

EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY
PROGRAMME EVALUATION THROUGH QUALITATIVE METHODS

INSTRUCTORS - this course will be team taught by:

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TEXT

Primary text:

Patton, Michael Quinn; *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods, 3rd Edition*; Sage Publications, 2002

Secondary text:

Robson, Colin; *Real World Research, 3rd Edition*; Wiley Publications; 2011

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to help students explore the theory and practice of program evaluation, especially if interested in working in social service, business development, mission-related programs or projects, and local or international NGOs. The course will review the current range of thinking on the philosophies, purpose, and structure of program evaluation, with an emphasis on how to use qualitative methods in evaluations. Students will gain hands-on experience in how to design an evaluation, how to determine the appropriate methods and collect data, and an analysis of on-going program evaluation and evaluation reports.

Sociological and anthropological approaches will provide the theoretical and philosophical background for our work, but the focus will be on practical applications of qualitative methodology in evaluation. Our focus will be interdisciplinary in that we will draw on experiences from a number of areas as examples of qualitative research. Students will form teams to work on an actual evaluation exercises (case studies), which will help different organizations i.e. World Vision, with their field work.

The course format will be participatory and experiential, using alternative forms of presentation. The work schedule is rather intense, but the nature of the work will change, adapt and/or self-correct to fit in with the practical aspect of the evaluation exercises we will undertake. There will be a significant amount of group work, therefore each participant is advised to weigh that in relation to personal obligations, distance from campus, ease of gathering with other students and individual willingness to participate in a work team.

The main objectives of the course are:

- Students have a general understanding of the philosophy, methods and contemporary issues in qualitative research & evaluation;
- Students are acquainted with various types of evaluation that can be useful in almost any type of program from social services, education, or activism, but with a primary focus on interview-based methods;
- Students equipped (knowledge, skills, tools, practice) to design and implement evaluation exercises using a variety of qualitative methods of data collection and analysis;

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to complete the following assignments in addition to activities performed in class. However, given the dynamic nature of the class and our involvement in actual evaluations/research the following may need to be altered after consultation with the third parties involved. There are four types of assignments that will comprise part of the overall grade: Class participation, Analytic/Reflective essays, A Final Project and an Audit Trail (journaling).

CLASS PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

This course is intended to be hands-on and group-oriented, as such, student participation is crucial for the

success of the project. Consequently the success of the learning experience depends on active student participation. Up to 80 points will be awarded for active participation and discussion. Participation is graded for each class. It is the responsibility of the absent student to designate a fellow student to obtain any class notes, announcements, or schedule changes.

Students will be expected to attend class having read and analyzed the main materials, and contribute to class discussions. Participation will be judged on the quality and contribution of the comments to the overall class discussion. Class discussions should involve an exchange of informed ideas among students and not just the instructor. You are expected to listen to the comments of others, responding with supporting and/or challenging ideas.

Especially useful class contributions usually involve one of the following:

- Application of key concepts from the readings in a clear and insightful ways
- Bringing in ideas and examples from own experience that illustrate and/or question key concepts from the readings
- Significantly expanding on or challenging another student's analysis
- Identifying parallels (or apparent contradictions) across readings
- Make contributions to the class over the course of the semester e.g. finding and summarizing an article about a class-related topic; finding an appropriate video for class (with a brief explanation of why it is important).
- Other contributions are welcome and encouraged.

ANALYTIC/REFLECTIVE ESSAYS

The course will offer the opportunity to students to analyze a scenario, a document, speaker, or oneself. These reflective essays will provide the student with the opportunity to work the ideas, concepts, and readings covered in class through analysis and reflection. Analytic essays will be short (less than 500 words) but serve as an important component of critical reflection and thinking. The essays are due one week after they have been assigned and can be submitted via e-mail. The turn-around will be one week.

EVALUATION PROJECT(S)

The course is intended to be practical and offer opportunities to work as a group on actual evaluation projects. Students will be divided into small groups and their work will help an International Organization with current on-going evaluations. The final project will be “Designing an Evaluation Terms of Reference” for a project / programme. However before submitting the final project the groups will be given the opportunity to (a) Review Evaluation Designs & Reports produced by few field programmes around the world to define their worth and gaps; and (b) Review the Evaluation Framework (system, structure) of few organizations and come up with recommendations (if any).

