

REC 4031
Leisure Systems Design & Evaluation (3cr.)
Fall 2006
Wednesday 1:00-4:00

Instructor

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Required Readings

Field, A. (2005). *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS. (2nd Edition). (and sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll)*. London: Sage Publications.
Dahl, B. and D. Molnar. (2003). *Anatomy of a Park (3rd Edition)*. Long Grove: Waveland Press Inc.
Other readings will be distributed in class or made available in the library.

Course Description (from catalog)

The course will explore the design and evaluation of leisure services from a macro-systems approach. Students will examine the overall assessment, planning, design, maintenance, and evaluation process for recreational parks and facilities through a management perspective. **Prerequisite** : Junior standing or permission of the instructor.

Content and Structure

This course suffers from an identity crisis. This could be a course about park and recreation facility design—or recreation facility planning—or recreation program planning—or evaluation of recreation programs and facilities—or evaluation methods. The concept of ‘design’ assumes planning activities and the concept of ‘evaluation’ assumes research activities. Research is often underutilized in planning activity—which, of course, is a grave mistake. In this course, we will attempt to bring planning and research activities together by doing projects that involve research to inform planning processes.

This will be an applied course with a project focus. Students will be assigned to project teams and students will be engaged in service-learning projects over the semester. In class activities and exercises will provides students with a “toolkit” of planning and evaluation methods that allow them to complete their projects.

The essentials of recreation area planning and design will be covered primarily by our textbook, “Anatomy of a Park”. Attention will be given to environmentally responsible park design and planning practices. Parks are, by definition, for people but we should plan our parks in ways that balance the recreation experience for different groups while protecting the natural environment. Students should develop a general understanding of various components critical to environmentally sensitive park design (e.g., soils, water, vegetation and wildlife).

The essentials of evaluating recreation system components—people, facilities, and services—will be covered by learning about social science research methods. Evaluation of recreation systems includes, but is not limited to, resource inventories, needs assessment, importance-performance analysis, benchmarking, and survey research. We will spend considerable time on survey research because it is one of the key methods used in evaluation research. Social science research involves the conceptualization, operationalization, measurement, and analysis of key variables. Quantitative data collected in survey research is usually analyzed using statistics to draw inferences about characteristics of a population from a sample because it is often not feasible to evaluate every system participant. We will learn applied statistical analysis to interpret survey data through lab and class sessions focused on how to use the statistical software SPSS. Students will gain experience entering data, running various descriptive and inferential analyses to answer research questions, and interpreting the output from SPSS.

As a result, this course is made up of two related components. We will discuss various aspects of recreation planning and design. And we will learn the strategies and techniques to conduct research to evaluate future system needs or current system effectiveness.

Objectives in relation to NRPA/AALR Accreditation Standards

1. To gain knowledge of the interrelationship between leisure behavior and the natural environment. (8.05)
2. To understand environmental ethics, the relationship of environmental ethics to the philosophy of planning, design and development, and the potential impact of planning, design and development upon the environment. (8.06)
3. To understand and be able to analyze programs, services, and resources in relationship to participation requirements. (8.21)
4. To understand the procedures and techniques for assessment of leisure needs. (8.22)
5. To understand the principles and procedures for planning leisure services and assessing and evaluating resources, areas and facilities, and associated environmental impacts. (8.23)
6. To gain knowledge of the principles and procedures for proper social, cultural and environmental design of leisure services, areas, and facilities. (8.24)
7. To gain knowledge of the purpose, basic procedures and interpretation, and application of research and evaluation methodology related to leisure services. (8.25)
8. To be able to apply computer and statistical techniques to assessment, planning and evaluation processes. (8.26)
9. To be able to formulate, plan for implementation, and evaluate the extent to which goals and objectives for the leisure service and for groups and individuals within the service have been met. (8.28)
10. To understand and be able to implement principles and procedures related to the operation and care of resources, areas, and facilities. (8.32)

Evaluation

• **Attendance is required.** We will spend time both in and outside of the classroom on projects and activities. Your attendance is critical to your success in understanding the subject matter.

The weighting of class assessment will be as follows:

Attendance and Participation: 20%
Class project and presentation: 30%
Homework and Quizzes: 15%
Mid-Term Exam: 15%
Final Exam: 20%

Total 100%

100% - 93% A	79% - 77% C+ < 60% F
92% - 90% A-	76% - 73% C
89% - 87% B+	72% - 70% C-
86% - 83% B	69% - 67% D+
82% - 80% B-	66% - 63% D
62% - 60% D-	

