

Instructor: Dr. Brian Bourke

DEPARTMENT: Educational Studies, Leadership and Counseling

COURSE PREFIX: ADM **COURSE NUMBER:** 735

CREDIT HOURS: 3

I. TITLE: Institutional Research, Assessment and Accreditation

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITE(S):

This course provides an overview of best practices of institutional research. Additionally, students have the opportunity to develop strategies to investigate relevant trends or problems within an institution. Field experience required.

Prerequisite(s): ADM 630

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The student will be able to

- A. identify research needs and define research questions associated with current issues in higher education;
- B. describe historical, social, political, financial, ethical, and other issues pertaining to assessment and evaluation in higher education;
- C. discuss the roles of diverse constituencies in requesting, providing, and receiving information related to assessment and evaluation;
- D. identify accreditation requirements;
- E. identify formal and informal sources of data and information;
- F. conduct critical reviews of existing research and identify factors influencing the application of research findings to specific problems in higher education;
- G. prepare a research plan that includes well-defined questions, research methods, a timeline for implementation, resource requirements, and procedures for communicating results;
- H. gather, organize, analyze, and synthesize data and interpret information from multiple sources; and
- I. effectively communicate research findings orally and in writing to diverse constituencies.

IV. CONTENT OUTLINE:

- A. History of institutional research
- B. Practicing institutional research
- C. Institutional research, change and organizational improvement
- D. Accreditation
- E. Trends and issues in institutional research
- F. Strategies and best practices of institutional research

V. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- A. Lecture
- B. Assigned readings
- C. Interviews
- D. Field project

VI. FIELD, CLINICAL, AND/OR LABORATORY EXPERIENCES:

Field Project: Students will work within a postsecondary institution to identify institutional needs of interest. A plan will be developed and proposed to investigate the problem using appropriate methods and measures.

Doctoral students in the class will complete an additional research report from this field experience.

VII. TEXT(S) AND RESOURCES:

Maki, P. L. (2010). *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution*, 2nd edition. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing.

Other readings noted are available through the Canvas course page.

VIII. EVALUATION AND GRADING PROCEDURES:

Evaluation and grade will be determined by assignments, tests, and projects based on text, supplementary readings in professional journals, lectures, presentations, group activities, and class discussions.

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|---------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|
| Class participation | 100 points | 10% | |
| Assessment Plan Part 1 | 250 points | | 25% |
| Learning Outcomes | 150 points | 15% | |
| Assessment Plan Part 2 | 150 points | | 15% |
| CAS Audit – Individual | 300 points | | 30% |
| CAS Audit – Collaborative | 50 points | 5% | |
| Total | 1000 points | | |

Class participation (10%) -Participation and active engagement in every class session is essential. Specific learning experiences occur in each class session. The vast majority of the class discussions will be spent in discussion of the readings. This course is reading-intensive and requires preparation outside of the class session. Please be prepared to discuss and respond to each reading. Each student in this course is expected to complete assignments in a timely fashion, contribute meaningfully to class discussions, and as appropriate, prepare objective critiques of research, readings, and other class efforts.

Evaluation of class participation will consider the following:

- 1) To what extent do you incorporate class readings into the discussion?
- 2) To what extent do you link readings with your practical experience?
- 3) To what extent do you engage your colleagues in the class in meaningful thought, analysis, and debate around the course material?.
- 4) To what extent do you contribute to your colleagues' understanding of complex ideas and perspectives by raising insightful and probing questions?
- 5) To what extent do you practice active listening as a way of informing your perspective?

(borrowed from Susan K. Gardner, Ph.D., Professor, U of Maine)

Assessment Plan (Part 1) (25%)

Choose an administrative unit at a post-secondary institution. Your best bet is to choose a unit that would be involved in direct student experiences/learning that could be assessed. Begin by selecting an institutional site (as defined by the Carnegie Foundation), then browse the listings. It may take a couple of passes, because you need to find an institution whose student affairs division has a robust web presence. When you've chosen a unit at a specific institution, you need to search their website and find the following:

- Mission Statement
- Strategic Plan
- Organizational Chart

If you cannot locate all three items, you need to keep searching, either for another unit at that institution, or at another institution.

