

Qualitative Inquiry Program

Course title: **QUAL 8515, 14-547, Qualitative Evaluation**
Instructor: **Melissa Freeman**
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Office Hours: **By appointment**

Class Times: **Tuesdays 5 – 7:45 pm**
Location: **River's Crossing 63**
Spring 2009: **January 13 – April 28, 2009**
Credits: **3.0**

*"To depend on great thinkers, authorities, and experts is, it seems to me, a violation of the spirit of democracy. Democracy rests on the idea that, except for technical details for which experts may be useful, the important decisions of society are within the capability of ordinary citizens. Not only **can** ordinary people make decisions about these issues, but they **ought** to, because citizens understand their own interests more clearly than any experts."*

(Howard Zinn, 1990, p. 6; emphasis in original)

Course Description

Examination of the concepts and methods employed in the negotiation, design, implementation, and report of qualitative program evaluations. Integration of theory and practice through the conduct of an evaluation study in a supervised setting.

Required Texts (Available UGA Campus Bookstore)

Kushner, Saville I. (2000). *Personalizing evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN 0-7619-6362-6

Stake, Robert E. (2004). *Standards-based & responsive evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN 0-7619-2665-8

Additional Readings

All additional readings are available at the Reserve Desk at the Main Library, and all have been scanned and are available electronically as PDF files. To access the documents, go to the Course Reserve module in GIL (<http://gil.uga.edu>). The password access is: **eval**

Nature of this Course

Qualitative evaluation is conducted within specific social contexts; each involving its own social, political, cultural, moral, and economic features, which in turn shape the evaluation. Students will examine first-hand this relationship by engaging in the planning, conducting, analyzing, and reporting of an evaluation of a local educational program (such as a museum or after-school program). Through this project and the class readings, students will explore how differing evaluation models and conceptions of evaluation shape the relationship the evaluator establishes with stakeholder groups, the methods employed for data collection, the level of stakeholder inclusion in the design and implementation of the evaluation, and strategies for analysis and reporting. Some class time will be devoted to the evaluation project but students will be expected to devote time outside of class to this work.

Objectives

Students taking this course will:

- Better understand the historical development of qualitative evaluation and its role in educational and social programming
- Become familiar with major approaches in qualitative evaluation
- Be able to design and carry out a qualitative evaluation
- Understand the logic of evaluative thinking
- Be able to identify and understand the kinds of evaluation questions addressed by qualitative approaches

University of Georgia Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A culture of Honesty.” All students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Learning to appropriately quote and paraphrase and to cite and attribute sources is a skill that is key to honest and creative scholarship. All students should review the guidelines at the website <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. If you have questions about what would be considered violations of the standards, please raise them in class or ask me.

Need for Editorial Assistance

This course requires substantial writing. Students who need editorial assistance are encouraged to make such arrangements. A good place to start is the UGA Writing Center: <http://www.english.uga.edu/~writingcenter/home.html>.

Accommodations for Qualified Individuals with Disabilities

It is the policy of The University of Georgia to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability and desire accommodations to complete your course requirements, please notify the course instructor as soon as possible to discuss your request.

Syllabus Changes

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Requirements and Grading

1. I expect regular and punctual attendance and will take excessive absences (missing more than 2 classes) into account in the final course grade. If you have a conflict with a session due to a prior commitment, please email or see me privately (so as not to use our limited class time with individual scheduling concerns).
2. Your participation is required in this class and is the determining component of your final grade. Failure to significantly contribute to the final evaluation report will be taken into account in the final course grade.
3. All students are required to use the WebCT services that support this course. Some course material will be available only on the course WebCT site. We will use WebCT to post messages, ask questions, share data collected as well as preliminary analytic reflections, and for sharing resources on specific topics. Assignments are to be submitted on the WebCT site. For access go to: <http://www.uga.edu/> click on "My WebCT," then log in to this course using your UGA MyID.
4. All students are required to complete the following written assignments with the final grade based on the distribution indicated below:

Project	%	Due Date
a) Evaluation Project	90	
Scope of Work		February 3
Background and Overview of Program		Ongoing
Relevant Literature Review		Ongoing
Evaluation Design and Methods		Ongoing
Observations/Interviews/Focus Group		Ongoing
Analysis		Ongoing
Final Report		May 5
b) Reader Leader	10	TBD
Total:	100	

Grading

Grading follows the University of Georgia policy:

100 – 93 = A	79 – 77 = C+
92 – 90 = A-	76 – 73 = C
89 – 87 = B+	72 – 70 = C-
86 – 83 = B	69 – 60 = D
82 – 80 = B-	59 – 0 = F

Description of Assignments

1. Evaluation Project

Working as a group, you will design and conduct an evaluation study. Responsibilities for this project will be worked out collaboratively in class.

(a) Report Sections

1. Executive Summary
2. Background and Overview of Program
3. Relevant Literature Review
4. Evaluation Design and Methods
5. Results
6. Discussion and Recommendations

(b) Observations and Interviews

Everyone will be responsible for conducting several observations (typed up and expanded) and at least one interview or focus group (fully transcribed).

(c) Final Report

Writing up results and reporting back to the program.

