

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PA 5311: Program Evaluation

Fall Semester 2023

In-Person On-Campus Class Meetings: from 9:45am-12:30pm on the following Fridays: 9/8, 9/22, 10/6, 10/20, 11/3, 11/17, and 12/1.

In-Person "Lab" times with your Evaluation Group: Every two weeks, at a minimum. Groups can schedule as they would like.

3 credits

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Office Hours: Upon request, virtually or in-person

Course Description & Learning Outcomes

This course provides an overview of program evaluation in public affairs. It explores the complexities of conducting program evaluation studies in community-based settings, such as public agencies, schools, non-profit organizations, and collaborative initiatives. Students will experience the realities of conducting a program evaluation shaped by a utilization approach.

The course is designed to achieve two primary purposes: 1) provide experience applying frameworks and tools to complete a utilization-focused program evaluation, and 2) build understanding of the profession of program evaluation. At the end of the term students will:

1. Understand the goals and uses of program evaluation in public policy and program delivery;
2. Be familiar with common program evaluation terminology, professional practices, and ethics;
3. Be able to design and implement an evaluation plan for a specific public or nonprofit program or initiative;
4. Use and employ a logic model, apply appropriate research strategies, and engage primary stakeholders in using findings; and
5. Recognize and navigate the cultural and power dynamics at play in evaluation-related efforts.

We will pursue these learning outcomes through project-based learning that allows students to compare different evaluation projects. We will establish guiding evaluation questions, articulate a clear evaluation purpose, develop a customized plan, collect and analyze data, and present findings to our clients.

The course is offered in a hybrid format that leverages face-to-face and online course elements, using an array of technological tools to learn together even when we are not physically present with each other. Our face-to-face meetings will be opportunities to apply reading and lecture materials, refine our plans and data collection tools, and make final presentations.

You and your teammates will design and complete an evaluation for a client organization. We will establish teams during the first week of class. You should plan to spend about 12 hours per week on course related activities and assignments. For example, you will meet with your project

team during weeks we are not meeting as a whole class to make progress on the work for your client, in addition to readings and review virtual lectures.

Means of Learning & Communicating with Each Other

We will draw upon various learning materials to achieve our learning outcomes. If you have questions, concerns, recommendations, or emerging ideas about the course, let me know. I welcome face-to-face or virtual video conversations about the course. If you would like to meet, please send an email to set something up. You can also communicate with me in person before or after class.

The online delivery of parts of this course gives you the flexibility to arrange your own weekly schedule. That flexibility requires that you plan and manage your time efficiently. You are responsible for actively using the online learning material and managing your time to complete assigned reading and online activities before their deadlines. Work done between face-to-face meetings takes the place of additional class meetings.

Technical problems online: Technical problems are usually not valid reasons for failing to fulfill the online course requirements or to meet deadlines. You are responsible for allocating enough time to complete online assignments, and they should include the possibility of technical challenges. Allow enough time to try again later or to travel to a campus computer lab or alternative place to complete the assignment. Exceptions may be made in the event of widespread computer viruses or some other large-scale event affecting the University's computer network, but exceptions will not be made for routine computer problems.

University and School policies

For links to University of Minnesota and Humphrey School policies, please click the "U of M Policies" link on our course Canvas site, or see <https://z.umn.edu/PolicyStatements>. Policies include information on student conduct, scholastic dishonesty, sexual harassment, equal opportunity, and disability accommodations.

Canvas

Our class readings, resources, and assignments are available on the course Canvas site. Find the site at canvas.umn.edu, or go to "Key Links" on [MyU.umn.edu](https://myu.umn.edu) and scroll down to Canvas. For help with Canvas, go to <https://z.umn.edu/HHHCanvasZoomHelp> or click the "Canvas Help" link on our course Canvas site.

Access to readings and materials after semester

Students may lose access to Canvas sites and course reserves at the end of the semester. If you'd like to download class material (depending on copyright) or your own work for personal use, please do so during the semester.

