

Humphrey School of Public Affairs PA 5311: Program Evaluation

Spring Semester 2020

In-Person On-Campus Class Meetings: in Humphrey School room 15 from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm on the following Wednesdays: 1/22, 2/5, 2/19, 3/4, 3/18, 4/1, 4/15, 4/29.

In-Person "Lab" times with your Evaluation Group: Every two weeks, at a minimum. Groups can schedule as they would like but scheduled time of face-to-face class is required.

3 credits

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Office hours: after class or by appointment

Course Description & Learning Outcomes

This course provides an overview to program evaluation in public affairs. It explores the complexities and realities of conducting program evaluation studies in community-based settings, such as public agencies, schools, non-profit organizations, and collaborative initiatives. Through working on a practical project, students will understand the complexities 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 create a utilization-focused evaluation project, and 2) build understanding of the profession of program evaluation as practiced across the globe. At the end of the term students will:

1. Understand the purposes and uses of program evaluation in public policy and program delivery;
2. Be familiar with common evaluation terminology, professional practices and ethics;
3. Be able to design an evaluation plan for a specific public or nonprofit program or initiative. Use and employ a logic model, apply appropriate research strategies, and engage primary stakeholders in using products developed;
4. 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 and contrast different evaluation projects across the course. We will establish guiding evaluation questions, articulate a clear evaluation purpose, and incorporate the projects' theories of action/change. The evaluation plan will lay out a data collection and data analysis strategy and it will be presented to the client.

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. We will have nine face-to-face meetings over the course of the semester. These sessions will be opportunities to apply reading and lecture materials, meet with clients, refine our data collection tools, and make final presentations.

Throughout the semester, you will work with an evaluation project team in your work for a client. We will establish these groups 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 face-to-face or virtually with your project team during weeks we are not meeting as a whole class to make progress on the work for your client, as well as do readings and review virtual lectures.

Means of Learning & Communicating with Each Other

We will draw upon various learning materials to achieve our learning outcomes: readings; multimedia cases; podcasts; field research; and project teams. Although this is a course that leverages technology, this does not mean that communication with the instructor should be more limited. **If you have questions, concerns, recommendations, or emerging ideas about the course, let me know.** The sooner the better. I welcome face-to-face or phone conversations about the course. If you would like to meet, please send an email to set something up. You also can communicate with me through our Canvas site, via phone or in person before or after class. My office hours will be held directly after class or by appointment

Hybrid courses are suited to students who are interested in active, self-directed learning. The online delivery of parts of this course gives you the flexibility to arrange your own weekly schedule. However, 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. Depending on your experience and skill level, the online course environment may be unfamiliar to you, and utilizing the online material may take longer than expected. Spend some extra time initially to familiarize yourself with the online course environment.

Current practice and research suggests students are successful in these types of technology- enriched classes when they are:

- Open minded about sharing experiences as part of the learning process;
- Able to communicate through writing;
- Willing to communicate with the instructor if problems arise;
- Able to think ideas through before responding;

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 "glitches." 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 by the instructor 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.

Course Prerequisites

Must be graduate student or have instructor's consent

Canvas

All course materials will be accessed through 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/CanvasHelpandSetup> or click the "Canvas Help" link on our course Canvas site. You should check the website regularly to attain the necessary readings, assignments, announcements, and other information.

Other Technical Support:

Contact the University's IT department

email help@umn.edu

eReserves

You can access course written materials on eReserves right on the course Canvas site. Alternately, you can log in to the [Reserves Direct website](#) with your internet ID and password. (This is the same information you would use to log in to your U of M email.) Or, choose the course from the [Library Course Page](#) and click on the Course Reserves tab.

Access to readings and materials after semester

Students 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.

Day	Readings and Other Learning Objects (complete prior to date in the first column)	In-Person Classes & Virtual Lectures (VL)	Deliverables (due 6pm)
1/22	Overview and Being an Evaluator Marvin C. Alkin (2011), "What is evaluation?" <i>Evaluation Essentials: From A to Z</i> . Guilford: pg. 1-15. Michael Patton (2012), "Introduction, Overview, & Context" <i>Essentials of Utilization-Focused Evaluation</i> . pg. 1-14 American Evaluation Association (July 2018). <i>Guiding Principles for Evaluators</i> .	VL: Substantive Introduction VL: Being a program evaluator In-person class	Answer survey to inform which project you work on (1/18)
1/29	Understanding the program Michael Patton (2012), "Determining What Intervention Model or Theory of Change is Being Evaluated," (Chapter 9) Sage Publications: pg. 230-260. Kathryn E. Newcomer, Harry P. Hatry and Joseph S. Wholey (2015), Using Logic Models (Chapter 3), <i>Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation</i> , Fourth Edition	VL: Understanding the program	Object description (2/2)
2/5	Shaping evaluation questions 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. Center for Disease Control (2013). "Good Evaluation Questions: A Checklist to Help Focus Your Evaluation," National Asthma Control Program. Center for Disease Control (2009) "Developing Process Evaluation Questions," Evaluation Briefs #4.	VL: Establishing Questions In-person class Meet clients	Logic model (2/9)
2/12	Design for Evaluating Process Improvement and System Change Emil J. Posavac (2011). "Monitoring the Implementation and the Operation of Programs," Program Evaluation Methods and Case Studies, 8th edition. Prentice-Hall, Inc. pg. 125-144. Margaret B. Hargreaves (2010). "Evaluating System Change: A Planning Guide." Method Brief. Mathematica. GovInnovator podcast (2013). "Reducing Fear of Program Evaluation: Interview with Paul Decker"	VL: Process evaluation VL: Evaluating Complex Systems	Reflection paper #1 (2/16)
2/19	Design for Assessing Impact 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. Poverty Action Lab (2017). "Evaluating System Change: A Planning Guide" (pg 1-8, 14-15) <i>Download optimal design: http://hlmssoft.net/od/</i> Onwuegbuzie, Anthony J., and Kathleen MT Collins. "A typology of mixed methods sampling designs in social science research." <i>The qualitative report</i> 12, no. 2 (2007): 281-316.	VL: Design VL: Evaluating program impact In-person class (bring computers, as you're able)	Design matrix (2/23)
2/26	Impact evaluations in the real world Campbell, Donald T. "Methods for the experimenting society." <i>Evaluation Practice</i> 12.3 (1991): 223-260. Gary Burtless (1995). "The Case for Randomized Field Trials in Economic and Policy Research," <i>Journal of Economic perspectives</i> , volume 9, number 2. Pages 63-84. Deborah Stone (1997) <i>Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making</i> . Vol. 13. New York: Norton, pg. 63-84.	VL: Impact evaluation in the real world.	

