ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: SYLLABUS

Ryan Smith, Director of University Assessment Services – rlsmith@ilstu.edu – 815-325-8971

WELCOME TO ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

I serve as the Director of University Assessment Services at ISU. I teach this course because I enjoy seeing you learn about assessment and learning from you. I have 20 years of experience in institutional research, assessment, and planning & budgeting in both academic and student affairs. I have worked in 2-year and 4-year settings.

This course will use Canvas as the course management tool. In the event Canvas is not functioning, please email me directly at rlsmith@ilstu.edu.

WHAT LEADERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION DO WITH ASSESSMENT

This course is designed for leaders in postsecondary and other settings. In *Coordinating Student Affairs Assessment* and *Leading Assessment for Student Success for Student Affairs*, the authors outline several tenets of assessment in higher education. You will learn about the tenets in this course:

- Know the why and purpose of assessment
- Commit to student learning as a primary focus
- Build capacity, engagement, talent & knowledge
- Cultivate a sustainable culture of assessment
- Develop an assessment infrastructure
- Use technology to advance assessment
- Lead logistical tasks
- Incorporate design thinking into assessment
- Connect assessment to planning and budgeting
- Develop assessment plans
- Determine appropriate methods
- Cultivate ethical assessment practice
- Incorporate social justice into assessment planning
- Navigate politics
- Use assessment results
- Evaluate the effectiveness of an assessment system

TEACHING & LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

Learning is like a cell phone. There is hardware (the class structure and meetings) and apps (assignments, discussions, etc.). Although your phone's hardware is in place, there is a lot of flexibility in how **you** design and use the apps in this course.

Learning is intentional (outcome-driven) and serendipitous (discovery along the way).

Learning improves over time and people learn at different speeds.

Learning anything involves effort and practice.

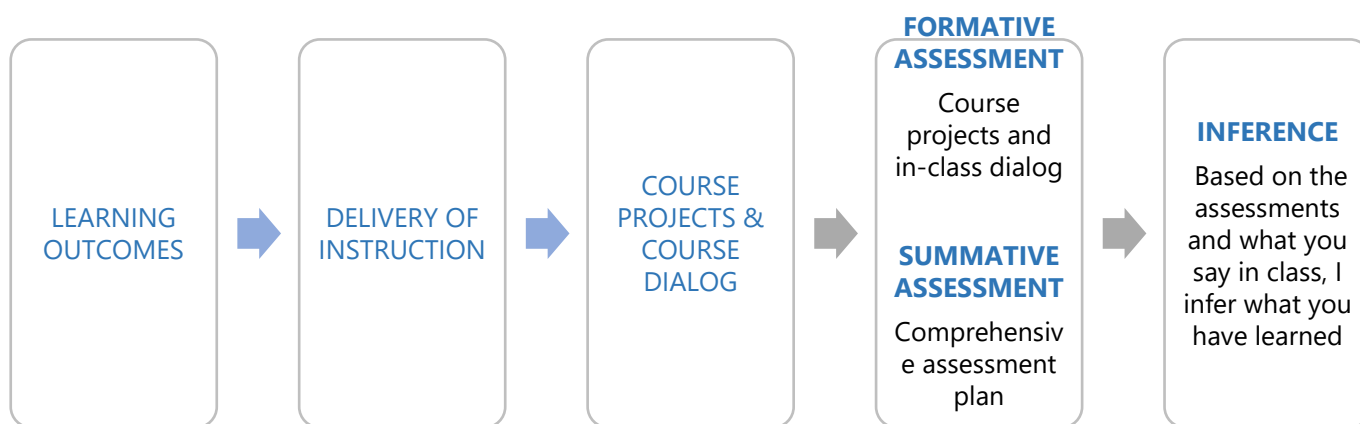Prior learning, motivation, and experience matter in learning.

Learning encompasses social, emotional, behavioral and cognitive aspects.

