

# Spring 2026 ITLS-6510-IO2 XL Syllabus

## ITLS 6510 Research and Evaluation in Instructional Technology

**Spring 2026**

**ITLS 6510 Research and Evaluation in Instructional Technology**

**Professor:** Kristin Searle

Contact Information: Located on the "start here" page for this course

### **Course Description**

As current and future industry and educational professionals, academic research is something that can assist you in doing your job better. You may be asked to implement ideas from research in your classroom or you may need to understand the latest trends in educational technology and adult learning to build better trainings. Academic research can help you do all of those things – if you understand how it works and how to access the information you need. This course is intended to make you an educated consumer of relevant educational research, including an understanding of the basic types of research, how the research process works, and current hot topics in instructional technology and learning sciences research. Emphasis is placed on critical reading, analysis, and synthesis of published research findings.

### **Course Objectives**

- Students will develop a basic understanding of research paradigms, kinds of research, and the research process as relevant to instructional technology and learning sciences.
- Students will develop a basic understanding of evaluation and be able to distinguish between research and evaluation.
- Students will develop skills in locating reliable and relevant research to address problems of practice.
- Students will develop their abilities to critically read and analyze academic research.
- Students will develop their abilities to synthesize research findings from multiple scholarly publications and build an argument.
- Students will develop their abilities to create an evaluation plan.
- Students will develop a basic understanding of current hot topics related to research in instructional technology and learning sciences.

### **Course Format**

Delivery of this course is online, through the Canvas learning management system. Each week of the course begins and ends on a **Monday**. When Monday is a holiday, assignments will be due the following day.


You can expect the following from the instructor:

- Weekly overviews or mini-lectures that will offer you some background on the week's readings.
- A weekly wrap-up of the week's key ideas and themes.
- Quick responses to requests to meet with the instructor by phone, in person, or in a virtual conference room (within 48 hours but more quickly on weekdays).

Because this course is online, you will be doing a fair amount of independent reading and need to be a self-motivated and independent learner. Please be aware that the overviews/mini-lectures and the course readings are complementary. You will not be able to succeed in this class if you only watch lectures or overviews and skip the readings.

## Required Course Readings

Required readings may be found in the Canvas module for each week. Some weeks your "readings" may include watching a video or listening to a Podcast. *Please note that I reserve the right to change the readings up to two weeks before the beginning of a module.*

You will also need the following book, which can be purchased from Amazon ([https://www.amazon.com/Kirkpatrick-Four-Levels-Training-Evaluation/dp/1607280086/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1515188899&sr=8-2&keywords=kirkpatrick%27s+four+levels+of+training+evaluation](https://www.amazon.com/Kirkpatrick-Four-Levels-Training-Evaluation/dp/1607280086/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1515188899&sr=8-2&keywords=kirkpatrick%27s+four+levels+of+training+evaluation)) or another online bookseller. Alternately, an e-book will be available for use from the USU library.  (<http://dist.lib.usu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1364594&site=ehost-live>).

Kirkpatrick, J.D. & Kirkpatrick, W.K. (2016). *Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation*. Alexandria, VA: ATD Press.

## Course Requirements

I expect you to read the syllabus and ask any questions you may have. I also expect that you will check in regularly with Canvas, making sure to read any posted announcements. Unless otherwise specified, you should work through the learning modules and the components within each module in the order they are listed in Canvas.

### Overall online participation (30%)

Purpose: Knowledge is not acquired in a vacuum, but rather through social interaction with your peers and the course instructor. Because I believe this interaction is so important to learning the course content, it is a significant part of your grade and reflects the time you will be spending engaging with the course materials, the instructor, and your peers.

Type of assignment: Individual

Each week, you will be required to participate in **the class discussion board** on Canvas. This may include completing an activity and posting about it, posting comments and questions about the readings, and responding to other students. Our weekly discussion leaders (see below) will assist us with thoughtful questions to guide our conversation. Be thoughtful, ask questions, provide answers, really dig into the texts and ideas! Each discussion post is worth 2 points and contributes to your overall online participation grade. I will not grade the correctness of your post, but I will grade based on the substance of your post and your response to peers within the deadlines specified below. Many of these ideas are challenging and it will be a far richer course if we work through them collaboratively.

I ask that your first post of the week be posted by **midnight on Thursday** and that you will respond to at least two of your classmates by **midnight on the following Monday**. This way, we can have a meaningful conversation over time rather than a last-minute Monday night brain dump. After everyone has submitted, I will post a summary of our discussion from the week.

### Discussion Facilitator (10%)

Type of assignment: Individual

Each week, a student will be designated as discussion facilitator for their group. You will serve as a discussion facilitator 1-2 times throughout the semester. **Please make note of when you have been assigned to facilitate your discussion group. You are all adults and I will not send out reminders.**

As discussion facilitator, it is your job to be an expert on the readings for that week and facilitate your group's discussion. You will still write your initial post like you would any other week, but you will likely have **many more responses**, as it is your job to monitor the discussion board and respond to others' posts to keep the discussion flowing. Some ways you could do that include (but are not limited to) asking follow-up questions, helping your peers to extend what we're reading a little further, and sharing related resources you've found. Keep in mind that I want the readings to spark a discussion about whatever I have identified as the overarching topic for that week.

