopedia Entries due 11/24

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Week 14 11/25	No class	
Week 15 12/2	Contemporary issues in evaluation theory: Student presentations	Project Part 2 due Fri 12/3