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes are statements of what you should **know** and **be able to do** at the end of this class. All students will have opportunities to demonstrate their attainment of the learning outcomes. I will review the evidence you show me through course projects and classroom discussions. I then provide feedback as to whether the outcome was achieved. **The goal of feedback is improvement, not judgment.** The model below describes how this works:

LEARNING OUTCOMES	→	DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION	→	COURSE PROJECTS & COURSE DIALOG	→	**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT** Course projects and in-class dialog **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT** Comprehensive assessment plan	→	**INFERENCE** Based on the assessments and what you say in class, I infer what you have learned

Learning outcomes are based on the ACPA / NASPA Assessment, Evaluation and Research (AER) framework, ACPA Assessment, Skills, & Knowledge (ASK) standards and Assessment Skills Framework (ASF). These competencies are in Canvas in the *Syllabus and Competencies folder*.

LEARNING MATERIALS

Learning materials are presented in the course outline and outcome mapping on the following pages. All of the resources are in Canvas. There is no textbook for the course.. Most of the readings are short articles or book chapters.

COURSE OUTLINE & OUTCOME MAPPING

The course is delivered in seven topics:

1. Assessment & Evaluation Foundations
2. Assessment Design & Planning
3. Program Outcomes Assessment Plans
4. Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans
5. Assessment Research
6. Assessment Ethics & Bias
7. Using Results & Building a Culture of Evidence

Each subtopic has an outcome and an application. Applications can be used to build an evidence file for your academic and professional use. You can use your evidence file to demonstrate to current and future employers what skills you have.

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Dates are approximate. I anticipate a few days off during the semester for conferences, holidays, and other things. I will keep you abreast of where we are in class sessions.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION FOUNDATIONS

TOPICS	LEARNING MATERIALS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	APPLICATION
INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE	NASPA Assessment, Evaluation, & Research Knowledge Community blog posts (3)		Assessment leadership
PURPOSES OF COLLEGE & LEARNING	**What Straight-A Students Get Wrong,** Grant**,** New York Times.	AER 3	Identify the relationship between grades & outputs
INTRODUCTION TO ASSESSMENT	**Introduction, pp. 1-6,** Patton**,** Utilization-focused Evaluation.	ASK 12.3	Write an assessment metaphor
TEACHING & LEARNING PARADIGMS	**Double-Loop Learning: A Concept and Process for Leadership Educators,** Cartwright, Journal of Leadership Education.	ASK 11.4	Paradigm game
ASSESSMENT PURPOSES	**Assessing Your Program-Level Assessment Pla***n***,** Hatfield**,** IDEA Paper.	AER 3 ASF 0.1, 0.3	What do you want to know?
TYPES OF RESEARCH	**Assessment, Evaluation & Research**, **pp. 28-32**, Wise, Student Affairs Assessment, Evaluation, & Research: A Guidebook for Graduate Students & New Professionals.	ASK 3.1	Evaluate a research scenario, Research application game
DEFINING ASSESSMENT	**What is Assessment? pp. 7-13,** Suskie. Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide.	AER 1 ASF 0.2, 0.3	Write your own definition of assessment
COURSE OVERVIEW	Planning for the semester		