Few guest speakers will be invited to share with the class their experiences with (a) designing evaluations, (b) conducting evaluations and (c) working under the current M&E frameworks of their organizations. Engaging with practitioners around the world and being involved in reviewing current Evaluations and Evaluation practices will provide students with a reality lens to the world of evaluations and help them with their final project –the design of an evaluation.

Final Project: Designing an Evaluation

The groups will first be given the opportunity to review few samples of evaluation design and then given the opportunity to design the evaluation for an on-going project / programme, using the qualitative methods covered in class (i.e. interview, observation, document analysis). Teams will be responsible to define the evaluation purpose and the conceptual framework, determine the methods and the sampling strategy. The final report will be shared with the organization / field programme for them to consider its actual use. Students and the organization / field programme may consider follow-up on the implementation of the Evaluation Design beyond this class depending on time-constraints and willingness from both parties.

There will be a mixture of individual, paired, and group work assignments to be completed throughout

the class as incremental steps to completing the overall evaluation design. However, the only graded element will be the final report (including appendices containing instruments / tools designed, management plan –timeframe, staff, budget, etc.). This will be a group grade and will comprise the bulk of the course grade. There will be high expectations that the final evaluation design be consistent with the standards of a professional, contracted researcher. Separate handouts will contain descriptions of the expectations for the format of the final report.

PEER REVIEW

Group projects often struggle with the issue of uneven contributions to the final product. To help reward those whose efforts are exemplary in the group work, one portion of the final grade will be based on the peer review.

AUDIT TRAIL

Throughout the project, each student will keep their own audit trail. This is a qualitative validation device that essentially consists of a personal journal of reflections, impressions, observations, frustrations and insights that the evaluator experiences over the course of the project. In this course the audit trail will be related to the students interaction with the final project (Designing an Evaluation Terms of Reference) and how the other pieces of information, reading materials, class and group work affect him/her. The purpose of the audit trail is to provide transparency to the process by allowing others to “see into the mind” of the evaluator. Students will start journaling after the first class. There are no specific length or format requirements. Entries will be kept at least on a weekly basis, but main points will be shared in the following class. The sharing will demonstrate thoughtful reflection worthy of a “reflective practitioner.” Students will find the entries useful as the work is summarized for the final project.

ASSESSMENT

Requirements Details	Unit	Points	Total	Weight
Class Participation*	8	10	80	16%
Audit Trail	8	5	40	8%
Essay	4	25	100	20%
Evaluation Project(s)	1	230	230	46%
Peer Review	1	50	50	10%
			500	100%

Note: class attendance is not mandatory however absence in class will be considered as non-participation.

In general, students are expected to follow the guidelines for the various the assignments and prior to turning in your work to check deviations from the guidelines with the instructor. In evaluating the student’s work, quality is more important than quantity, emphasizing creativity, clear and engaging expression of ideas, sensitivity to subjects and the larger community.

Grades will be based on an accumulation of numerical points that will be converted to a letter grade with plus or minus at the end of the course. An “A” grade is reserved for truly exceptional work. Most of us do not function at that level without significant effort and attention to detail. The scale may be altered for special reasons and points deducted for missed deadlines.

Letter grades will be assigned according to the grade scale below (based on the possible 500 points).