**Adhering to the minimum of one post and two responses to others will not get you full credit for this assignment.**

### **Critical Analysis of a Research Article (30%)**

Purpose: To apply what you have learned about how to critically read and analyze a research article.

Type of assignment: Individual and Group

This assignment has multiple parts. All components of the assignment are required.

- Find a scholarly, peer-reviewed research article you would like to read and analyze. Submit via Canvas for approval by **February 17<sup>th</sup>**.
- Read the article, complete the provided reading template, and submit via Canvas for feedback by **February 23<sup>rd</sup>**. To complete this assignment well, you will likely need to read the article multiple times.
- Write a 3-5 page, double-spaced critical analysis of the article you have read and submit for peer review by **March 16<sup>th</sup>**. If you do not want to work over spring break, I suggest using the week of February 27<sup>th</sup> wisely.
- Complete peer review assignment by **March 23<sup>rd</sup>**.
- Submit final reading template and critical analysis by **March 30<sup>th</sup>**.

### **Final Assignment: Evaluation Plan (30%)**

For your final assignment, you will create an evaluation plan for a training of your choosing. If you do not have a training you can evaluate from work or Instructional Design 1, you can work with me to find a training described in the published literature in enough detail that you could create an evaluation plan for it.

Purpose: To apply what you have learned about evaluation through the creation of an evaluation plan.

Type of Assignment: Individual

In this assignment, you will create an evaluation plan for an organization and training of your choosing. You will provide an overview of the organization, define the evaluation, and then use Kirkpatrick's model to design an evaluation at all 4 levels of training. The final document should be a 10 page (or more), double-spaced evaluation plan, with the bulk of the 10 pages devoted to your plan. Each section should address the questions outlined in the Canvas assignment description.

Please note: **To receive full credit assignments must be completed on time.** If there are circumstances that prevent you from completing an assignment on time, please notify me and I will determine if an extension is appropriate. Assignments in this class, especially the mid-term and final assignments, tend to build on one another, so it is in your best interest to submit them on time. Late work submitted without advance communication with the course instructor prior to the assignment due date will be accepted at the instructor's discretion, with a *minimum* one point deduction.

### **Grading Scale**

*Final Grades calculated as a percentage of total points rounded to the nearest whole number*

Your grade will be based on the university grading scale:

## **Grade Percentage**

A	100-93%
A-	92-90%
B+	89-87%
B	86-83%,
B-	82-80%
C+	79-77%
C	76-73%
C-	72-70%
D	69-60%
F	59-0%

## **Course Schedule:**

Each module runs Monday to Monday.

Week 1 (1/5): What is academic research? How is different from market research? How is it different from evaluation?

Week 2 (1/12): Why do we care about research? The learning styles debate.

Week 3 (1/20): Kinds of research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods

Week 4 (1/26): Research Paradigms 1

Week 5 (2/2): Research Paradigms 2

Week 6 (2/9): Finding Reliable Information

Week 7 (2/17): How to Read a Journal Article

Week 8 (2/23): Synthesizing Information and Literature Reviews

Week 9 (3/2): Intro to Evaluation

Week 10 (3/16): Conducting a Needs Assessment

Week 11 (3/23): The Kirkpatrick Model

Week 12 (3/30): Evaluation Methodologies

Week 13 (4/6): Data Analysis & Reporting

Week 14 (4/13): Class Wrap-Up, and Peer Review of Evaluation Plans

Week 15 (4/20): Final assignment due by midnight on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **ITLS 6510 AI Usage Policy**

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, and others in their assignment work if they adhere to the guidelines below. First and foremost:

- Students must be the “creator or originator of an idea” and/or Work
- Students must make a substantial contribution to the Work (assignments that are wholly AI generated will not be accepted)
- Students must be accountable for the work that was done and its presentation in a publication

If you use AI for an assignment, you need to include a statement on AI usage at the end of the assignment that clearly describes how and when you used AI. It also needs to be clear that you understand what AI has generated. If you would not know how to answer questions I asked you about what AI has generated, I strongly encourage you not to use the text, figure, table, etc.

Students will be responsible for the content and quality of their assignment submissions, which are expected to meet the assignment criteria and will be graded accordingly. Students are likewise expected to exercise responsibility and adhere to the following best practices:

- Thoroughly review AI output for relevance, depth, inaccuracies, bias, plagiarism, copyright infringement, and other issues, making corrections as needed.
- Refrain from inputting or producing imagery, video, or audio of another person’s likeness or voice in an AI tool without their express permission.
- Refrain from submitting sensitive or private information about another person to an AI tool.
- Refrain from uploading copyright-protected or paywalled content to an AI tool without the creator’s permission.
- Cite AI as a reference whenever its outputs are used, quoted, or paraphrased.

Major course assignments will be run through AI detection software and students whose AI usage statements do not match with what the software identifies as AI generated content will, at a minimum, receive a reduced grade for the assignment and, at most, may be reported for an academic integrity violation.