INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to “assessment!” This course introduces you to concepts and methods for conducting assessments, evaluating programs, and using research skills to improve student affairs practice.

The heart of this course is the practical experience in assessment, evaluation, and research you will obtain through your participation in and completion of a year-long assessment project. In order to complete this project, we will use readings (in textbooks and articles), and course assignments to develop and hone your research and assessment skills. Four projects will be selected from four offices in the Division of Student Affairs. Your assessment group (consisting of 4 or 5 students in your class) will serve as “project consultants” to one of these offices. The offices will also designate staff member(s) to serve as “project manager(s).” Project managers will meet with consultant groups.

This course will be conducted in a manner that encourages active and collaborative learning. We will also use the knowledge and expertise you are gaining in your assessment teams as well as your past knowledge and expertise as a base for many discussions and assignments. We will approach our work together with the understanding that we are all teachers and all learners all the time.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

EDLR 5102 is the first of two courses designed to introduce the basic principles of assessment, evaluation, and research in student affairs practice. These are critical skills for the student affairs professional. There are three essential hallmarks of a professional:

1. **personal integrity** – professionals understand that their word represents a promise to keep the commitments they make;
2. **task accountability** – the output of professionals is determined by completion of important tasks which is independent of the time or schedules necessary to complete them;
3. **expertise** – professionals can readily access and apply specialized knowledge to deal effectively with real-life problems.

**Knowledge:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of principles of assessment and evaluation, including how to conduct assessments in an ethical and professional manner. Students will learn a variety of research methods and show proficiency in the methods used for their particular assessment project; mixed methods will be used for each project. Students will also learn how to work with student affairs professionals and student affairs offices as members of a consulting group in order to conduct an assessment project that provides data for evaluative purposes.

**Skills:** Students will improve writing skills by using a variety of professional writing styles throughout the semester. Students will improve research skills including library research skills, research design skills, skills in using quantitative and qualitative research methods, and skills required to submit research according to IRB protocol and receive IRB approval for conducting research. Students will demonstrate scholarly skills, including effective oral presentations and proper use of APA (6th Edition) style for written work. Students will also demonstrate minimum technological proficiencies, including: professional communication; sending / receiving document attachments via electronic e-mail; searching, retrieving, and reading information from World Wide Web sites, including reference databases; and proficient use of Power Point or similar technologies.

**Attitudes:** Students will appreciate the importance of assessment for both accountability and quality improvements. Assessment and evaluation can and should be part of the planning process for educational interventions, programs, and services in student affairs. In addition, data driven decision-making will be a key element in the evaluation process. Finally, students will develop an appreciation for a variety of research methods and the importance of choosing the right methods to answer assessment questions and provide quality data for evaluative purposes.
COURSE TEXTS

Required:


Strongly suggested supporting material:


COURSE REQUIREMENTS / POLICIES

Attendance

It is expected that students will attend all class sessions and actively participate in discussions and activities. There are no excused or unexcused absences in this class. If you miss class you are responsible for arranging with a classmate to obtain any materials. If you miss class on a day when you are to present, you will receive a 0 for the assignment that day. And if there is something due on the day you miss class, you must turn in the assignment that day. The exception to this rule is absence for religious reasons; presentations and due dates will be adjusted if students are absent for religious reasons (see below).

Participation

Students are expected to be prepared for class and to participate actively in all class activities. Participation in small and large group dialogues is an essential part of the learning process. While it is recognized that there may be some students who are less comfortable communicating in a group setting, the participation of all students is necessary for the growth and development of the group. All voices are valuable and integral to the learning process.

Laptops / Cell phones

Laptops and cell phones are not allowed to be out and in use in class (except during breaks, and by presenters during presentations). If you have a documented disability for which you must use a laptop, please let me know.

Readings:

All assigned readings should be completed prior to the class session for which they are assigned. Each student is responsible to the instructor and the other members of the class to be knowledgeable of major themes, concepts, and ideas presented in the reading. Your questions and comments will be considered in the context of the class discussions.

Grading:

The purpose of the assignments in this class is for students to demonstrate competence on the learning outcomes. Components of assignments will be evaluated using a scale: “competent”, “improvement needed” and “area of concern”.

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All students must complete all “required” assignments and be competent on the specific learning outcomes for each individual assignment. Students who complete the required assignments competently will earn a B. No one is required to do more than these assignments, and no judgment will be passed on students who choose to earn a B.