Date	Main learning areas	Topics / Material to cover	Method of Delivery	Requirements & Assignments
Week # 1 Sept. 5	Conceptual Frameworks & Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intro, Expectations, Overview <p>Material to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Issues in Evaluation (Patton 1, 2) ▪ Theoretical Background: Philosophical & Theoretical (Patton 3, 4) ▪ Approaches to Social Research (Robson 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive exercises ▪ Lecture with Q&A ▪ TED videos 	<p>Class Participation Audit Trail</p> <p>*Class / Session Evaluation</p>
Week # 2 Sept. 19	Conceptual Frameworks & Theory	<p>Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designing Evaluations <p>Material to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designing Qualitative Studies (Patton 5) ▪ Additional reading (optional): General Design Issues (Robson 4 –pg. 78-80; 5, 6) <p>Additional learning from a practitioner’s experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender Integration and Programme Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive exercises ▪ Lecture with Q&A ▪ Speaker 	<p>Class Participation Audit Trail Reflective Essay 1 <i>(Example of essay topic “How do different programme theories / worldviews on a social problem impact the design of the evaluation and actual measurement? Use an example.”)</i></p> <p>*Class / Session Evaluation</p>
Week # 3 Oct. 3	Evaluation Exercise / Project	<p>Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fieldwork & Observation <p>Material to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fieldwork Strategies & Observation Methods (Patton 6) ▪ Additional reading (optional): Observational Methods (Robson 13) <p>Additional learning from a practitioner’s experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to the “incarnational living” promoted in the new generation of programmes in World Vision [(a) links to the method of observation and fieldwork variations; (b) role of this staff in M&E] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive exercises (group work) ▪ Lecture with Q&A ▪ Speaker 	<p>Class Participation Audit Trail Reflective Essay 2 <i>(Example of essay topic “impartiality of fieldwork –a myth or a reality? What are your views and supporting arguments?.” OR “Sociology vs. anthropology –a comparative perspective. How does viewing the world through one or the other lens affect the methods / tools that we choose? Provide one comparable example / issue through out the essay)</i></p> <p>*Class / Session Evaluation</p>
Week # 4 Oct. 17	Evaluation Exercise / Project	<p>Topic: Qualitative Methods and data collection tools</p> <p>Material to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviewing (Patton 7) ▪ Additional reading (optional): Interviews and Focus Groups (Robson 11) <p>Additional learning from a practitioner’s experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of mixing methods in an evaluation. The endless debate of chicken and egg! Which method helps which first - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive exercises (group work) ▪ Lecture with Q&A ▪ Speakers (at least two speakers presenting their preferences and experiences) 	<p>Class Participation Audit Trail Reflective Essay 3 <i>(Example of essay topic “Taking into consideration the speakers perspectives on the merits of qualitative and quantitative methods, your own experience, preference and literature, what would be your current stand on the “chicken and the egg” debate on which methods help which first and better?)</i></p>

		qualitative or quantitative?		*Class / Session Evaluation
Week # 5 Oct. 31	Practical Implications	<p>Current trends and issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ USAID Policy on Evaluation ▪ Meta-Evaluations (General overview on the method and World Vision's practice with it) ▪ Peacebuilding programming tools and their interaction with other programming DME tools (overview of "Making Sense of Turbulence Contexts (MSTC)"; "Local Capacities for Peace (LCP)" etc.) <p><i>*Class will be held at World Vision offices in D.C. from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive exercises (group work) ▪ Lecture with Q&A ▪ Speakers (<i>four speakers - two for the first topic to present perspectives from someone that works with USAID grants and another that works with non-governmental funding sources; one speaker on Meta-analysis and one speaker on Peacebuilding tools and their interface with other DME tools.</i>) 	<p>Class Participation Audit Trail Reflective Essay 4 <i>(Example of essay topic "How does the current trend in USAID and World Vision evaluation policies / approaches affect the use of qualitative research methodologies studied in the course to date? Use one project as an example throughout the essay.)</i></p> <p>*Class / Session Evaluation</p>
Week # 6 Nov. 14	Evaluation Exercise / Project	<p>Topic: Data Analysis and Reporting</p> <p>Material to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis & Interpretation (Patton 8) ▪ Enhancing Quality & Credibility (Patton 9) ▪ Additional reading (optional): The analysis and interpretation of qualitative data (Robson 17) <p>Additional learning from a practitioner's experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stories from the field –Participatory Evaluation experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive exercises (group work) ▪ Lecture with Q&A ▪ Speaker ▪ Any material (video / article) contributed by students 	<p>Class Participation Audit Trail Project –small group work Session Evaluation</p>
Week # 7 Nov 28	Evaluation Exercise / Project	<p>Topic: Structure and Content of the Evaluation Report</p> <p>Material to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reporting (Patton 8) ▪ Additional reading (optional): Reporting and Disseminating (Robson 18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive exercise ▪ Lecture with Q&A ▪ Any material (video / article) contributed by students 	<p>Class Participation Audit Trail Project –small group work Peer Review Session Evaluation</p>
Week # 8 Dec. 12	Practical Implications	<p>Way forward –using what we learnt and planning to further knowledge</p> <p>Additional learning & discussions from a practitioner's experience:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) M&E for day to day project management (generalists' perspectives) (b) Transformative Evaluation vs. Development Evaluation –what is more doable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive exercise ▪ Lecture with Q&A 	<p>Class Participation Audit Trail Peer Review Course Evaluation</p>