Day	Readings and Other Learning Objects (complete prior to date in the first column)	In-Person Classes & Virtual Lectures (VL)	Deliverables (due 6pm)
3/4	Monitoring Outcomes 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. GovInnovator podcast (2014) Avoiding performance perversity : Donald Moynihan, La Follette School of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison	In-person class	
3/11	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	Draft design (3/1)
3/18	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), J.S. Jossey-Bass: pg. 596-635.	In-person class VL: Analytic Approaches	Sample data collection tool and analysis plan (by 3/8)
3/25	Use Michael Patton (2012), "Simulating Use of Findings," (Chapter 12) <i>Essentials of Utilization-Focused Evaluation</i> Sage Publications: pg. 309-322. Book review: Nightingale, Paul. "Evidence-based Policy: A Practical Guide to Doing it Better, N. Cartwright, J. Hardie, Oxford University Press (2012)" (2013): 1511-1513. GovInnovator (2017). Launching an applied research team within city government . David Yokum		Revised data collection tool and analysis plan (3/15)
4/1	Applications Kay E. Sherwood (2005). "Evaluation of the Fighting Back Initiative," <i>New Directions for Evaluation</i> , 105, pg. 15-36. Martha S. Campbell, Michael Quinn Patton, Patricia Patrizi (2005). "Evaluation of the Central Valley Partnership of the James Irvine Foundation," <i>New Directions for Evaluation</i> , 105, pg. 39-54.	In-person class	Exam (available 11/4 through 11/8)
4/8	Project No readings		Draft results (11/15)
4/15	Project No readings	In-person class	Reflection paper #2 (11/22)
4/22	Communicating Findings Stephanie Evergreen & Ann Emery (2014). "Data Visualization Checklist." Gary Miron (2004). "Evaluation Report Checklist."	VL: Communicating the Full Plan	Draft presentation (11/30)
4/29	Final Presentation of Project with your Team	In-person class	Final report (by 12/2) Peer assessment (12/6)

Assignments and Grading

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

- **Reflection Memos.** You will complete two 3-4 page (double-spaced) reflection papers 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 (5% each, total of 10%)
- **Exam.** You will complete one exam on the readings, podcasts, lectures and e-cases 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 mainly through the development of a complete program evaluation plan and data collection/analysis strategy for a public or nonprofit client. There will be assignments due related to the following items:
 - Draft Object Description & Logic Model (10%)
 - Draft Evaluation Design, including Design Matrix (10%)
 - Revised Data Collection Tool & Analysis Plan (10%)
 - Draft Results and Presentation (10%)
 - Final plan & Presentation for Client (20%)

Additionally, 15% of your grade in this class will be determined by your peers on the project team.

- **Contribution to collective learning process.** You will contribute to our collective learning process by sharing substantive questions and insights during face-to-face sessions OR via discussion on Canvas (completed before the class period ends) (5%). You are expected to contribute one or more questions, summaries of the readings, or other insights per week of class.
- **Attendance.** Students are allowed one “unpenalized” non-attendance per semester. In this case, the student should make a substantive contribution on canvas about the readings or virtual lectures before the class period ends. All other absences will be deducted from the contribution to the collective learning process score.
- Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized five percentage points for each 24-hour period that they are late. Unless otherwise noted, the assignments will be due no later at 9pm on the date noted. In other words, a 9:05pm submission will lose 5 points.

Grades will be assigned as follows: A (94-100%), A- (90-94%), 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 6pm on the date noted.

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, disability accommodations, and more

Universal Competencies of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration <i>Students who graduate from an accredited program will be able to:</i>	Competencies of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs <i>Studies who graduate with the Master of Public Policy degree from the Humphrey School will be able to:</i>	Learning Objectives for PA 5311 (Program Evaluation) <i>Students who complete this course will be able to:</i>
Participate in and contribute to the public policy process	Participate in problem-solving, policy-making, and institutional and societal change in dynamic, uncertain environments.	Design an evaluation plan for a specific public or nonprofit program or initiative that is focused on engaging primary stakeholders in using the plan to answer important questions.
Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions	Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve complex problems, and make decisions informed by quantitative, qualitative, economic, and other methods.	Understand the purposes and uses of program evaluation in public policy and program delivery. Be familiar with common program evaluation terminology and professional practices and ethics.
Articulate and apply a public service perspective	Articulate the essential role of public institutions in democratic societies and the importance of democratic values in delivery of public services. Understand conceptions of the common good, acknowledge normative and ethical viewpoints, and promote social justice.	Grapple with ethnics in program evaluation design and engagement of diverse stakeholder group in shaping plans.
Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and	Communicate and interact productively with individuals in diverse and changing cultures and communities.	Work effectively with your project client.