

Assessing Christian Education Ministry Effectiveness Online CE 755Z

Professor: [Stephen D. Lowe](#), Ph.D.
Elective. Three Hours

Please be sure to read and familiarize yourself with ALL content in this syllabus and in the online classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the course, Assessing Christian Education Ministry Effectiveness. Although I can't give you a personal welcome, as I might do in my on-campus course, I do want to welcome you warmly to this vital learning experience. I want this course to be a significant and vital part of your seminary education. You are one of many students taking advantage of the alternative delivery of high quality theological education through our EDEN distance learning network. Please visit the online classroom at <http://eden.erskine.edu>. I am available when you need me because we aren't limited by office hours or distance. I look forward to getting to know you better as we progress through the course materials. Anytime you experience difficulty or have a question about course content or course requirements, please use one of the communication means identified above to reach me. I pray God's wisdom as you expose yourself to the study of his Word.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to "educate persons for service in the Christian Church."

CONTACT INFORMATION



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Website http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics_Files/Faculty/SLowe.html

Please note: there is a processing fee associated with Incompletes.

COURSE PURPOSE

To help students understand and appreciate the importance and value of engaging in various forms of ministry assessment for the purpose of improving programs, ministries, and agencies of Christian Education.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Program evaluation principles and practices are integrated within a Christian education ministry context to form a comprehensive framework for conducting assessments of educational programs. Students are given opportunities to engage in the assessment of current Christian education ministries and to reflect upon the Biblical basis for the practice of ministry evaluation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. To facilitate student understanding of basic educational assessment and evaluation methods.
2. To encourage student awareness of educational assessment and evaluation so he/she can recognize the difference between competing models of evaluation.
3. To enable the student to use what he/she knows about evaluation and assessment in simulated and real Christian education ministry settings.
4. To facilitate student skills for analyzing Christian education ministry through the lens of educational evaluation tools.
5. To promote a student's ability to conceptualize the practice of educational evaluation and assessment through exposure to a variety of theoretical constructs.
6. To enhance student evaluation skills for use in Christian education ministries by developing his/her ability to critique evaluation and assessment tools and determine their relevance to concrete assessment situations.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

You may use Erskine Seminary's Virtual Bookstore at www.ecampus.com/erskine to order your textbooks for this course. Please click the "Shop by Course" link to see if the books required for this course are listed under the courses shown. If they are not available on ecampus, you may order them from other online book distributors.

1. Schuller, David S. (ed). *Rethinking Christian Education*. Chalice Press, 1993.
2. Hudson, Jill M. (2002). *Evaluating Ministry: Principles and Processes for Clergy and Congregations*. [Alban Institute](http://www.albaninstitute.org).

3. Stephen D. Lowe, unpublished manuscript, 2005. *Assessing Christian Education Ministry Effectiveness*, Available online.
4. Schaller, Lyle E. (1998). *44 Questions for Congregational Self-Appraisal*. Abingdon Press. (this text will not be required reading but will be required to fulfill an assignment)

COURSE RESOURCES

Click on the links below for information relevant to seminary policies

[Writing Theological Papers](#)

[Style & Form Standards](#)

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA AND SCALE

The following grading scale, from the Seminary catalog is used to assign a numeric value to each completed assignment. All scores are weighted equally. Your final grade is the average of each grade received. A letter grade will be computed on the basis of your average raw score using the following grade scale recently adopted by the Seminary faculty:

- A Level Work** = Exemplary ability to differentiate constituent parts; assess and critique theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts, proposals, and relevant literature; and the ability to reason in a logical and compelling manner.
- B Level Work** = Reflects above average grasp of the subject matter; displays a superior ability to use new knowledge in a creative manner; and can demonstrate an above average ability to discriminate among alternative viewpoints.
- C Level Work** = Adequate but not exceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; sufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and a satisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.
- D Level Work** = Inadequate mastery of basic facts and information presented in the course; insufficient or inappropriate use of common terms and language indicating an inadequate grasp of the material; and an inferior ability to analyze and judge proposals, ideas or concepts.