NOTE: Reflective essays are due the week after their listing

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Alkin, Marvin C., *Evaluation Essentials –From A to Z*, The Guilford Press, 2011

Excellent introduction to evaluation (process and product) regardless of the reader's previous engagement in this field –holistic as it puts evaluation learning at the macro and micro level of a programme.

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene, Christina Gilmartin, and Robin Lydenberg. *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology*. Oxford University Press, 1999

Katzer, Cook, and Crouch, Wayne W., *Evaluating Information*, MacGraw-Hill, 1998

Patton, Michael Quinn; *Developmental Evaluation –Applying Complexity Concepts to enhance Innovation and Use*; The Guilford Press, 2011

Smith, Carolyn and William Kornblum (eds), *In the Field: Readings on the Field Experience*. Praeger, 1996
Anecdotal accounts of field issues

Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books, Inc. and the University of Otago Press, 1999

Weiss, Robert S. *Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. A basic text with a focus on the how-to of interviewing

Supplemental information for CJP graduate course syllabi:

Approved 3/20/06; updated 8/11

Writing Guidelines:

Writing will be a factor in evaluation: EMU has adopted a set of writing guidelines for graduate programs that include four sets of criteria: content, structure, conventions and style (see below). It is expected that graduates will be able to write at least a “good” level with 60% writing at an “excellent” level.

For the course papers, please follow the APA style described in CJP’s *GUIDELINES for GRADUATE PAPERS* (see student handbook or request a copy from the Academic Program Coordinator).

Academic Integrity Policy (AIP):

EMU faculty and staff care about the integrity of their own work and the work of their students. They create assignments that promote interpretative thinking and work intentionally with students during the learning process. Honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility are characteristics of a community that is active in loving mercy, doing justice, and walking humbly before God. EMU defines plagiarism as occurring when a person presents as one’s own someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. (Adapted from the Council of Writing Program Administrators). [Taken from “Academic Integrity,” 2011-12 Undergraduate Catalog.] This course will apply EMU’s AIP (see catalog, pp. 16-19) to any events of academic dishonesty. For more information see <http://www.emu.edu/academic-support/writing/academicintegritypolicy03-09.pdf> If you have doubts about what is appropriate, one useful website is <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>

Grading Scale & Feedback:

Grades will be based on an accumulation of numerical points that will be converted to a letter grade at the end of the course. Each assignment will receive a score expressed as a fraction, with the points received over the total points possible (e.g. 18/20). The following is the basic scale used for evaluation. *Points may be subtracted for missed deadlines.*

95-100 = A outstanding	90-94 = A- excellent
85-89 = B+ very good	80-84 = B good
75-79 = B- satisfactory	70-74 = C passing
Below 70 = F failing	

Graduate students are expected to earn A’s and B’s.

A GPA of 3.0 is the minimum requirement for graduation.

Regarding feedback on papers/projects: Students can expect to receive papers/assignments back in a class with faculty feedback before the next paper/assignment is due. This commitment from faculty assumes that the student has turned the paper in on the agreed upon due date.

Institutional Review Board:

All research conducted by or on EMU faculty, staff or students must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board to assure participant safety: <http://www.emu.edu/irb/>

Academic Support Center & Disability Support Services:

If you have received services in the past related to a learning disability or attention deficit disorder and/or you feel you may have such a problem in this course, please make an appointment to speak with the faculty member or with the Coordinator of Student Disability Support Services in the Academic Support Center, third floor of the Hartzler Library (432-4254).

Please take advantage of the free individual tutoring from writing tutors. Writing tutors are strong writers who hold scheduled one-on-one sessions with students and are an excellent resource for writers at any level or at any stage in the writing process. Please remember that writing tutors do not provide editing or proofreading services. They will help you put what you learn into practice and will work with you to improve your own proofreading and editing skills. To make an appointment, please visit or call the Academic Support Center on the 3rd floor of the Sadie Hartzler Library or by accessing WOnline on myEMU portal.