ASSESSMENT DESIGN & PLANNING

TOPICS	LEARNING MATERIALS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	APPLICATION
PLANNING ASSESSMENT PROJECTS	**Atul Gawande's Checklist for Surgery Success.** NPR Morning Edition. **Planning & Designing Individual Assessment Projects,** Henning**,** Student affairs assessment: Theory to practice. **Design Thinking Assessment: Application to Student Affairs,** Allworth, Design Thinking in Student Affairs	ASK 1.1, 1.7, 3.4	Assessment Design Template
ASSESSMENT PLANNING & BUDGETING	**Leading Logistical & Administrative Assessment Tasks,** Keen**,** Coordinating Student Affairs Divisional Assessment.	ASK 1.8 ASF 3.2	Distinguish between & indirect assessment costs
ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS	**Step 1: Engage Stakeholders, CDC.**	ASK 1.6	Identify engagement strategies
SOCIAL JUSTICE ASSESSMENT	**Indigenous Assessment,** Wall**,** Exemplars of Assessment in Higher Education. **Focus on Students & Equity in Assessment to Improve Learning,** Montenegro, Student-focused Learning: Involving Students in the Learning Process.	ASK 1.5 ASF 8.3	Social Justice Assessment Scenarios; Social Justice Assessment Planning
ALIGNMENT & MAPPING	**Strategic Assessment**, **pp. 85-89**, Wise, Student Affairs Assessment, Evaluation, & Research: A Guidebook for Graduate Students & New Professionals.	ASK 1.2 ASF 2.2	Evaluate a curriculum map

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PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLANNING

TOPICS	LEARNING MATERIALS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	APPLICATION
EVALUABILITY	**What is the Context? Are the Questions Evaluable?** , Alkin, Evaluation Essentials.	ASK 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 12.3 ASF FOUNDATION	Evaluability scenario
PROGRAM THEORY & FIDELITY	**The Importance of Implementation Fidelity Data for Evaluating Program Effectiveness,** Fisher, Assessment Matters. **Elevating Program Theory and Implementation Fidelity in Higher Education,** Smith**,** Research & Practice in Assessment.	ASK 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 12.3 ASF 2.1, 4.1-4.3	Build a logic model
WRITING PROGRAM GOALS	**It's Not Just Semantics: Managing Outcomes vs Outputs,** Mills-Schofield**,** Harvard Bus. Rv. Blog. **Writing Good Goals (Evaluation Briefs 3, 3a and 3b).** CDC.	ASK 2.1	Write program goals
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PURPOSES*	**What is Evaluation?**, Boultemis, The ABCs of Evaluation.	AER 3	Evaluate a scenario
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT TYPES*	**Types of Assessment,** Henning**,** Student Affairs Assessment: Theory to Practice.	ASK 3.1, 3.5	Choose the best assessment type
RUBRICS*	**What is a Rubric?,** Stevens Introduction to Rubrics.	ASK 4.3 ASF 3.6	Critique an assessment plan
META-ASSESSMENT	**Criteria for Evaluating Effective Outcomes-based Assessment Practice,** Brescianai**,** Demonstrating Student Success: A Practical Guide to Outcomes-based Assessment of Learning & Development in Student Affairs.	ASF 8.1	Critique an assessment plan

LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLANNING

TOPICS	LEARNING MATERIALS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	APPLICATION
LEARNING OUTCOMES MODELS	**A Conceptual Model for Assessment, pp. 16-22 & 30-37,** Astin, Assessment for Excellence.	ASK 2.1 ASF 1.1	Create an IEO model
LEARNING THEORY & DOMAINS	**Introduction to Bloom's Taxonomy.** University of Central Florida, Faculty Center.	ASK 2.1	Identify learning myths
DIRECT & INDIRECT MEASURES	**Direct vs Indirect Assessment of Student Learning**. DePaul University, Teaching Commons	ASK 3.2	Make indirect measures direct
WRITING LEARNING OUTCOMES	**How to Identify Learning Aims,** Kerr, The Curricular Approach to Student Affairs	ASF 1.1	Write learning outcomes

