

The University of Georgia
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
RLST 4900: Research and Evaluation
Spring, 2004

Instructor: Stephen Maynard

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Office Hours: 2:30-3:30 PM Tuesday & Thursday (Also By Appointment)

Class: Tuesday & Thursday 3:30 – 4:45 PM; Ramsey Center Room 203

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION: (from Undergraduate Bulletin) The nature and value of research in leisure services. Understanding and using research, including needs assessment and program evaluation, in management, planning, and administration of leisure facilities and programs. Prerequisite: RLST 2800 and RLST 2800L

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course provides an overview of the processes of research and evaluation as encountered in leisure services. *Why* learn about research and evaluation? Because one factor that distinguishes advanced administrators from entry-level positions is the ability to effectively collect and synthesize information in a variety of ways and make decisions or generalizations based on that information. In fact, it is now expected that an administrator provide "factual" evidence to support programming or planning decisions and be able to document outcomes in order to receive continued funding. The same logic that underlies theoretical research guides the collection and assessment of information for planning and evaluation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course addresses NRPA accreditation standards 8.17, 8.21 - 8.28, 8.35 and 8.36.

By the end of the course a student should be able to:

1. Understand the basic terminology and concepts that are used in research and evaluation;
2. Understand the logical processes behind data collection and be able to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research designs;
3. Understand processes for outcome assessment and general evaluation of leisure services, including utilization of data analysis software programs.
4. Understand and appreciate the role of research in leisure service administration including the evaluation of programs and personnel, and in long term planning.

REQUIRED READINGS

Measuring program outcomes: A practical approach. (1996). United Way of America, Item #0989.

Henderson, K. & Bialeschki, M. D. (2001). Evaluating Leisure Services: Making enlightened decisions (second edition). Venture Publ.

Classroom Philosophy

Students in this class are juniors or seniors in Recreation and Leisure Studies. Since it is a 4000 level class, expectations of students' work outside of class and contributions and efforts in class will be high. While you are viewed as professionals-in-training who will move off into various careers, you are also here to have a life changing experience. Thus, a combination of instruction geared toward job preparation and education conducive to the acquisition of critical thinking skills will be the foundation of this class. As in all RLST classes, it is expected that students will develop and demonstrate professionalism including active involvement in class activities, respect for other students, and a commitment to do your best. A lot of learning goes on in a classroom beyond mastery of the subject matter. It is important to learn how to ask questions when you need further explanation, how to listen to other students so you understand their points of view, how to carry your load in group projects, and how to be respectful and responsible as a member of this class.

Although students and instructors have different responsibilities and expectations, this class may be viewed as a journey taken together by both parties and leading to the same destination. If students are confused about class material or expectations they should ask for clarification. Respectful communication is essential if we are to arrive at the desired destination.

We will try to engage in hands-on activities during class. That means material in the assigned readings will *not* necessarily be covered in lecture. You are expected to study that material before class so you can apply your understanding during class activities.

Classroom Expectations

Students should come to class on time and be prepared for the day's activities. Daily attendance will be taken during the first 10 minutes of class. I reserve the right to withdraw students with excessive, unexcused absences.

Excused absences include religious holidays, field trips in other classes, and required attendance at other university functions. Medical absences can be excused after-the-fact with a note from the Health Center. The instructor should be informed of planned excused absences at least two days prior to the absence. Unexcused absences include any other reason for not being in class. Students are allowed three unexcused absences, after which they will lose two percentage points from their final grade per missed class.

Assignments

Assignments are described on an attached page. Each assignment is due at the *beginning* of class on the scheduled date. Late assignments (Late = turned in after I have collected them) will be reduced 10% of total points for each day past the deadline (for example, an assignment due at

Tuesday's class which is turned in at the beginning of Thursday's class will lose 20%). Unless otherwise instructed, assignments should be typed following APA guidelines (12 point font, 1" margins, double spaced, stapled, etc.). Poor spelling and grammar may present serious obstacles for your readers, and will be reflected in your final grade.

Exams

Material from assigned readings and classroom presentations will be covered in three exams. Since your understanding of that material will also be evident in the content and quality of the assigned projects, exams are only a portion of the points that determine your grade in this class.

<u>Grading</u>		<u>Total</u>	
Article critique	20 points	225 - 250	= A
		200 - 224	= B
Proposal	50 points	175 - 199	= C
Critique of proposal	15 points	150 - 174	= D
SPSS Lab Work	25 points	149 or less	= F
Exam 1	40 points		
Exam 2	40 points		
Exam 3	40 points		
<u>Misc. assignments</u>	<u>20 points</u>		
Total	250 points		