

**RLST 4900-- Research and Evaluation  
Spring 2003**

3:30-4:45 Tues, Thurs  
203-204 Ramsey

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**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 meets NRPA accreditation standards 8.20, 8.23, and 8.25. 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. Develop techniques for evaluating leisure programs and services;
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.

Other materials will be made available online at the class webpage. Go to [www.coe.uga.edu/~dsamdahl/4900\\_course\\_menu.html](http://www.coe.uga.edu/~dsamdahl/4900_course_menu.html)

## Classroom Philosophy

Students in this class are juniors or seniors in Recreation and Leisure Studies. Essentially, you are professionals-in-training who will move off into careers and carry the reputation of UGA with you. In 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 good citizen of this class.

The instructor's role is similar to that of a supervisor on a job: Though we have different roles we all are working towards the same goal. If an employee doesn't understand what is expected of her, she should ask questions. Likewise, if a student is confused about class material or expectations she should ask for clarification. Respectful communication is essential if we are to pull together to get the job done. And, like a good working environment, if we do it right we can have fun along the way.

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. Regularly scheduled quizzes on the assigned readings will help you stay current with that material.

## Classroom Expectations

Just like at a job, regular attendance is expected. 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.

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 must be informed of planned excused absences two days prior to the absence. Unexcused absences include any other reason for not being in class. Students are allowed two unexcused absences, after which they will lose 5 points 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 will be reduced 10% of total points for each day past the deadline. Unless otherwise instructed, assignments should be typed following APA guidelines (12 point font, 1" margins, etc.). Grammar and composition are important for essays and visual presentation is important for other work. The instructor does *not* carry a stapler for your convenience; staple your papers together before coming to class.

## Exams

Material from assigned readings and classroom presentations will be covered in regular, short quizzes. 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.

## GRADING

Points are distributed throughout the term and across all categories of activities (including quizzes, in-class activities, assignments) as shown below:

Quizzes	145 points		Assignments:		
In-class activities	90 points		Questionnaire	40 points	
Assignments	145 points	==>	Group project	40 points	
<u>Participation</u>	<u>20 points</u>		Data entry/analysis	25 points	
			Evaluation proposal	20 points	
TOTAL	400 points		Reflection paper	20 points	

Points will not be taken away for unexcused absences except on the dates noted. However, students who miss class also miss any points that came from class activities on that day. For students with an acceptable excused absence (religious holidays, sickness, etc.) the instructor will assign a comparable activity for the points missed in class.

Papers are due at the beginning of class on the assigned day. Papers received after the beginning of class are graded down 10% per day.

In general, grades reflect the following

90% or better	A	Strong, accurate understanding of material; evidence of independent thinking; good grammar and composition; full discussion of important issues
80-89%	B	Accurate understanding and some evidence of application or independent thinking but doesn't go far beyond the book; discussions might be good but not go deep enough; composition might show some weakness
70-79%	C	Able to repeat back what was in book and lecture; technically correct or with a few errors but not demonstrating confidence in or application of material; correct but superficial discussions
60-69%	D	Demonstrates some understanding but also errors; in general lacks evidence of complete understanding of the material; discussions do not adequately address all necessary issues
59% or less	F	Little evidence of understanding; many errors; incomplete discussion or description