

CSA 504 – Research & Assessment in Student Affairs
Spring 2009
Thursday 9:05-12:05
304 Rackley Building

Instructor

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Course Description

Research and assessment are integral in the quality assurance of student affairs programs in higher education. In this course we will critically examine the role of research and assessment in Student Affairs. Research focuses on advancing the professional knowledge of the higher education community by forming new theories and confirming or refuting existing theories (Erwin, 1996). Assessment is any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996).

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will:

- a. be familiar with a variety of research and assessment models used in student affairs and higher education;
- b. possess an understanding of student affairs assessment as a process;
- c. exhibit research and assessment skills necessary to be a student affairs practitioner;
- d. understand the effects of institutional and external climate and resources for research and assessment; and
- e. design and/or conduct a plan/project within student affairs from stated goals or outcomes to communicating findings.

Mapping to the Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes that are addressed in this class are:

1. Foundations of Student Affairs
 - 1.1.2 Knowledge of and ability to articulate contemporary issues in Student Affairs
 - 1.1.3 Knowledge of and ability to articulate role of Student Affairs
2. Student Development and Outcomes
 - 2.1.1 Understanding of psychosocial, cognitive, college impact, and learning theories
 - 2.1.3 Understanding of the characteristics of effective educational interventions
 - 2.2 Ability to apply theory to practice in both specialized and generalist areas
 - 2.3 Ability to apply theory to develop effective educational programs

3. Professional Competencies
 - 3.3 Knowledge and demonstration of adherence to applicable professional ethical standards

6. Research and Assessment
 - 6.1.1 Knowledge of and ability to employ good practices that focus on the effectiveness of programs and services
 - 6.1.2 Knowledge of and ability to design and implement thorough assessment efforts, including the identification of new key questions, resources, and target populations
 - 6.1.3 Knowledge of and ability to create instruments and/or protocols for assessing important questions
 - 6.1.4 Knowledge of and ability to identify, evaluate, and utilize existing instruments and protocols
 - 6.1.5 Knowledge of and ability to analyze and utilize multiple sources of data to reach useable conclusions
 - 6.1.6 Knowledge of and ability to credibly convey key findings/recommendations to stakeholders and constituents

Required Texts:

Banta, T.W. (2002). *Building a scholarship of assessment*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bresciani, M. J., Zelna, C. L., & Anderson, J. A. (2004). *Assessing student learning and development: A handbook for practitioners*. Washington, DC.: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Creswell, John (2008). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd Edition). Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage Publications, Inc

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.). (2001). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Schuh, J. H. & Upcraft, M. L. (2001). *Assessment practices in student affairs: An applications manual*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sowell, E. J. (2001). *Educational research: An integrative approach*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Optional Texts

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. (2006). *CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education*. <http://www.cas.edu>.

Students will be expected to locate readings on the Internet from various web sites. Other readings also will be placed on ANGEL.

Academic Integrity

The Penn State University Faculty Senate Policy 49-20 states: "Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts."

Typical forms of academic dishonesty are plagiarism, fabrication of information (including citations), aiding others engaged in acts of academic dishonesty, and submitting the work of another person or work previously used in courses without informing the current instructor. Failure to provide appropriate citations of others' work is plagiarism and therefore a violation of the academic integrity policy of the University. Please be sure to properly cite your source(s) when you include others' ideas, sentences, or other materials in your papers. Violations of academic integrity will result in a grade of a zero (no credit) for the assignment and may result in additional sanctions as well.

All graduate students are responsible for understanding and abiding by Penn State University's policies regarding academic integrity and student conduct. Students should seek clarification of definitions and policies if they desire more information. Please review policies posted on PSU's *Graduate College website*. The APA Publication Manual also contains useful information.

For information on what constitutes plagiarism, visit the following website:

<http://academicintegrity.cas.psu.edu/Plagiarism.html>

Note to Students with Disabilities

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for modifications or reasonable accommodations in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services, ODS, located at 116 Boucke Building at 1-814-863-1807(V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS please visit their web site at www.equity.psu.edu/ods. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for modification or reasonable accommodations.

Accommodations

Students with documented disabilities that affect their ability to participate fully in the course or who require special accommodations are encouraged to speak with us so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged.

ANGEL Access

Course materials are located in ANGEL, Penn State's course management system.

Additional Student Information

All written assignments must conform to the style and reference formats specified in the *Publication Manual of the APA*, fifth edition.

Assignments will be graded on content as well as on technical quality of the writing and presentation. All written assignments should be carefully proofread for spelling, grammar, and syntax. Assignments containing multiple errors will be returned, ungraded, for student revision and resubmission. This includes multiple APA style errors.

This course requires a good deal of reading and homework. Students should carefully consider the assignment and reading load associated with this course. Students are responsible for completing the required readings in advance of the designated class session. Students will be well-served by reviewing the schedule of readings, scanning the readings and assignments carefully, and planning their time accordingly. In some cases, the assigned readings are relatively brief or readily comprehensible. In other cases, full comprehension will require additional time for re-reading in advance of the class session or afterwards. The formation of reading groups or study groups is strongly encouraged.

Involvement in class discussion and in experiential activities is an important aspect of this course and a primary means for learning the material and related concepts. Class participation is also a means to help students (1) develop their own oral communication and listening skills, and (2) take an active role in their own learning. Class participation does not necessarily mean talking a great deal or “saying at least one thing” at each class meeting. This behavior may in fact detract from the class, from one’s participation, and from one’s learning.

Students missing more than one class session (excused or unexcused) should not expect to successfully complete this course.

Course Assignments:

All of the assignments in the course revolve around a topic, issue, or problem in student affairs/higher education of particular interest to you. The final proposal will include an introduction that is descriptive of the topic and problem statement, a review of relevant literature, and a research plan. The proposal should be no fewer than 20 and no more than 25 pages.