Erskine Seminary Grading Scale:

A	95-100	C+	84-85
A-	93-94	C	80-83
		C-	78-79
B+	91-92	D+	76-77
B	88-90	D	72-75
B-	86-87	D-	70-71
		F	0-69

Revised Spring '08

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

FAQ's

1. All assignments must be submitted via e-mail attachment (unless otherwise notified).
2. Please use Microsoft Word when submitting assignments electronically.
3. All assignments should be clearly marked on the e-mail subject line with the student's last name and assignment number.

COURSE PLATFORM

Erskine Seminary is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). According to the ATS Standard 10.3.4.3, "Institutions shall ensure that distance education programs provide appropriate opportunity for collaboration, personal development, interaction among peers within a community of learning, and supervised field or internship opportunities when appropriate to the degree program." It is with this stipulation that EDEN has implemented a web-based learning platform which will serve to provide a number of collaborative learning experiences. The learning platform is Moodle and according to their website, "Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses . . . and create effective online learning communities." You will be provided with additional information concerning Moodle tutorials, site information, and the peer mentoring program. In order to meet the online discussion component of this course, you will need:

- A computer (or access to a computer)
- Access to the Internet

COURSE COMPONENTS

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through four learning components:

1. **Lecture Component:** Mastery of course content will be accomplished through the student's active listening and reaction to audio taped lectures and questions covering the content of those lectures.
2. **Reading Component:** Exposure to the literature of the field relevant to the topic of this course will be accomplished through required readings as specified in this course syllabus. In addition, students are expected to react in writing to what they are required to read and to maintain a Reading Log.
3. **Reflection Component:** Students are expected to think critically and deeply about the subject matter of this course intellectually (theory) and pragmatically (practice). This is encouraged through a variety of writing assignments from which the student may choose. The student is expected to integrate in the writing requirements the various components of the course

including e-lectures, required readings, and other unplanned learning encounters with the professor or other members of the class.

4. **Evaluation Component:** All students take a proctored comprehensive final examination. The exam tests knowledge of core course concepts and information by responding to a series of essay questions.

5. **Collaborative Component:** Each student is expected to actively participate in the online peer learning dimension of this EDEN course. Please read the assignment description below for more details about how you can fulfill this requirement of the course.

Please Note: Successful completion of this distance learning course will require that you set your own schedule and discipline yourself to stay on schedule. If you are taking this course in Summer Term you will need to adjust the due dates to conform to the beginning and ending dates for Summer Term set by the seminary catalog.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Courses taken through EDEN are self-directed and self-paced with institutional, instructional, and technical support provided by Erskine Seminary. The time constraints of this course are self-imposed to a large degree. However, keep in mind that coursework must be completed within the seminary academic schedule for all courses. Each course assignment identifies the time required to complete it, all things being equal. Some variation in time required to complete an assignment is to be expected due to a variety of factors, not the least of which is your own self-discipline.

The following module system is a syllabus management system that will help guide you in the completion of course assignments.

Assignment One – Course Content

Master the content of course lectures by listening to all e-lectures and writing a one-page summary (double-spaced) of the content of the lectures. In your summary, discuss the major points made in the lecture series. Students will keep a BRIEF e-lecture log in which they indicate a few important things they have learned from each lecture. They will post their lecture log in **weekly** installments in the online classroom as part of the community building experience. Students are also encouraged to post questions and comments about the lectures and to interact with the professor and/or other students through the online community section.

Assignment Two – Reading

- **Read *Assessing Christian Education Ministry Effectiveness* manuscript by Lowe.**

Use the “Recommended Format for Reading Reports” at the end of this syllabus to write a one-page double-spaced critical reaction to the book. When you are finished writing it, please upload* it to the online classroom. There other students will read and respond to your work and the professor will grade it. You must also read at least one other student’s report on this same book and leave a response in the online classroom.

*Steps to upload your assignment:

1. Find the “Critical Reaction Paper” discussion forum on weeks 6, 8, and 10 of the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find assignment listed there.
3. Click on “Add a new discussion topic” and this will take you to the upload area
4. Type in your name and reaction paper title (i.e. Joe Smith’s Assessing CE Ministry paper) in the subject line.
5. Type a BRIEF explanation in the message section (i.e. Critical Reaction paper)
6. Click on the “browse” feature at the bottom of that paper and find your paper.
7. Double-click on your document and select “post to forum” shown at the bottom of the screen.

