

PADP 8640

Program Evaluation Spring 2020

Tuesdays 3:30 – 6:15 pm
Baldwin 102

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Office Hours:
Wed. 2:00-3:00
Other hours by
appointment

General Description:

This course focuses on selected topics in the practice of program evaluation. The purpose is to give students a broad understanding of program evaluation concepts and methods. Although other types of program evaluation will be reviewed, the focus will be primarily on impact assessment. The core objectives of the course are to enable students to:

- 1) Understand the basic concepts and methods of evaluation research
- 2) Understand and develop logic models underlying public programs
- 3) Specify evaluation question(s) to be answered by a program evaluation
- 4) Identify and understand how to measure program outcomes
- 5) Understand types of evaluation research designs, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques commonly used in impact evaluation
- 6) Develop an appropriate evaluation plan to assess the impact of a program

These course objectives are intended to promote student mastery of two of the five core competencies required for NASPAA accreditation of our MPA program. Those competencies are:

Competency 2: To participate in and contribute to the public policy process

Students in the Master of Public Administration program at The University of Georgia will understand the public policy process at the federal, state, and local levels, including formulating, implementing, and evaluating policy. They will develop the ability to interpret and persuasively communicate information regarding policy alternatives through memoranda and presentations. Additionally, students will analyze policy alternatives using quantitative and qualitative tools to evaluate decisions and explain potential ramifications for diverse constituencies. They will learn to manage financial resources and develop a comprehensive budget proposal to achieve organizational goals.

Competency 3: To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions

Students in the Master of Public Administration program at The University of Georgia will utilize various methods and analytical tools to analyze and interpret data to provide effective reasoning for decision-making and policy creation. Students will learn to effectively and concisely inform the public and other stakeholders of decisions and initiatives through the presentation of data and research findings. Furthermore, they will produce policy papers involving the synthesis of information, evaluation, and analysis of critical questions or problems currently facing the field of public administration and policy.

Text:

Kenneth J. Linfield and Emil J. Posavac, *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies*, ninth edition, (New York: Routledge, 2019). ISBN: 978-1-138-10396-2

Additional reading material is available on the UGA eLC website.

Course Policies:

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend each scheduled class meeting, to be on time, and to be prepared for each class session. A significant proportion of your final grade (15 percent) will be based on the instructor's assessment of your participation which includes attendance and participation in class discussions.

Only a medical emergency, a death in the immediate family, personal illness, official religious holidays, and academic related absences (e.g., academic conference attendance) will be considered excused. If you miss class for any other reason you will be considered absent from class without a justified reason. Note that students must inform the instructor in advance if they are unable to attend class. This includes sending an email if you are unable to attend class due to a medical illness.

Academic Honesty: All students must abide by the University of Georgia policy regarding academic honesty. All academic work must be performed without any form of cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed. The University policy on academic honesty may be accessed at <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>.

Computers, Cell Phones, and other Electronic Devices: You may bring a laptop computer to class, and indeed, you are encouraged to do so. You will find it is useful for course work. You may, of course, also bring your cell phone, iPad, or other similar device. However, while you are in class, please refrain from using these devices for activities unrelated to course work. Such

activities could include surfing the web, working on Facebook, watching videos, checking your e-mail, tweeting, or engaging in other similar actions. Please also make sure that your phone is silenced during class time.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability and would like to request specific accommodations, please contact your instructor. If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the UGA Disability Resource Center, 114 Clark Howell Hall, Athens, GA 30602. Phone: 706.542.8719, Email: drc@uga.edu.

Course Assignments and Grades:

I. Evaluation Plan:

In addition to weekly reading assignments, students are required to develop a plan for the evaluation (impact assessment) of a public or nonprofit organization program. To complete this project, students will work in teams consisting of three members. Students are encouraged to partner with local organizations and work with those organizations to produce evaluation plans that meet the needs of their programs. Specific assignments for each group are as follows:

1. Program Statement: Students will provide a short description of the selected program and will identify 1) the problem addressed by the program, 2) the intended beneficiaries or targets of the program, 3) the intended outcomes of the program, and 4) the program's key stakeholders. **(5 points)**

2. Logic Model: Students will identify the logic model or program theory underlying the selected program. The model should specify all program activities, subobjectives, and expected outcomes. **(5 points)**

3. Evaluation Questions and Literature Review: Students will specify the evaluation questions that will be addressed and summarize the existing literatures on the programs under analysis. **(5 points)**

4. Evaluation Research Design: Students will specify a proposed research design for assessing the impact of the selected program and will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the design in terms of internal and external validity. **(5 points)**

5. Data Collection, Measurement, and Data Analysis: Students will identify the data necessary for impact assessment including the measurement of key variables and the methods that will be used to collect those data. Students will also specify the regression model that will be used for data analysis. Finally, students will identify the strengths and weaknesses of their methods of measurement, data collection, and data analysis. **(10 points)**

6. Evaluation Plan Presentation: Each group will give a 10 minute presentation of their final evaluation plan. Groups will prepare PowerPoint slides to guide their presentations.