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ASSESSMENT RESEARCH

TOPICS	LEARNING MATERIALS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	APPLICATION
EPISTEMOLOGY & ACTION RESEARCH	**Epistemology**, Henning, Student Affairs Assessment: Theory to Practice.	ASK 1.5, 2.2	Epistemological inventory
VALIDITY & RELIABILITY	**Validity & Reliability,** Salkind**,** Statistics for People Who Think They Hate Statistics.	ASK 7.3 ASF 3.3	Evaluate validity scenarios
ASSESSMENT RESEARCH	**Methodology**, pp. 95-112, Wise, Student Affairs Assessment, Evaluation, & Research: A Guidebook for Graduate Students & New Professionals. **Design Thinking Model**, Allworth, Design Thinking in Student Affairs.	ASK 3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6 ASF 5.1-5.2	Assessment research jeopardy
SURVEYS	**Survey Design,** Henning, Student Affairs Assessment: Theory to Practice.	ASK 5.1 ASF 3.2	Evaluate a survey
INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUPS	**Interviews & Focus Groups,** Henning, Student Affairs Assessment: Theory to Practice.	ASK 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8	Moderator guide / Code NSSE comments
BIG DATA	**Are Students Socially Connected? Check Their Dining-hall Swipe Data.** Chronicle of Higher Education. Angela Parnell, You Are a Data Person – browse or watch video	ASK 3.7 ASF 6.7	Evaluate a visual analytic

ASSESSMENT ETHICS & BIAS

TOPICS	LEARNING MATERIALS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	APPLICATION
ASSESSMENT ETHICS	**Ethics,** Henning**,** Student Affairs Assessment: Theory to Practice.	ASK 10.1, 10.2 ASF 8.3	Ethics scenarios
ASSESSMENT BIAS	None	ASK 4.5 ASF 8.3	Find bias in an assessment

USING RESULTS & BUILDING A CULTURE OF EVIDENCE

TOPICS	LEARNING MATERIALS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	APPLICATION
CAPACITY BUILDING	**Building Capacity in Student Affairs Assessment,** Bentrim, Coordinating Student Affairs Assessment. **A Coaching Model for Student Affairs Assessment**, Slager, Assessment Matters.	ASK 13.1	Building Evaluation Capacity
POLITICS & BARRIERS	**Politics**, Henning, Student Affairs Assessment: Theory to Practice.	ASK 12.1, 12.4. 12.5	Politics inventory
USING RESULTS	**Disseminate Data to Leverage Buy-in and Promote Utility on Campu**s, Christakis, Leading Assessment for Student Success: Ten Tenets that Change Culture and Practice in Student Affairs.	ASF 7.1	Assessment story in six words
CULTURE OF EVIDENCE	**Building Talent & Increasing Assessment Knowledge.** V. Wise & R. Aaron. Coordinating Student Affairs Divisional Assessment.	AER 12 ASF 8.2	Culture of assessment priorities
REVIEW	Bring your comprehensive paper drafts or outlines for a review session in the last class – Dec 8		

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COURSE PROJECTS

Outside of Class

Please submit all course projects in Word. Due dates subject to change.

- Assessment Leadership Reflection
- Assessment Budgeting
- Incorporating EDI Principles in Assessment & Evaluation
- Engaging Stakeholders
- **Assessment Critique**
- Evaluate a Visual Analytic
- **Comprehensive Assessment Plan**

In Class

There where be 2 or 3 in class projects per session. Some in class work may be moved out of class.

COURSE PROJECT SUBMISSION

How to submit projects. Please submit course projects through Canvas in Microsoft Word or Qualtrics links. If Canvas is down or isn't working, e-mail it to me.

Style. I have no preference in terms of submission style. If you want to practice using APA in this class, that's fine.

Feedback. I read every assignment and provide feedback through comments directly in Microsoft Word or Canvas. Some feedback will just be a "check." Other feedback will be more detailed.

Due dates. Projects are due the day they are due. Shocking, I know 😊. Refer to the section on late work in course policies for more information.

Grading. This course uses *specifications grading*. Specification grades are tied to class progress, participation, and performance. Why do I use specifications grading? In my experience, grades incentivize students to be strategic learners, not deep learners.[1] And many students find grades anxiety-inducing. I encourage students to use this opportunity in graduate school to focus on deep learning.

Two other things you need to know about grading:

1. A grade is not an evaluation of you as a person. If you get a mark you don't like, it doesn't define you as a person. It just means that you didn't provide enough evidence that you know the material. That's all. Just try again (time permitting).
2. A grade is based on the submission of your work **and** the quality of it.