Steps to download (or read) others’ assignment:

1. Find the “Critical Reaction Paper” discussion forum on weeks 6, 8, and 10 of the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find student postings listed there.
3. Click on the title of the student posting listed under Discussion.
4. Click on the Word document in that posting.
5. Select “open” to read the document instantly or “save” to save the document to your desktop folder.
6. Post your comments related to the paper by hitting “reply” on the discussion board. Enter your comments in message section. Hit “post to forum” when finished.

- **Read *Evaluating Ministry* by Hudson.**

Use the “Recommended Format for Reading Reports” at the end of this syllabus to write a one-page double-spaced critical reaction to the book. When you are finished writing it, please upload it to the online classroom. There other students will read and respond to your work and the professor will grade it. You must also read at least one other student’s report on this same book and leave a response in the online classroom.

- **Read *Rethinking Christian Education* by Schaller.**

Use the “Recommended Format for Reading Reports” at the end of this syllabus to write a one-page double-spaced critical reaction to the book. When you are finished writing it, please upload it to the online classroom. There other students will read and respond to your work and the professor will grade it. You must also read at least one other student’s report on this same book and leave a response in the online classroom.

Assignment Three – Reflection

Using the book by Schaller and especially the questions contained in Chapter Two “What Do the Numbers Tell Us?” conduct a general evaluation of your church. If your church is small it can cover the entire congregation but if your church is large (200+ average attendance **44 Questions for Congregational Self-Appraisal**) you may focus your evaluation on only one program/ministry segment (i.e., Christian Education, Youth Ministry, etc.).

After you have collected the above data, select key portions of it to be presented in chart or graph form in order to highlight important patterns or trends. Once your data are collected and presented, write a three to five page analytical summary of your findings. In this summary, seek to ascertain: what patterns have emerged, what changes have taken place, what dynamics or forces were/are at work that contribute(d) to the observed patterns. Generally seek to understand what your data collection process has told you about this church. *Do not forget or neglect this section of your assignment!*

Assignment Four – Evaluation

1. When all other course assignments are completed and you have determined that you are ready to take the final exam, please contact me to make arrangements for taking the exam.
2. The final exam will test student comprehension and understanding over issues raised in the taped lectures and in the required textbooks.
3. When the Summative Examination is received the student will select five essay questions from among the ten listed and answer them fully and completely.

Overall Assignment - Collaborative

There is evidence to suggest that students who actively engage in online discussions earn higher scores than other students. Online discussions provide a rich and stimulating environment of collaboration, interaction, and community building. Students participating in online discussions tend to provide more thought-provoking comments, richly detailed responses, and insightful observations.

In order to facilitate collaborative learning opportunities, students will interact in the online community as directed by the course professor. **Additionally**, students will respond to at least one fellow classmates' contribution. Participation in these online discussions should include thoughtful and perceptive comments related to the posting. The following as guidelines are suggested for your consideration:

Online Discussion Rubric

Stays on Task:	The student follows teacher's instructions and guidance.	Occasionally the student gets off task and gets back on task without the need of the teacher's assistance.	The student is on task most of the time and is responsive to guidance meant to bring the student back on task.	The student starts out following the specific instructions of the assignment but rapidly moves off subject.	The student is unresponsive to instructor guidance.	
The student participates in the discussion in timely and substantive ways.	The student posts to the online discussion 4 or more times with posts that are on task and contribute in a substantive way to the posted question.	The student posts to the online discussion 3 times with posts that are on task and contribute in a substantive way to the posted question.	The student posts to the online discussion 2 times with posts that are on task and contribute in a substantive way to the posted question.	The student posts to the online discussion 1 times with a post that is on task and contributes in a substantive way to the posted question.	The student has not participated in ways that are on task and contribute in a substantive way to the posted question.	
The student demonstrates a knowledge base from assigned texts.	The student's posts are clearly built on familiarity with and comprehension of assigned materials.	The student's posts are clearly built on familiarity with and limited comprehension of assigned materials.	The student's posts are clearly built on some familiarity with and comprehension of assigned materials.	The student's posts are built on some familiarity with and limited comprehension of assigned materials.	The student's posts demonstrate a lack of familiarity with and comprehension of assigned materials.	