Class Attendance: Students are expected to attend all class meetings. If unusual or emergency circumstances prevent class attendance, the student should notify the professor in advance if possible. Multiple absences from class will result in lower grades. The student is responsible for the material presented in classes missed. (EMU Graduate Catalog)

Students should be aware of the importance of regular class attendance, particularly in the case of CJP classes that meet weekly or over several weekends. Being absent for more than one class leads to a student missing a large portion of the class content. In addition to consistent class attendance, students should make every effort to arrive to class on time out of respect for the learning process, fellow students and faculty.

Course Extensions and Outstanding Grades:

For Fall and Spring semesters, all coursework is due by the end of the semester. If a student will not be able to complete a course on time, the student must submit a request one week before the end of the semester for an extension (up to 6 months) using a course extension form provided by the Academic Program Coordinator. If the request is granted the student will receive an "I (incomplete) for the course which will later be replaced by a final grade when the work has been turned in on the agreed upon date. If the request for an extension is denied, the student will receive a grade for the work that has been completed up until the time the course was expected to have been completed. If no work has been submitted, the final grade will be an F (or W under certain circumstances).

Extensions will be given only for legitimate and unusual situations. Extensions are contracted by the student with the program for up to a maximum of 6 months after the deadline for the course work. PLEASE NOTE: If the outstanding course work is received within the first 6 weeks of the extension, no grade reduction will be imposed; after 6 weeks any outstanding coursework will be reduced by ½ letter grade. If the extension deadline is not met, the student will receive a final grade for the work completed.

Under exceptional circumstances, an additional 6-month extension may be granted by special petition to the CJP academic committee. To receive this additional extension, a letter of petition is expected with full rationale for the reason unable to finish to this point and a practical plan on how the student will actually finish if this extension is permitted. This must be submitted at least 1 week before the end of the first extension. A student is encouraged to use this only when absolutely necessary.

Writing Standards –Graduate Level (Grid Version)

Criteria	A excellent	B minimal expectations	C below expectations	Comments
Content <i>(quality of the information/ideas and sources/details used to support them)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shows clarity of purpose - shows depth of content - applies insight and represents original thinking -demonstrates quality and breadth of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shows clarity of purpose - shows substantial information and sufficient support - almost always represents original thinking - uses quality resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shows clarity of purpose - lacks depth of content and may depend on generalities or the commonplace - represents little original thinking - uses mostly quality resources 	
Structure <i>(logical order or sequence of the writing)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is coherent and logically developed - uses very effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is coherent and logically developed - uses smooth transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is coherent and logically (but not fully) developed - uses some awkward transitions 	
Style <i>(appropriate attention to audience: effective word choice, sentence variety, voice; appropriate level of formality for academic writing vs. informal text messages and email)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is concise, eloquent, and rhetorically effective - composes varied sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - displays concern for careful expression - composes some varied sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - displays some personality <u>but</u> lacks imagination and may be stilted - composes little varied sentence structure - frequently uses jargon and clichés 	
Conventions <i>(adherence to grammar rules: usage, mechanics)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - composes well-constructed sentences -makes virtually no errors in grammar and spelling - makes accurate word choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - almost always composes well-constructed sentences - makes minimal errors in grammar and spelling - makes accurate word choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - usually has well-constructed sentences - makes several errors - makes word choices that distract the reader 	
Source Integrity <i>(appropriate acknowledgment of sources used in research)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cites sources for all quotations - composes credible paraphrases, cited correctly - includes reference page - makes virtually no errors in documentation style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cites sources for all quotations - composes credible paraphrases, usually cited correctly - includes reference page - makes minimal errors in documentation style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cites sources for all quotations - composes mostly credible paraphrases, sometimes cited correctly - includes reference page - makes several errors in documentation style 	
<p>The weighting of each of the five areas is dependent on the specific written assignment and the teacher’s preference. Plagiarism occurs when a person presents as one’s own “someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source” (adapted from Council of Writing Program Administrators).</p>				Grade

Approved by University Faculty April 28, 2004
Revised by the Writing Committee April 2008
Updated March 2009