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[1] I need to clarify that I am not anti-grades or anti-points. Many instructors use grades and points and it works well. Specifications grading is just something that works for me and has been successful in the past.
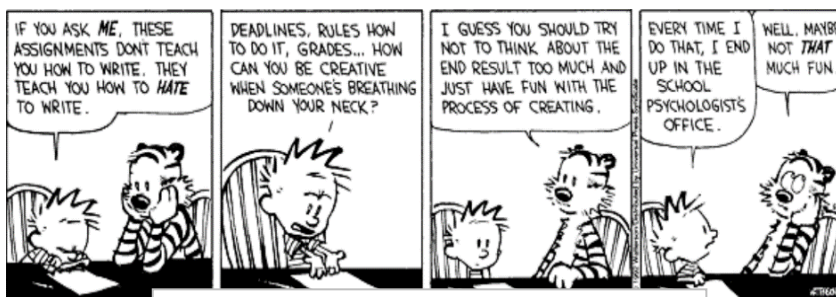
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Here's the approximate breakdown: I give about 20% for the out of class work, 25% for in-class work, 20% for the critique and 35% for the comprehensive plan.

What a Final Course Grade Means

A = **A**ll good! Lots of ✓ and ✓+.

B = **B**asically fine, like a convenience store apple. Nearly all ✓.

C = **C**'mon, this is graduate school. Mostly ✓, but too many –, ? and 0.

D = **D**id something happen?

F = **F**orget about it.

Calvin & Hobbes, Bill Watterson

Performance Criteria

Assessment	Meaning
0	A 0 means there is nothing for me to assess. Really late work is included here (0).
?	There is a misunderstanding about this task. You can try again, though. I'll give you 168 hours to try again. You can do this twice over the course of the semester.
-	You are not there yet. Relevant literature and the obvious is just repeated and restated, if it is present at all. Little to no reference to student experience or expertise. Little to no evaluation of discipline ideas or new solutions. Content is minimal (a few sentences for each answer). You have 168 hours to try again. You can do this twice over the course of the semester.
✓	Relevant literature is analyzed and applied. Some reference to student experience and expertise. An analysis of the problem and some solutions are presented. Content explores the topic in sufficient detail (as determined by the instructor) to demonstrate an ability to analyze and apply the issue.
✓+	Relevant literature is cited, evaluated and synthesized into your own ideas. Students incorporate their own experience and expertise. Students evaluate discipline ideas and propose how to apply new solutions.

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Participation, Progress, & Performance

Projects(s)	Participation	Progress	Performance (-)	Performance (✓)	Performance (✓+)
In-class participation	See Performance criteria.	n/a	Little to no contribution to classroom discussions.	Attending and actively engaged in all the classes.	Attending and actively engaged in all the classes.
In-class projects	Sharing your in-class project ideas with the rest of the class.	Application of what was learned in other parts of the course.	See performance criteria table.	See performance criteria table.	See performance criteria table.
Out of class projects	Course project completion and submission. Engaged discussion about the CAP summaries in class.	Improvement between in-class projects, class discussion, and course projects.	See performance criteria table.	See performance criteria table.	See performance criteria table.
Assessment Critique	Course project completion and submission. Engaged discussion about the Assessment Critique summary in class.	Application of what was learned in other parts of the course.	No use of the meta-assessment checklist or rubric. Answers to the critique questions lack substance, cite no literature, and just repeat the prompts.	Use of the meta-assessment checklist or rubric. Answers to the critique questions reflect some substance, might cite literature, and go beyond the prompts (analysis and application).	Use of the meta-assessment checklist, rubric, or both. Answers to the critique questions reflect substance, cite literature, and go beyond the prompts (evaluation and synthesis).
Comprehensive Assessment Plan	Course project completion and submission. Engaged discussion in the in-class peer review.	Setting goals in the faculty-student conference meeting and following through in the project.	Completion of most of the checklist items. Most items receive a "✓," but many are "-." Reflects minimal understanding of assessment.	Completion of most of the checklist items. Obtaining at least a "✓" on all completed checklist items. There might be a few "-." The plan reflects an understanding of assessment.	Completion of most of the checklist items. Obtaining at least a "✓" on all the checklist items. The plan demonstrates that an understanding of assessment can be translated into creating a meaningful plan.

