

**The Faculty of Psychology**  
**University of Bergen**  
Module in the training programme for researchers

Elective course offered by the Graduate School of Human Interaction  
and Growth (GHIG)

**Evaluation research: from competing paradigms to mixed  
methods**

**Contents:**

This course addresses methodological challenges in the evaluation of complex policies and interventions. Many social and educational interventions are necessarily complex, and the evaluation of such interventions can take a variety of approaches and address a multiplicity of distinct but inter-related research questions.

**Objectives:**

***General learning objectives:***

Traditionally, there have been competing paradigms in evaluation research, with very different emphases over a range of dimensions including outcome vs. process; measurement vs. explanation; quantitative vs. qualitative; evidence vs. theory. The course describes and assesses the relative merits of these competing approaches. It further describes recent developments in research methodology which integrate alternative perspectives through complementary use of mixed methods.

***Specific learning objectives***

After successful completion of the course, candidates should be able to:

**Knowledge**

- understand the strengths and weaknesses of theoretical evaluation designs
- understand the challenges of applying experimental designs to complex interventions

**Skills**

- distinguish different approaches to evaluation
- prepare a basic research design for different types of evaluation

**Competence**

- evaluate scientific publications of evaluations in terms of the objectives, design, method, and conclusion
- appreciate the advantages and disadvantages of combining mixed research methods in evaluation design

**Learning Requirements:**

Master Degree in disciplines relevant to educational sciences, psychology and public health.

**Description of Learning Materials and Media**

Books, electronically available papers, web sites.

**Teaching Semester**

March 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> 2013

**Language of Instruction**

English

**Teaching Methods**

Lectures, discussion groups, seminars.

***Own activity:***

Candidates will work in small groups to develop a research protocol, with review through discussion with the course co-ordinators.

**Evaluation**

The course will have a mandatory evaluation filled in online at the conclusion of the last course day. Filling in the evaluation is compulsory to receive a course certificate.

**Assessment / Examination Format**

Pass or fail. Pass with 80 % attendance of the lectures, seminars and group work, and the approval of a paper (10-15 pages) reflecting on relevant theoretical or empirical aspects of the candidate's project. The paper is to be evaluated (pass/fail) by the course coordinator or the appropriate course instructor.

**Ects**

3

**Course Coordinator**

Laurence Moore

**Contact Person**

Maria Luttgés Mathieu: [Maria.Luttges@hemil.uib.no](mailto:Maria.Luttges@hemil.uib.no)

**Relevant Reading**

Craig, P., P. Dieppe, et al. (2008). Developing and evaluating complex interventions: the new Medical Research Council guidance. *British Medical Journal*, 337, a1655.

Nutbeam D, Evaluating health promotion- progress, problems and solutions. *Health Promotion International* 1998: 13:27-44.

Oakley, A. (1998) Experimentation in social science: the case of health promotion, *Social Sciences in Health*, 4, pp. 73–89.

Pawson, R. D., and Tilley, N. *Realistic Evaluation*. London: Sage, 1997.

Rogers PJ (2007) Theory-based evaluation: reflections ten years on. *New Directions in Evaluation*,

114:63-81.

Shadish, W. R, Cook, T. D. & Campbell, D. T. (2002) *Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference* (Boston, MA, Houghton Mifflin