A framework (labeled Assessment Plan – guiding questions) is provided in Canvas to help you think through the crafting of an assessment plan for the administrative unit. The framework consists of guiding questions to help you think through issues to consider in the creation of your team's assessment plan. Assessment plans require thorough explanation to facilitate the development of a culture of assessment in the unit. To that end, each component of the assessment plan is to be accompanied by a memo that explains the particular component, the rationale behind it.

Consult Bresciani et al. Chs. 3, 4 and 6 (posted to Canvas) to assist you in completing this assignment. These chapters will provide additional background beyond what is discussed in class.

Required components for this assignment:

1. Assessment Plan Document
 - a. An overview of the assessment plan (providing specifics, not simply generic steps in an assessment process). Draw on the documents provided. If more information is needed, using the Internet to see what similar departments have posted on their sites.
 - b. What programs or activities will be assessed?
 - b. An explanation of who will be involved in the assessment process
2. Memos
 - a. Memo to staff within the administrative unit
 - b. Memo to interested parties outside the unit who would play a role in the assessment process (this should not include students)

These are two separate memos because the way we talk about our work within an administrative unit is likely to differ from the way we talk about our work to those outside of the administrative unit (e.g. faculty, senior administrators)

Examples of assessment plans are posted to Canvas.

Learning Outcomes (15%)

Your task is to write learning outcomes for each of the assessment activities laid out in your assessment plan. You need to have a minimum of 4 learning outcomes associated with each portion of your assessment plan.

Consult the handouts posted to Canvas for more background information on learning outcomes.

Assessment Plan (Part 2) (15%) – Now that you’ve written a broad assessment plan (Part 1), and learning outcomes, you need to add depth to your assessment plan by explaining how you will go about assessing each learning outcome. For this assignment, you will add to what you submitted for #1 in Assessment Plan (Part 1). Start with that document, incorporate any feedback I provide, weave your learning outcomes into the document, and address the following for each learning outcome:

1. assessment approaches to be employed
2. plans for reporting results
3. plans for evaluation
4. Intended participants for data collection

Item 4 might seem like it is redundant, but you do not want to take anything for granted or make assumptions in your assessment plan.

Due Wednesday, October 28, 2015

PSE Program CAS Audit – Individual Section (30%)

Students will perform an accreditation audit for the Master of Arts in Postsecondary Education Administration at Murray State University. Students will use the *Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) 8th Edition Guidelines* to audit the academic program based on nine parts: mission and objectives, recruitment and admission, curriculum policies, pedagogy, curriculum, equity and access, academic and student support, professional ethics and legal responsibilities, and program evaluation. Students will assess program deliverables and syllabi, conduct interviews, and critique the administrative operations of the program in order to provide a thorough review. Students will create an audit report highlighting strengths, deficiencies and recommendations per the nine parts mentioned above. The report will be addressed to the coordinator of the Postsecondary Education Administration (PSE) program.

Fall 2015: each student will be assigned one of the nine program parts listed above. Each student will follow the CAS Self-Assessment Guide for Master’s Programs (provided by Dr. Bourke) for the assigned section. Any section(s) not assigned to individual students will be completed as a class.

The final report will be combined by Dr. Bourke and shared with other PSE Program faculty and ELC Department Chair.

First Draft Due Wednesday, October 14, 2015

Final Submission Due Wednesday, December 9, 2015

PSE Program CAS Audit – Collaborative Sections (5%)

As a class, you will complete the following sections of the CAS Audit. At points throughout the semester, I will make sure there is time during our class meeting time for you to collaborate. To aid in pull the final submission together, our final class meeting will be set aside as a workshop time, where we will meet in a computer lab in Alexander Hall.