Course Policies

1. Homework should be professionally presented. Spelling, grammar, and general presentation counts. Spelling and grammar will consistently account for 20% of the point total for all out-of-class written assignments.
2. Late submissions are unprofessional, or in more simple language, BAD—B.A.D.!!! A lateness penalty of 10% per day will be assessed. Extraordinary circumstances (such as a death in the family) should be discussed with the instructor as soon as they come up. Leave from college due to medical conditions can (and should) be documented with a doctor's note.
3. Plagiarism is a serious offense. Students found guilty of plagiarism will fail the class—no exceptions.
4. EXAMS MUST BE TAKEN ON THE DAY ON WHICH THEY ARE SCHEDULED. ANY MISSED EXAM WILL RESULT IN A ZERO. If you know you will have a conflict with one of the scheduled exam dates, see me at least **one-week** in advance to reschedule.
5. **All course activities are governed by the Student Conduct Code of Green Mountain College. As such, ideals of academic honesty, integrity, human rights, and responsible citizenship are expected.**

REC 4031: Leisure Systems Design and Evaluation
Tentative Semester Schedule

Week 1: Wednesday 8/30

- Introductions
- Basics of Site Design and Recreation Planning
- What differentiates “good” design from “poor” design?
- Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures, Actions
- Benchmarking/Needs assessment
- Introduce service-learning project, assign groups & responsibilities

Reading Assignments :

Anatomy of a Park, Chapters 1 and 2
Handout on Survey Research

Week 2: Wednesday 9/6

- Field Trip 1—Pine Hill Park: Vans Confirmed

Reading Assignments :

Anatomy of a Park, Chapters 3 and 4
Handout Chapter 3—*Trails: Pathways for People* (Hultsman et al.)

Written Assignment

Homework: Discuss what you believe to be the five most important pieces of information about trail design.

Week 3: Wednesday 9/13 NO CLASS MEETING

Monday 9/11 7:30 pm. Middletown Springs Town Plan Meeting
Survey Design Team required to attend

Reading Assignments:

Anatomy of a Park, Chapters 5 and 6
Discovering Statistics Using SPSS, Chapter 1

Written Assignment

Discovering Statistics Using SPSS, Chapter 1
Homework: Answer Questions 1-7, pp. 35-36

Week 4: Wednesday 9/20

- Statistics Workshop #1
- Quiz # 1

Reading Assignments :

Anatomy of a Park, Chapters 7,8, and 9
Field, Chapter 3

Written Assignments:

- Homework: Statistics Exercise #1 (handout)

Week 5: Wednesday 9/27

- Field Trip 2—Lake St. Catherine (Campgrounds, Boat launches, and Beaches)

Reading Assignments:

Discovering Statistics Using SPSS, Chapter 7

Written Assignments:

- Homework: Statistics Exercise #2 (handout)

Week 6: Wednesday 10/4

- Statistics Workshop #2

Week 7: Wednesday 10/11

- Statistics Workshop #3
- Midterm exam

Week 8: Wednesday 10/18

- Qualitative Data Collection and Data Analysis

Reading Assignments:

Handout on Qualitative Data

Written Assignments:

- Homework: Qualitative Analysis Exercise

Week 9: Wednesday 10/25

- Field Trip 3—TBA--Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Historic Park (Nature Trails and Visitor Centers) or Coolidge State Park

Week 10: Wednesday 11/1

- Student Presentations

Week 11: Wednesday 11/8

- Recreation Seminar Conference (mandatory attendance)

Written Assignments:

- Homework: Conference review assignment

Week 12: Wednesday 11/15

- TBA

Week 13: Wednesday 11/22

- **No Class: Thanksgiving Break**

Week 14: Wednesday 11/29

- Summary Info on Evaluation, Research Methods, & Statistics

Week 15: Wednesday 12/6

- Review for the Final Exam

FINAL EXAM: Check Final Exam Schedule

Class Projects

- 1) Middletown Springs Town Plan Resident Survey
 - a. Middle Towns Springs is revising its 5 year town plan that will guide future conservation, development, services, and quality of life. The last town plan was controversial wherein several residents challenged the initial draft plan. Students engaged in this project will work with the Middletown Springs Planning Commission to develop, administer, and report on a resident survey of town planning issues and needs. Specific skills acquired will include questionnaire design, sampling design, survey administration, data analysis, and report writing.
 - i. Project Team 1 (4 students)—Survey Design
 - ii. Project Team 2 (3 students)—Survey Administration
 - iii. Project Team 3 (4 students)—Survey Data Analysis
- 2) Middletown Springs Town Plan Benchmark Analysis
 - a. Students in this project will assist the Middletown Springs plan revising by conducting benchmark analysis of Middletown Springs with other communities in the areas of recreation programs and facilities, education, land conservation, economic development, and other possible measures. Data collection will consist of interviews and archival research.
 - i. Project Team 1 (4 students)
- 3) Pine Hill Park Assessment and Plan
 - a. Pine Hill Park is a 300 acre park in the Rutland city limits that has been developed for mountain biking recreation. Students engaged in this project will review the park's history, evaluation current park facilities and programs, and prepare a prospective park plan.
 - i. Project Team 1 (4 students)