Week with a Friday of...	Readings (complete prior to date in the first column)	In-Person Classes and Virtual Lectures (VL)	Deliverables (due by 5pm)
9/8	Overview and understanding the program Michael Patton (2012), "Introduction, Overview, and Context" <i>Essentials of Utilization-Focused Evaluation</i> Sage: pg. 1-14. John A. McLaughlin, Gretchen B. Jordan (2015), Using Logic Models (Chapter 3), <i>Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation</i> , Fourth Edition, Kathryn E. Newcomer, Harry P. Hatry and Joseph S. Wholey.	VL: Substantive Introduction VL: Understanding the program In-person class	Answer survey to inform which project you work on (by 9/5)
9/15	Being a program evaluator American Evaluation Association. <i>Guiding Principles</i> . Recommendations from previous PA 5311 students FAQs	VL: Being a program evaluator Meet with client	None
9/22	Evaluation questions and design Peter H. Rossi, Howard Freeman, & Mark Lipsey, (1999) "Identifying Issues and Formulating Questions (Chapter 3), <i>Evaluation: A Systematic Approach</i> , 6th edition. Sage Publications. pg. 79-116.	VL: Establishing Questions VL: Design In-person class	Object description (by 9/21) Logic model (by 9/21)
9/29	Evaluating process and outcomes Emil J. Posavac (2011). "Monitoring the Implementation and the Operation of Programs," <i>Program Evaluation Methods and Case Studies</i> , 8th edition. Prentice-Hall, Inc. pg. 125-144. Theodore Poister (2010). "Performance Measurement: Monitoring Program Outcomes," <i>Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation</i> (Third Edition), Wholey, J.S., Hatry, H.P., and Newcomer, K.E. Jossey-Bass: pg. 100-124.	VL: Process evaluation	Design matrix (by 9/28)
10/6	Gathering quality information Carol H. Weiss (1998). "Measures," <i>Evaluation</i> , (Second edition). Prentice Hall: pg. 114-151.	VL: Indicators and Measures VL: Data sources VL: Sampling In-person class	Draft design (by 10/5)
10/13	Data analysis Patricia Rogers and Delwyn Goodrick, (2010). "Qualitative Data Analysis," (Chapter 19) <i>Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation</i> (Third Edition), Wholey, J.S., Hatry, H.P., and Newcomer, K.E. Jossey-Bass: pg. 429-453. Kathryn Newcomer and Dylan Conger (2015). "Using Statistics in Evaluation," (Chapter 23) <i>Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation</i> (Fourth Edition), Newcomer, K.E., Hatry, H.P., Wholey, J.S. Jossey-Bass: pg. 596-635.	VL: Analytic approaches	None

Week with a Friday of...	Readings (complete prior to date in the first column)	In-Person Classes and Virtual Lectures (VL)	Deliverables (due by 5pm)
10/20	Evaluating impact Campbell, Donald T. "Methods for the experimenting society." <i>Evaluation Practice</i> 12.3 (1991): 223-260. Peter Rossi, Howard Freeman, and Mark Lipsey (1999). "Strategies for Impact Assessment," <i>Evaluation: A Systematic Approach</i> , 6th edition. Sage Publications: pg. 235-271.	VL: Evaluating program impact In-person class	Data collection tool and analysis plan (by 10/19)
10/27	Use of findings Michael Patton (2012), "Simulating Use of Findings," (Chapter 12) <i>Essentials of Utilization-Focused Evaluation</i> Sage Publications: pg. 309-322.	None	Reflection Memo (10/26)
11/3	Project No readings	In-person class	Exam (available 10/30 through 11/1)
11/10	Communicating Findings Stephanie Evergreen & Ann Emery (2014). "Data Visualization Checklist." Gary Miron (2004). "Evaluation Report Checklist."	VL: Communicating the Full Plan	
11/17	Project No readings	In-person class	Draft results (by 11/16)
11/24	Project No readings	None	Draft presentation (by 11/23)
12/1	Final Presentation of Project with your Team	In-person class Bring a laptop that you can use to project your slides during your presentation.	Final report (by 11/30) Peer assessment (by 12/6)

Assignments and Grading

The assignments for this course move you toward achieving the course's learning outcomes related to conceptual frameworks and practical strategies for conducting evaluation projects as well as building understanding of program evaluation.

- **Reflection Memo.** You will complete a 2-page reflection memo to give you a chance to reflect upon your current and desired knowledge and skills in the context of your group project. Professional practice is improved when people take the time to reflect on what they are doing now, and how they might improve their effectiveness (**10%**).
- **Exam.** You will complete an exam on the readings and lectures that will document your basic understanding of core technical course concepts (**10%**).
- **Program Evaluation Fieldwork.** Your mastery of knowledge in this course will be demonstrated through the development and implementation of a program evaluation plan and data collection/analysis strategy for a public or nonprofit client. You will complete the following assignments:
 - Object Description (**5%**)
 - Logic Model (**5%**)
 - Design matrix (**5%**)
 - Evaluation Design (**5%**)
 - Draft Data Collection Tool & Analysis Plan (**10%**)
 - Results (**5%**)
 - Draft Presentation (**5%**)
 - Presentation for Client and Final Report (**20%**)

Additionally, **15%** of your grade in this class will be determined by the peers in your project team and their assessment of your professionalism and contribution to the product.

- **Contribution to collective learning process.** You will contribute to our collective learning process by sharing substantive questions and insights during face-to-face sessions and via discussion on Canvas (**5%**). You are expected to contribute a combined average of one or more questions or insights per week of class.

Grades will be assigned as follows: A (95-100%), A- (90-95%), B+ (87-90%), B (83-87%), B- (80-83%) C+ (77-80%), C (73-77%), C- (70-73%) D+ (67-70%), B (63-67%), B- (60-63%) and F (below 60%). Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized 5 percentage points for each 24-hour period that they are late. Assignments are due at 5pm on the date noted.