

Research and Assessment

CSA 504

The Pennsylvania State University
Tuesdays 11:15-2:15
Spring 2012
303 Rackley Building

Susan Rankin, Ph.D.

sxr2@psu.edu

Office hours: by appointment
863-2655 (office)

Daniel Merson, Ph.D

vagabond@psu.edu

Office hours: by appointment

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).

This course uses Sanford's psychosocial theory of challenge and support¹ as the framework. Sanford asserts that optimal development occurs when both the challenge of the task and the support provided are high. The effort students will give to this course is high; you will work hard. In order to optimize your development as student scholar-practitioners, the instructors will provide significant support for your erudition.

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;

¹ Sanford, N. (1966). Self and society: Social change and individual development. New York: Atherton.

- 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

Learning Activities

All Learning Activities are due on the Wednesday following each class by 11:55 pm in the appropriate drop box on ANGEL (unless otherwise instructed)

Students are assessed in this course through a series of academic and professional exercises known as learning activities. They are designed as a mechanism for students to improve their professional and academic abilities. Rubrics are provided to help you understand their objectives as well as structural guidelines.

All of the learning activities in the course revolve around a topic, issue, or problem in student affairs/higher education of particular interest to you. The final poster presentation will provide a description of the topic and problem statement, review the relevant literature, and offer a proposed research plan.

Learning Activity 1: SARI Completion & Approval – Due on January 10

Complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) web based training program in human research subject's protections. This is required for all graduate students at Penn State. The home page for CITI is <https://www.citiprogram.org/> and instructions for completing the tutorial are available on the site. Penn State is a CITI participating organization. Please forward a copy of your successful completion to Dr. Merson prior to the first day of class. Many of you will have already completed the training program in another class.

Learning Activity 2: Problem Statement - Due on January 18

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)

Learning Activity 3: Preliminary Review of Literature- Due on February 1

Provide preliminary review of literature synthesizing five research articles related to your selected topic. No article may be more than five years old. Be prepared to discuss your preliminary literature review in class.

Learning Activity 4 – Introduction - Due on February 15

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).

Learning Activity 5: Concept Map and Review of Related Literature - Due on February 29

Provide:

- (1) a synthesis of at least ten sources related to your topic inclusive of the five articles reviewed in the preliminary review of literature if they are still appropriate (10 page maximum).
- (2) Based on the review of the literature provide a concept map for your project. A concept map is a technique used to represent knowledge in graphs.

Learning Activity 6– Research/Assessment Design and Revised Introduction - Due on March 21

Develop the research design for your topic and "revise" the introduction. In this learning activity 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.

Learning Activity 7 – Poster Presentations - April 17 and April 24

Each student will develop and present a poster presentation of her/his/zir proposal. The presentation is 10 minutes.

Learning activities submitted late will be penalized by one-fourth of the 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.

All learning activities must conform to the style and reference formats specified in the *Publication Manual of the APA*, sixth edition. Learning activities will be graded on content as well as on technical quality of the writing and presentation. All written learning activities should be carefully proofread for spelling, grammar, and syntax. Learning activities containing multiple errors will be returned, ungraded, for student revision and resubmission. This includes multiple APA style errors.

Re-writes

As part of the learning process, the instructors will try to decrease the subjectivity of grading by providing grading rubrics; however our professional judgments of your work are inherently subjective. Therefore, any learning activity with a B+ or lower may be rewritten and submitted for a revised grade. The revision must be submitted within one week from the day the paper was returned in class. In addition, as noted above, there also may be times when the instructors require a student to rewrite a paper.

Evaluation and Grading:

Grades will be determined according to the following scale:

5%	Learning Activity 1: SARI Completion & Approval
10%	Learning Activity 2: Topic Selection/Problem Statement
15%	Learning Activity 3: Preliminary Review of Literature
10%	Learning Activity 5: Introduction
15%	Learning Activity 4: Concept Map and Final Review of Literature
15%	Learning Activity 6: Research/Assessment Design and Revised Introduction
30%	Learning Activity 7: Poster 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.

Readings

This course requires a good deal of reading. Students should carefully consider the learning activities 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 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. The books you will need are as follows:

Required Texts:

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

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. (2009). *CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education*. <http://www.cas.edu>.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). (2010). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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 learning activity 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>

Additional Information

Note to Students with Disabilities

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. 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. 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.

Class Participation

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. More importantly, you should continually take the knowledge you learn in your courses and apply it in a professional role, and vice versa. Your learning in this course will be richer by incorporating your practical experience. 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. No additional points will be given for class participation because engagement is simply expected.

Laptops

Recent research suggests that multi-tasking detracts from one's ability to focus completely on a specific task². Multi-tasking also disrupts your colleagues in class. Therefore, the use of laptops during class to take notes is permitted; however using laptops and/or electronic devices for other tasks is strongly discouraged.