In order to earn a B+, A- or A, students will complete additional assignments (described above) and turn them in on the designated dates. The focus of these assignments is not on the grades, but on the completion of the components (i.e. the effort) of the students. Having said that, students must demonstrate competency on these additional assignments (i.e. the same feedback standards will be utilized).

**GROUP ASSIGNMENTS**

**Annotated bibliography:** Your group will create an APA annotated bibliography (8 different sources from each person for your assessment project topic). This will serve to assist your assessment project literature review.

**Literature Review:** Your group will conduct a thorough review of the literature in order to inform your group assessment project. The literature review must be submitted in correct APA format.

**Research Design and IRB Application:** Your assessment group, in conjunction with your project manager, will complete a thorough, sound, and ethical research design based on the question(s) you have been asked to assess. You will also complete an application for IRB approval based on your research design for your assessment project.

**NOTE:** In order for the consultation project to be successful, you are required to meet as a group with your project manager and your instructor at least twice over the course of the semester.

**INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS**

**RefWorks:** You will create an account in RefWorks and use this software for your work in this class.

**Annotated bibliographies:**
- You will create an APA annotated bibliography (8 sources-different types) for a higher education/student affairs topic of interest to you.
- To earn a B+: Students will create an annotated bibliography on a different higher education/student affairs topic (8 sources)

**Abstracts:**
- You will write APA abstracts for two empirical assessment/research articles of interest to you.
- Option 1 for earning an A-: two additional abstracts in addition to completing the B+ assignment

**Research article analysis**
- You will analyze an empirical research article of interest to you
- Option 2 for earning an A-: Students will analyze an additional article (in addition to completing the B+ assignment).

**In order to earn an A, students will**
- complete the B+ assignment (additional annotated bibliography)
- Complete both A- options
  - Additional two abstracts
  - additional research/assessment article analysis

**CITI Training:** You will complete CITI training through UConn’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). See the Training Requirements tab at: [www.irb.uconn.edu](http://www.irb.uconn.edu). You need to complete the Basic Course / Human Subjects Research--Social---Behavioral---Educational (SBE) Modules. Upon completion of all modules, print a copy of the grade book and bring to class.

**Campus Labs Baseline training workshops:** You will complete a minimum of two Baseline webinars. You must complete the “How to Use Baseline: An Introduction” webinar; you may choose any of the other webinars available during fall 2013 for your second webinar. Upon completion of the webinars, you will receive an email thanking you for your participation and inviting you to take a survey. Please print this email as proof of completion of this assignment.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Student behavior shall be consistent with conduct delineated in the Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code, Appendix B: Academic Integrity in Graduate Education and Research [Adopted November 1998] @ http://www.community.uconn.edu/student_code.html. Students are responsible for understanding: Forms of Academic and Scholarly Misconduct; Academic Misconduct within a Particular Course; Allegations of Academic Misconduct; and the section on the Graduate Hearing Committee.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Sec. 10a-50. (Formerly Sec. 10-334g). Absence of students due to religious beliefs. No person shall be expelled from or refused admission as a student to an institution of higher education for the reason that he is unable, because the tenets of his religion forbid secular activity on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirements on such particular day or days or at such time of day. Any student in an institution of higher education who is unable, because of such reason, to attend classes on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day shall be excused from any examination or any study or work assignments on such particular day or days or at such particular time of day. It shall be the responsibility of the faculty and of the administrative officials of each institution of higher education to make available to each student who is absent from school because of such reason an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirements which he has missed because of such absence on any particular day or days or at any particular time of day. No special fees of any kind shall be charged to the student for making available to such student such equivalent opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of this section. For the purposes of this section, "institution of higher education" shall mean any of the schools comprising the state system of higher education, as defined in section 10a-1. (P.A. 75-367, S. 1.)

According to UConn University Senate guidelines, “Students anticipating such a conflict should inform their instructor in writing within the first three weeks of the semester, and prior to the anticipated absence, and should take the initiative to work out with the instructor a schedule for making up missed work.” For conflicts with final examinations, students should, as usual, contact the Office of Student Services and Advocacy (formerly the Dean of Students Office).

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities. Qualified individuals who require reasonable accommodations are invited to make their needs and preferences known as soon as possible. Please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities if you feel you may be qualified.