(5 points)

7. Final Evaluation Plan: Each group will prepare a final evaluation plan based on feedback provided by the instructor and fellow students. In addition to the components included in prior assignments, the final evaluation plan will include: 1) ethical considerations of the evaluation, 2) the practical significance of the proposed evaluation to administrators and policy-makers, and 3) the relevance and contribution of the proposed evaluation to the extant literature. **(15 points)**

II. Final Examination: There will be a take-home final exam distributed on **April 21** and due by 5:00 pm on **May 5**. The examination is designed to test your ability to understand and critically evaluate the reading, lecture, and discussion material covered in the course. **(35 points)**

III. Class Participation: Students are expected to attend class and to participate in class discussions. **(15 points)**

		Points	Due Date
1	Program Statement	5	Feb. 11
2	Logic Model	5	Feb. 18
3	Evaluation Questions and Literature Review	5	Mar. 3
4	Evaluation Research Design	5	Mar. 31
5	Data Collection, Measurement, and Data Analysis	10	Apr. 7
6	Evaluation Plan Presentation	5	Apr. 14 or 21
7	Final Evaluation Plan	15	Apr. 28
8	Final Examination	35	May 5
9	Class Participation	15	
	Total Points	100	

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 7: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

A review of course requirements...

January 14: INTRODUCTON TO PROGRAM EVALUATION

A look at the development of program evaluation and the types and functions of evaluation studies...

Linfield and Posavac, Chapter 1

January 21: ETHICS AND EVALATON

Consideration of ethical issues in the evaluation of public programs...

Linfield and Posavac, Chapter 5

January 28: PLANNING FOR A NEW PROGRAM

A discussion of needs assessment and the collection of data necessary to design a program...

Linfield and Posavac, Chapter 6

February 4: EVALUATING AN EXISTING PROGRAM: PRELIMINARY STEPS

A review of issues to address in preparing to conduct an evaluation...

Linfield and Posavac, Chapter 2

February 11: UNDERSTANDING A PROGRAM'S THEORY OR LOGIC MODEL

Understanding the logic or theory underlying a program...identifying activities, subobjectives, and outcomes of interest...

Linfield and Posavac, Chapter 3

Lawrence B. Mohr, *Impact Analysis for Program Evaluation*, second edition, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1995), Chapter 2 (available on eLC)

February 18: MEASUREMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

Issues in the measurement of subobjectives and outcomes... Strategies for the collection of data...

Linfield and Posavac, Chapters 4 and 8

February 25: PROCESS ANALYSIS: ASSESSING IMPLEMENTATION

A discussion of procedures for assessing the implementation of a program...

Linfield and Posavac, Chapter 7

March 3: IMPACT ANALYSIS

Understanding causality and the counterfactualist paradigm

Mohr, Chapter 1 (available on eLC)

March 10: SPRING BREAK

March 17: EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS FOR IMPACT ANALYSIS

Consideration of the defining characteristics of experimental research designs... a review of internal and external validity of experimental designs...a regression framework for data analysis

Linfield and Posavac, Chapter 11

Mohr, Chapters 4 and 5. (available on eLC)

March 24: QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS FOR IMPACT ANALYSIS

Discussion of single-group and comparison-group quasi-experimental designs and threats

to internal and external validity...

Linfield and Posavac, Chapters 9 and 10

March 31: OUTCOMES AND COSTS

A review of cost-effectiveness analysis...

Linfield and Posavac, Chapter 12

April 7: COMMUNICATING FINDINGS AND FACILITATING UTILIZATION

Writing the evaluation report to improve utilization of results...

Linfield and Posavac, Chapters 13 and 14

April 14: PRESENTATION OF EVALUATION PROPOSALS

April 21: PRESENTATION OF EVALUATION PROPOSALS

Final Exam Distributed

April 28: No Class Meeting (Monday Schedule)

Final Evaluation Proposal Due at 5:00 pm

May 5: Final Exam Due at 5:00pm