Attendance

Because you are the center of learning in this class, it is imperative that you attend. Students missing more than one class (excused or unexcused) should not intend to successfully complete the course.

Religious Observances

If a class meets on a holiday for you, please tell the instructors in advance.

² See Jackson, M. (2008). Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age. Amherst, NY: Prometheus.; Junco, R., & Cotten, S. R. (In Press). Academic Effects of Instant Messaging Use. Cyberpsychology and Behavior.; and Mayer, R. E., & Moreno, R. (2003). Nine ways to reduce cognitive load in multimedia learning. Educational Psychologist, 38(1), 43-52.

Course Outline

<p>January 10 Class 1 <i>Sue not in class</i></p>	<p><u>Overview of course, learning activities</u> Research Overview – What is research and what is its role in Student Affairs? Assessment Overview – What is assessment and what is its role in Student Affairs?</p> <p>Readings: Sowell, Chapter 1 Upcraft & Schuh, 2002 Upcraft, 2003</p> <p>Learning Activity submission: CITI approval – send to Dr. Merson prior to class Bring 2 topic ideas for proposal</p>
<p>January 17 Class 2</p>	<p><u>Hypotheses & Research Questions</u> <u>Literature Review (Conducting a Search/Critiquing Research Articles)</u></p> <p>Readings: Creswell, Chapters 2, 5, 6 & 7 Sowell, Chapters 3 & 13 Boot & Beile, 2005 Griffin & Perez, in press (Lit review section) Mathiasen, 2005 (Lit review section) Lundberg, 2007 (Lit review section)</p> <p>Learning Activity submission: Learning Activity #2 due January 18 - Problem Statement</p>
<p>January 24 Class 3</p>	<p><u>Methods & Ethics</u> <u>Theoretical Foundations</u></p> <p>Readings: Schuh & Upcraft, Chapter 32 Creswell, Chapter 3, 4 ACPA's Statement of Ethical Principles & Standards (Download full document at http://www.myacpa.org/ethics/statement.cfm) NASPA's Standards of Professional Practice (Download full document at http://www.naspa.org/about/standards.cfm)</p>

January 31 Class 4	<u>Thematic Analysis using Textual Data (Qualitative Research)</u> Readings: Schuh & Upcraft, Chapter 3 & 4 Creswell Chapter 9 Sowell, Chapters 10 & 11 Patton, 1991 Whitt, 1991 Broido & Manning (2002) Arminio & Hultgren (2002) Learning Activity submission: Preliminary Review of Literature due February 1
February 7 Class 5	<u>Statistical Analyses of Numerically Coded Data (Quantitative Research)</u> Readings: Schuh & Upcraft Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8 Creswell Chapter 8 Sowell, Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 Smart, 2005
February 14 Class 6	<u>Assessment in Student Affairs</u> Readings: Schuh & Upcraft, Part 3 Bresciani, Zelta & Anderson, Chapter 2 Learning Activity submission: Introduction due February 15
February 21 Class 7	<u>Sampling & Instrumentation</u> <u>Measuring Against Professional Standards</u> Readings: Schuh & Upcraft, Chapter 12; Part 4 Bresciani, Zelta & Anderson, Chapter 6 CAS Standards

February 28 Class 8 <i>Sue not in class</i>	<u>Outcomes Assessment & Mapping to Practice</u> Readings: Bresciani, Zelta & Anderson (all) Schuh & Upcraft, Chapter 11 Maki (2004a) Making Claims Maki (2004b) Maps Learning Activity submission: Concept Map and Review of Related Literature due February 29
March 6 Class 9	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
March 13	NO CLASS – NASPA
March 20 Class 10	<u>Theory to Practice or Playing with Data</u> <u>Survey Research databases</u> Readings: Lane, D. M. (2007) Chapter 16: Chi Square. From http://davidmlane.com/hyperstat/chi_square.html (Only read the section on “Chi square test of independence.”) UCLA Academic Technology Services (2008) Resources to Help You Learn and Use SPSS. from http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/ Learning Activity submission: Research Design/Revised Introduction due March 21
March 27	NO CLASS – ACPA CONFERENCE

April 3 Class 11	<u>Climate Assessment</u> Readings: Rankin & Reason (2009) Whitt (1996) Milem, J., Chang, M., & Antonio, A. (2005). Ingle (2005)
April 10 Class 12	<u>Research/Assessment Presentations</u> <u>Poster Presentation Preparation</u>
April 17 Class 13	<u>Poster Presentations</u>
April 24 Class 14	<u>Poster Presentations</u>

**CSA 504 – Research & Assessment in Student Affairs
Spring 2010
Thursday 9:05-12:05
304 Rackley Building**

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.
- Dillman, D. A. (2002). Writing Questions *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (second ed., pp. 32-78). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Griffin, K. and Perez, D. (in press). Looking beyond labels: Black honors students negotiating the intersections between their personal and social identities.
- 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/>