COURSE POLICIES

Syllabus Amendments

A syllabus is three things: 1) a planning guide, 2) a communications tool and 3) a supportive instrument to help you learn the material. It's not a contract. It's an article of good faith. Every attempt is made to provide an accurate overview of the course. However, circumstances may require modifications while the course is in progress.

Safety and Security

Illinois State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the University community. Ask students to ensure they have downloaded the SafeRedbirds app. Also, note the information posted in each classroom about emergency shelters and evacuation assembly areas (both are indicated on stickers inside every classroom).

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

ISU remains committed to creating and maintaining a working, learning and living environment that is welcoming, supportive, respectful, inclusive, diverse and free from discrimination and harassment. In addition, the Inclusive Community Response Team (ICRT) serves students by fostering an open and inclusive campus and responding to instances of hate and bias. You can learn more about how the team can help and report concerns on the ICRT website. The Multicultural Outreach Team (MCOT) is a group of staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students in Student Counseling Services dedicated to fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive university community for our minoritized students. MCOT offers workshops which promote dialogue about identity, empathy, stereotypes, bias, privilege, power, white supremacy, and systemic racism. Students can learn more about MCOT at https://counseling.illinoisstate.edu/outreach/multicultural-outreach-team/

Students with Disabilities

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is appropriating someone else's work without attribution. Graduate students should know what this is, but to clarify: copying and pasting an idea from a web page, journal article, another student, or pretty much anywhere else without citing the source is plagiarism. More info: https://deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/conflict/conduct/code/academic.php If you are stressed, out of time, out of energy, lack an understanding of the material, or for some other reason feel the urge to compromise your academic integrity, don't do it. Please call me first and we'll work through the issue together. Reading your genuine, direct voice and ideas is more important to me than perfection. You be you – don't worry about what you think I might want to hear.

Attendance

If you need to miss class, you may need to provide me with a 1-2 summary of all the readings / topics and complete all in-class work. I may also ask that you schedule a meeting with me to ensure that you have a grasp of the material. Some in-class projects cannot be made up outside of class. This is at the discretion of the instructor and could vary on an individual student basis. Don't take it personally.

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Student Counseling Services

If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, lost, anxious, depressed or are struggling with personal issues, I am here for you and will listen without judgment. You should be aware of Student Counseling Services (SCS). These services are free and completely confidential. SCS is located at 320 Student Services Building, 309-438-3655.

Well Being

It's hard to learn if you're hungry or in a difficult place financially. If you are having difficulty affording groceries, accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or securing a safe and stable place to live, help may be available. I urge you to contact the Dean of Students Office to learn more.

Here's the Deal with Late Course Projects

Due dates aren't arbitrary benchmarks. They are integral part of the learning process. Here's why:

1. To provide you feedback about what and how much you are learning. This helps you improve over time. If you submit a substantial amount of coursework the last week of the semester, you lose the opportunity for improvement.
2. To inform instruction while the course is in progress (formative assessment) and at the end of the course (summative assessment).

Here's the deal:

- *1 to 48 hours:* This is reasonable a twice a semester. Life happens. Just let me know.
- *49 to 167 hours:* Your work moves to the bottom of the que and I can't guarantee I'll have a chance to review it. If you find yourself in this time and space, you need to contact me.
- *168 hours or more (a week):* We need to figure this out. You'll probably need an incomplete and finish the course after the semester. You do not want to be in Incomplete Land.