COURSE OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

One of the most important types of research and assessment in higher education is the study of college impact. This field of study investigates the aspects of the college environment that have an impact on student outcomes. However, in order to conduct college impact research, one must have a working knowledge of the ways in which college environments and outcomes are conceptualized and measured. The objectives of this course, then, are the following:

• to develop an understanding of the theories and models in the higher education literature that depict college environments and student outcomes;
• to identify the various ways in which the college environment and student outcomes are represented in empirical literature;
• to incorporate the principles of environmental and outcomes assessment through quantitative and qualitative approaches;
• to apply the material from this course to studies of campus environments and outcomes.

POLICIES

1. Attendance: Students are expected to attend every class session, or notify the instructor in advance that he/she will be absent along with the reason for the absence. Students are also expected to arrive on time for class and remain for the duration of the class. Students are asked to refrain from conducting private conversations in class, and are requested to use appropriate language and behavior that are not demeaning or disruptive to either the instructor or the other members of the class. Failure to consistently abide by these attendance policies will have an adverse impact on one’s final grade.

2. Late papers/assignments: All assignments must be completed by the due date unless prior arrangements are made, well in advance of the deadline. Extensions on any assignment will not be granted except for instances related to religious observances (see below), documented disabilities (see below), or extraordinary circumstances that are pre-approved by the instructor.

3. Contact information: I encourage you to call or email me to set up an appointment if you would like to meet with me outside of class. (Contact information is provided on the first page of this syllabus.) I will set up an email reflector for this class as soon as the enrollment is finalized. The address for the reflector will be edcp742@umd.edu. I will use this group email address to update you on specifics for the class, or for reminders on upcoming deadlines. If you are unable to check email regularly, please see me. You are also welcome to use the reflector to communicate with your classmates.
4. **ELMS website**: This course will utilize the online learning website called ELMS. On this website, you will be able to access all scanned readings, weekly Powerpoint slides, and other class handouts. Students are expected to use this website to access relevant readings and course materials.

5. **Academic integrity**: The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student, you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit [http://www.shc.umd.edu](http://www.shc.umd.edu). If you wish to report a violation of academic conduct, visit the website or call 301-314-8450. On the first day of class, I will ask you to sign an honor pledge for all of the work that you will complete in conjunction with this class.

6. **Accommodations for students with disabilities**: If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see the instructor as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester. If you have a disability and have not yet registered with the University's Disability Support Services (DSS) in the Shoemaker Building, you should do so by contacting the office at 301-314-7682. All requests for accommodations due to disabilities must be in accordance with recommendations set forth by DSS.

7. **Religious observances**: If you need to miss a class or make up an assignment due to an individual participation in a religious observance, please notify me within the first two weeks of the beginning of the semester.

8. **Course evaluation**: As a member of our academic community, you as a student have a number of important responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to submit your course evaluations each term though CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. Please make a note now of the dates for Spring 2010 and the link at which you can access the submission system ([www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu)). If you submitted all of your evaluations in the fall or are a new student, you can also access all posted results from Fall 2007 forward via Testudo under CourseEvalUM Reporting. To retain this access, you must submit all of your evaluations each semester. If you do not have access right now, you can gain it by submitting all of your Spring 2010 evaluations. More information is at: [https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/stdt_faq.shtml](https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/stdt_faq.shtml).

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION AND COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

The course will employ a variety of instructional approaches including lecture and discussion, and relies heavily on student participation. Course requirements include both written and oral assignments. All written work should be formatted using APA style. You will be evaluated on the following items:
1. (10%) **Class participation:** You are expected to participate in class discussions in a manner that demonstrates thoughtful reflection and understanding of the subject matter as well as respect for your colleagues in the class. In order to participate meaningfully, you must come to class having read all of the reading assignments and written all of the writing assignments.

2. (15%) **College Impact Research Article Critique:** After the introduction of the weekly topics of college impact and student outcomes research, select a research article from a higher education or student affairs journal that you feel exemplifies college impact research; scan and upload that article to our Blackboard site for your classmates and instructor by **Thursday, March 3.** Write a critique of the article (5-7 pages), due **March 10.** Additional information about the critique will be provided during the semester. You will also briefly present the article you have chosen and elements of your critique to the class.

3. (30%) **Outcomes presentation, due March 31 or April 7:** You will lead the class with a presentation on a specific student outcome. Your presentation should be based on 1) information detailed in both Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) and Astin (1993) on your selected outcome and 2) your own research on the topic. You will choose which method of research:
   a) 2 interviews that you conduct with a student about what has influenced her/his experience with your outcome
   b) An analysis of the NSLLP 2004 dataset—you will receive a copy of the dataset in class, choose your variables, run an analysis, and report on results.

   Presentations can include audio/visual material; please make arrangements with the instructor in advance if you plan to use any technological resources. Additional information about this assignment will be provided during the semester.