The following course outline is an organizational strategy designed to help you see at a glance what assignments are due at what period.

MODULE #1 – Lecture Component

All work for the first module should be completed four weeks from the semester start date.

Week	Lectures	Assignments Due
1	E-lecture (digital audio) 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. Discussion board posting Begin reading texts
2	E-lecture (digital audio) 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and

		understanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posting • Continue reading texts
3	E-lecture (digital audio) 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. • Discussion board posting • Continue reading texts
4	E-lecture (digital audio) 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the lectures concentrating on comprehension and understanding. • Lecture summary paper due. • Discussion board posting • Continue reading texts

MODULE #2 – Reading Component

All work for the second module should be completed ten weeks from the semester start date.

Week	Books to read	Assignments Due
5	<i>Assessing Christian Education Ministry Effectiveness.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start critical reaction paper • Discussion board posting
6	Read <i>Assessing Christian Education Ministry Effectiveness.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical reaction paper due • Discussion board posting
7	Read <i>Evaluating Ministry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start critical reaction paper • Discussion board posting
8	Read <i>Evaluating Ministry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical reaction paper due • Discussion board posting
9	Read <i>Rethinking Christian Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start critical reaction paper • Discussion board posting • Work on Church Evaluation
10	Read <i>Rethinking Christian Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical reaction paper due • Discussion board posting • Work on Church Evaluation

MODULE #3 – Reflection Component

All work for the third module should be completed fourteen weeks from the semester start date.

Week	Books to read	Assignments Due
11	44 Questions for Congregational Self-Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Church Evaluation • Discussion board posting
12	44 Questions for Congregational Self-Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Church Evaluation • Discussion board posting

13	44 Questions for Congregational Self-Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Church Evaluation Discussion board posting
14	44 Questions for Congregational Self-Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church Evaluation due • Discussion board posting

Recommended Format for Reading Reports

- I. **Purpose of the author.** Why was the book written? Often the author tells the purpose quite specifically, or you may need to infer his or her purpose.
- II. **Highlights.** What two to five propositions, questions, or conclusions best represent what the book is about.
- III. **Critical commentary.** From your viewpoint what could or should be said about strengths and weaknesses of the material? What questions are well answered? What new questions are raised? Somewhere between 2-3 pages.
- IV. **Notable quotations.** Five to ten per book. Select things you might want to directly quote in a paper you might write later. Be sure to show the page number for each quotation.

NOTE: You may find it best to write your reports in numbered sections as above, but for a more thorough and readable composition, a careful rewriting to integrate the parts is often desirable.

RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

From the Seminary Catalog, "the grade of 'I' or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" normally is given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing all course requirements. If a grade of "I" is given for a course the remaining course work must be submitted for grading prior to the final date established in the current Seminary Catalog. Otherwise, the grade of "I" automatically becomes a grade of "F." For further details, please read the current Seminary Catalog.

Any late assignment will be automatically reduced by one letter grade regardless of reason. *Please make this class a high priority and keep ahead of assignments in order to compensate for the exigencies of ministry.*

Inclusive Language Policy. The Seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary Catalog stands as an example of recommended usage.

Once you have completed, signed, and submitted a registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a BINDING CONTRACT, and business office billing will be based on this registration. If you decide not to take this class, a drop/add form must be completed, including securing the appropriate signatures. Failure to properly withdraw from the class will result in receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS POLICY.

Plagiarism, defined as the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, is a clear violation of the Erskine Seminary Honor Code as set forth in the [Student Handbook](#) and *Seminary Catalog*. It is also a clear violation of the will of God in regard to taking something that belongs to someone else without his/her permission. The penalty for an infraction of the plagiarism policy is severe and may potentially result in the permanent dismissal of a student from the seminary. If you have any questions concerning the appropriate use of referenced sources, please contact me prior to submitting your work for grading.

Please visit these websites for more information about plagiarism:

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

<http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html>

Select Bibliography

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