Assignment 1: Human Subject Review and Approval – Due on January 15

Each student must complete the tutorial and test to gain human subjects approval. You will find the information on the Office for Research Protections website. You will forward a copy of the e-mail you receive from the Office for Research Protections indicating your successful completion of the tutorial to Dan Merson no later than *January 15*.

Assignment 2: Problem Statement - Due on January 22

Identify a topic and write a problem statement related to student affairs. This statement should make it clear to the reader why this particular issue is important to study and provide rationale as to your personal interest in exploring this topic. (1 page maximum)

Assignment 3: Preliminary Documentation of Sources - Due on February 5

Provide an annotated bibliography or matrix of five articles related to your selected topic. No article may be more than five years old. For each article provide a bibliographical reference, a one-two paragraph summary of the article, an evaluation of the research design and methods utilized, how the information presented is relevant to your topic, and any other information you deem to be important for your analysis of the literature. Please provide the first page of each article with your assignment. If you use an on-line search, you must provide a "full-text" copy of the first page of the article. Be prepared to discuss your articles in class. (15 page maximum)

Assignment 4: Review of Related Literature - Due on February 19

Provide a synthesis of ten sources related to your topic inclusive of the five articles reviewed in the annotated bibliography and additional relevant articles. (10 page maximum)

Assignment 5 – Introduction - Due on March 5

Write the introduction to your paper. The introduction should present background information about your topic. The purpose of this section is to set the stage for the discussion of your topic and is inclusive of the problem statement. (3 page maximum).

Assignment 6– Research Design/Revised Introduction- Due on March 19

Develop the research design for your topic and "revise" the introduction. In this assignment you will describe in detail how the study will be conducted. This section of the proposal is typically divided into labeled subsections. Often a subsection describing participants or subjects is followed by subsections describing testing or other measurement procedures to be undertaken with the participants and a subsection describing how the resulting measurements will be analyzed to help resolve the problems stated in the introduction.

Assignment 7 – Final Proposal - Due on April 2

Write the first draft of your proposal.

Assignment 8 – Proposal Presentation - Due on presentation date

Each student will develop and present a formal presentation of her/his proposal. The presentation is 25 minutes with an additional 5 minute question/answer period.

Late assignments will be penalized by one-fourth of the assignment's point total per each day past the due date. Students with extraordinary circumstances must discuss alternate deadlines with the instructor in advance of the due date.

Evaluation and Grading:

Grades will be determined according to the following scale:

5%	Assignment 1: Human Subject Review and Approval
10%	Assignment 2: Topic Selection/Problem Statement
10%	Assignment 3: Annotated Bibliography
10%	Assignment 4: Review of Literature
10%	Assignment 5: Introduction
15%	Assignment 6: Research/Assessment Design and Revised Introduction
20%	Assignment 7: Final Proposal
20%	Assignment 8: Proposal Presentation

A	94-100 %	“A” grades signify outstanding achievement.
A-	90-93 %	
B+	87-89 %	“B” grades signify solid achievement.
B	83-86 %	
B-	80-82 %	
C+	77-79 %	“C” grades signify passable achievement.
C	73-76 %	
C-	70-72 %	
Failing	<70 %	

Incompletes will be granted only under dire circumstances and after consultation with the instructor.
Incompletes will not be granted simply because more time is desired to complete the work of the course.

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Course Readings

- Arminio, J. L. & Hultgren, F. H. (2002). Breaking out from the shadow: The question of criteria in qualitative research. *Journal of College Student Development, 43*,446-460.
- Axinn, W. G., & Pearce, L. D. (2006). *Mixed Method Data Collection Strategies (Chapters 1 and 2)*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Broido, E. M., & Manning, K. (2002). Philosophical foundations and current theoretical perspectives in qualitative research. *Journal of College Student Development, 43*, 434-445.
- Boote, D. N., & Beile, P. (2005). Scholars before researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher, 34*(6), 3-15.
- Ingle, G. (2005). Will your campus diversity initiative work. *Academe, 91*(5).
- Maki, P. L. (2004a) Maps and inventories: Anchoring efforts to track student learning. *About Campus, 9*(4), 2-9.
- Maki, P. L. (2004b). Making claims about student learning within contexts for learning. In *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing and the American Association for Higher Education, pp. 59-84.
- Milem, J., Chang, M., & Antonio, A. (2005). *Making diversity work on campus: A research-based perspective*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Patton, M. J. (1991). Qualitative research on college students: Philosophical and methodological comparisons with the quantitative approach. *Journal of College Student Development, 32*, 389-396.
- Smart, J. C. (2005). Attributes of exemplary research manuscripts employing quantitative research. *Research in Higher Education, 26*, 461-477.
- Upcraft, M.L. (2003). Assessment and evaluation. . In *Student services: A handbook for the profession*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 555-572.
- Upcraft, M. L., & Schuh, J. H. (2002). Assessment vs research: Why we should care about the difference. *About Campus, 7*(1), 16-20.
- Whitt, E. J. (1991). Artful science: A primer on qualitative research methods. *Journal of College Student Development, 32*, 406-415.
- Whitt, E. J. (1996). Assessing student cultures. In M. L. Upcraft & J. H. Schuh. *Assessment in student affairs: A guide for practitioners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. pp. 189-216. (Chapter 9)

Additional Resources

Lane, D. M. (2007) HyperStat Online. from <http://davidmlane.com/hyperstat/index.html>

Trochim, W. M. K. (2006). Research Methods Knowledge Base. from
<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb>

UCLA Academic Technology Services (2008) Resources to Help You Learn and Use SPSS. from
<http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/>