4. (45%) **Final research proposal:** Your final assignment will consist of a research proposal that examines some aspect of the college environment, or the impact of the college environment on a chosen outcome. You can choose the topic of your paper and the methodological approach, either qualitative or quantitative. There are two deadlines for the final research paper:

   - (15%) **Research prospectus, due March 17:** The prospectus will introduce your topic, state your principal research question(s), articulate the significance of the topic, outline the theoretical and empirical research you will review, and briefly summarize your methodological approach (5 pages).

   - (30%) **Research proposal, due May 5:** The full proposal (20-30 pages) will sharpen the sections from your prospectus, and add the methodology section. Since this course focuses primarily on methodological issues, I will expect detailed and sophisticated methods sections for this research proposal. You will also present your proposal to your course colleagues on May 5th.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**


Other readings: All other readings specified in the course calendar can be found as scanned documents in ELMS.

**OTHER USEFUL TEXTS AND RESOURCES**


**COURSE CALENDAR**

**Class 1: January 27**

**Introduction to the Course**

- Expectations for the course
- Explanation of the syllabus
- Discussion of course objectives
- What is college impact research and why is it important?
- Stakeholders activity

**Class 2: February 3**

**Basic Elements of Research Design**

- Elements of empirical research studies
- Developing conceptual frameworks involving environmental and outcomes models
- Choose topic for outcomes presentation

*Readings (all in ELMS):*


**Class 3: February 10**

**Overview of Environmental Theory**

- Foundational college environment theories
- Evolution of college environmental studies
  - From: What are college environments?
  - To: What matters about college environments?

*Readings (all in ELMS):*


### Additional Resources


### Class 4 February 17

**Overview of Environmental Theory**

- Evolution of college environmental studies
- Recent research on college environments
  - Campus Climate
  - Environments for sub-populations
  - Benefits of diverse environments
  - Engagement

**Readings (all in ELMS):**

Additional Resources

Class 5: February 24
**Studying College Impact & Student Change**
- Development of research on college outcomes
- Conceptual framework for studying college impact
- Summary of major theoretical models

*Reading:
Pascarella & Terenzini: Chapters 1 and 2*

Class 6: March 3
**Theories and Models of College Impact**
- Astin I-E-O Model
- Incomplete models of college impact
- Concept of involvement

*Assignment due:*
Select, scan, and upload to ELMS your college impact research article to the rest of the class by this date.

*Reading:*
(1) Astin, *What matters in college?* Chapters 1-3, 10-12

Class 7: March 10
**Critique of College Impact Research Articles**

*Assignment due:*
College Impact Research Article Critique

*Reading:*
Read all of the articles that your classmates emailed to you.
Class 8: March 17

Theories and Models of College Impact: Prominent Theories

- Weidman’s model of undergraduate socialization
- Tinto’s theory of college departure
- Kuh’s concept of student engagement
- Other theories/models from higher education literature

Assignment due: Research Prospectus

Reading (all in ELMS):


AND TWO OF THE FOLLOWING (your choice):


NO CLASS March 24

Spring Break

Classes 10 & 11: March 31st & April 7

Research on Student Outcomes

Assignment Due: Outcomes Presentation

Reading:

Self-Concept:
- Astin: Personality & self-concept (pp. 105-140)
- P&T: Psychosocial change (pp. 213-270)*
Attitudes & Values:
  Astin: Attitudes, values, and beliefs (pp. 141-164)
  P&T: Attitudes & values (pp. 271-344)
Relations with Others:
  Astin: Patterns of behavior (pp. 165-185)
  P&T: Psychosocial change (pp. 213-270)*
Cognitive Development:
  Astin: Academic & cognitive development (pp. 186-244)
  P&T: Cognitive skills & intellectual growth (pp. 155-212)
Career Development:
  Astin: Career development (pp. 245-272)
  P&T: Career outcomes (pp. 445-550)*
Satisfaction & Persistence:
  Astin: Satisfaction (pp. 273-311)
  P&T: Educational attainment & persistence (pp. 373-444)
Long-Term Outcomes:
  P&T: Economic impacts of college (pp. 445-550)*
  P&T: Quality of life after college (pp. 551-570)
* Report on portions of chapter that relate to your topic.

April 14: Assessment of College Environments & Outcomes
  • Using environmental theories in research
  • Assessment
  • Accountability

Reading (all in ELMS):

Additional Resources


Class 12: April 21
Challenges in Studying College Impact
- The difference between change and impact
- The gap between student development and student outcomes literature
- The disconnect between environmental and outcomes assessment

Reading (all in ELMS):

Additional Resources

Class 13: April 28
Applications for Student Affairs & Higher Education

Reading (ELMS or online):
(1) ACPA–College Student Educators International. (2007). ASK standards: Assessment skills and knowledge content standards for student affairs practitioners and scholars. Washington, DC.

Additional Resources:


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**Class 14: May 5**

**Student presentations**

*Assignment due:*

Research Proposal