2. Reader Leader

In order to maintain the collaborative nature of this course, everyone will be responsible once or twice (depending on enrollment) to lead a section of the week's readings. Essentially what this involves is for the leader to bring a brief **written** summary of the key points of the article or chapter read (no more than one-page), a brief response to present **orally**, and a **question** for the class to consider.

Schedule of Class Meetings

Date	Topic	Readings Due	Evaluation Activities	Class Activities and/or Assignments Due
PART I: Designing and Conducting a Qualitative Evaluation				
1. 1/13	Introduction to Course		AEA's Guiding Principles for Evaluators & The Program Evaluation Standards	Handouts from Mathison (2005) & The American Evaluation Association
2. 1/20	Characteristics of Qualitative Program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lapan (2004) • Stake (2004) Chs. 1 & 2 (pp. ix-53) 	Visit the program and talk to several stakeholders about what they think would be important to know about the program?	What is the program, its history and function? Who are its stakeholders?
3. 1/27	Responsive and Person-Centered Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stake Ch. 4 (pp. 86-107) • Kushner (2000) Chs. 1-3 (pp.ix-74) 	Developing Preliminary Evaluation Questions and a Scope of Work	Reader Leaders:
4. 2/3	Ethnographic Methods in Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camino (1997) • Hopson (2002) • Stake Illustrative Example of Eval Proposal on WebCT 	Participant Observation	Reader Leaders: From now till April post your observation notes and transcripts on WebCT as you complete them.
5. 2/10	Data Gathering: Participant Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stake Ch. 5 • Dorr-Bremme (1985) 	Participant Observation	

6. 2/17	Cultural Competence and Attending to Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stake Ch. 7 • Hall & Hood (2005) • Sengupta et al., (2004) 	Participant Observation and Planning for Interviewing	Reader Leaders:
7. 2/24	Evaluator Roles and Subjectivities	No Readings: Catch up on your fieldnotes	Interviews or Focus Groups	Who are you in relation to the program? How has who you are affected your perceptions of the program and your interactions with program participants? What thoughts do you have about yourself as an evaluator and team member as a result of this experience so far?
8. 3/3	Data Gathering: Interviews and Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kushner chs. 4, 5, & 6 	Interviews or Focus Groups	Reader Leaders:
9. 3/10	No Class		Spring Break	
PART II: Analyzing, Synthesizing, Writing the Report				
10. 3/17	Analyzing Qualitative Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stake Chs. 6 & 8 • Thomas (2006) 	Preliminary Analysis	Transcribe
11. 3/24	Synthesizing Multiple Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kushner Chs. 7 & 8 	Ongoing Analysis	Reader Leaders:
12. 3/31	Issues of Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abma (1997) • Schwandt (1997) • Rallis & Rossman (2001) 	Interpretation and Representation	Reader Leaders:

13. 4/7	Writing the Report	Brief Literature Review	Situating the findings in the literature	
14. 4/14	NO face-2-face Class	WebCT report updates	Writing the Report	
15. 4/21	Reporting Results	No Readings: Write	Writing the Report	
16. 4/28	Last Class	Debriefing	Writing the Report	Final Evaluation Report DUE May 5

Course Readings

- Abma, Tineke A. (1997). Sharing power, facing ambiguity. In L. Mabry (Ed.), *Evaluation and the postmodern dilemma. Advances in Program Evaluation*, 3, 105-119. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Camino, Linda A. (1997). What can anthropologists offer ethnographic program evaluation? *National Association for the Practice of Anthropology Bulletin*, 17(1), 41-57.
- Dorr-Bremme, Donald W. (1985). Ethnographic evaluation: A theory and method. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 7(1), 65-83.
- Hall, Melvin & Hood, Denice Ward (2005). Persuasive language, responsive design: A framework for interculturally responsive evaluation. In S. Hood, R. Hopson, & H. Frierson (Eds.), *The role of culture and cultural context: A mandate for inclusion, the discovery of truth, and understanding in evaluative theory and practice* (pp. 41-60). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
- Hopson, Rodney K. (2002). Making (more) room at the evaluation table for ethnography: Contributions to the responsive constructivist generation. In K. E. Ryan & T. A. Schwandt (Eds.), *Exploring evaluator role and identity* (pp. 37-56). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
- Lapan, Stephen D. (2004). Evaluation studies. In K. deMarrais and S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social studies* (pp. 235-248). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rallis, Sharon F. and Rossman, Gretchen B. (2001). Communicating quality and qualities: The role of the evaluator as critical friend. In A.P. Benson, D. M. Hinn, & C. Lloyd (Eds.) (2001), *Visions of quality: How evaluators define, understand and represent program quality. Advances in Program Evaluation*, V. 7, (pp. 107-120). JAI Press.
- Schwandt, Thomas A. (1997). Whose interests are being served? Program evaluation as a conceptual practice of power. In L. Mabry (Ed.), *Evaluation and the postmodern dilemma. Advances in Program Evaluation*, 3, 89-104. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- SenGupta, Saumitra, Hopson, Rodney, & Thompson-Robinson, Melva (2004). Cultural competence in evaluation: An overview. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 102, 5-19.
- Thomas, David R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2), 237-246.