

PAF 541 Program Evaluation

School of Public Affairs
Arizona State University

Spring 2013

January 11-12, 25-26, February 15-16

Class Location: NHI2 Room 220
Professor: Yushim Kim, Ph.D.
Office Hours: Monday 3:00-5:00PM
UCENT, Room 445
Other days/times/places by appointment
Phone: (602) 496-1157
E-Mail: ykim@asu.edu

One of the most fundamental questions within the field of program evaluation is “Do social programs work?” This course is designed to provide students with the tools to answer this question as both *users* and *producers* of evaluation research.

Program evaluation serves many important functions. It supplies information to policymakers and program administrators who face decisions about which programs to fund, scale back, expand, modify, or eliminate. Evaluation is an accountability tool: when individuals or agencies decide to finance a program, they have a right to ask what their funds bought. Evaluation is also a vehicle for improving public services. By finding out what efforts succeed and fail—and how new ideas and approaches fare against existing practices—policymakers and administrators can improve policy and program designs, devote resources to programs that work and fix programs that are inefficient or marginally effective.

The course involves students in consulting teams, conducting evaluation research for actual non-profit and government agency clients. The combination of real-world experience with course readings, lectures and discussions aims to educate course participants in both the theoretical and practical realms of program evaluation. Throughout the course, just as I will share from my own experience as an evaluator of welfare and employment policies and programs, I encourage students to relate the general material to their own experience and specific policy interests.

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for this course is PAF 501 (or a similar introductory research methods course, or instructor permission). Having completed PAF 502 Research Methods II and PAF 505 Public Policy Analysis, or their equivalents, would be useful as well.

Requirements

Class attendance & participation and in-class presentations: Attending and participating in class are important elements of this course. Generally, quality participation demonstrates that students are engaging with the material. Students will select one topic to present in class. The course

also includes an online component (<http://myASUCourses.asu.edu>) where students can continue to discuss course topics.

Applied Evaluation Project: A student (or students) will perform evaluation research. Two options are available: conducting an evaluation for a nonprofit/public agency or conducting research related to evaluation topics. Students must identify a project by themselves and consult with the instructor about a topic before January 14.

Note the following key dates and times for projects milestones and deliverables:

January 14 (Mon), 5PM	Research topic and plan due
January 23 (Wed), 5PM	Progress report I due
January 30 (Wed), 5PM	Progress report II due
February 11 (Mon), 5PM	Draft final report due
February 16 (Sat)	In-class presentation
February 20 (Wed), 5PM	Final report due

- Research topic and plan (max. 2 pages, single-space): Includes a topic, a question, a type of evaluation, a detailed work plan (e.g. if necessary, provide milestones, people to interview, data collection and analysis plan, who will be in charge of which part of the work)
- Progress report I (max. 5 pages, single-space): Includes 1) an actual body of the report drafted as of the deadline (max 4 pages) and 2) a summary of activities - who has done what work on what date for the actual body of the work written (max. 1 page)
- Progress report II (max. 8 pages, single-space): Includes 1) an actual body of the report drafted as of the deadline (max 6 pages) and 2) a summary of activities - who has done what work on what date for the actual body of the work written (max. 2 page)
- Draft final report (max. 10 pages, single-space) – An expanded progress report
- Final report (max. 12 pages) – A finalized report

Additional materials on components of the project (Research Plan, Presentation, Final Report) and expectations of student/team performance will be discussed in class. Post deliverables to the Black Board site (Discussion Board) before the deadline.

Grading

Grades for specific elements will be allocated as follows:

Attendance & In-class discussion	20%
Progress Report I	20%
Progress Report II	20%
Applied evaluation project	40 % total (distributed as follows)
	Draft Final Report (20%)
	Final Report (10 %)
	Presentation Evaluation by peer (10 %)

There will be no incompletes given, with the exception of serious *unexpected* events that prevent

course completion. Any student in this situation must confer with me in advance. If you have to miss a class, please send me the date of your absence via email in advance. If you miss class more than once, the best participation grade you will earn is a C, regardless of your participation in class discussion. In this case, I advise you to withdraw the class.

Reading

The following is the main textbook for the course and is available from the ASU bookstore (and from various online sources):

Rossi, Peter H., Mark W. Lipsey and Howard E. Freeman. (2004). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*, 7th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (Note: the 6th edition is very different from the 7th, and we're using the 7th; do not buy the 6th)

Doctoral students are also expected to buy and read the following:

Shadish, William R., Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. (2002). *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Other useful books (not required to buy unless you are personally interested):

Patton, Michael Q. (2010). *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*. The Guilford Press.

House, Ernest R. (2010). *Evaluating with Validity*. Information Age Publishing.

Rosenthal, Robert. (1991). *Meta-Analytic Procedures for Social Research* (revised eds.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Other required readings identified throughout the syllabus by author/chapter will be posted or distributed in class.

Students are encouraged to undertake additional reading in specific areas of interest to them. The GAO (<http://www.gao.gov>) is a good source for relevant reports in many areas. Many think tanks have evaluation reports available online. Some of the more prominent/prolific include the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) (<http://www.mdrc.org>), the Urban Institute (<http://www.urban.org>), Abt Associates (<http://www.abtassociates.com>), and Mathematica Policy Research (<http://www.mathematica-mpr.com>). Journals that are particularly relevant to policy analysis and program evaluation are listed on page ten of the course textbook. I subscribe to *Evaluation Review*, the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, and the *American Journal of Evaluation*, the latter two of which offer relatively inexpensive student memberships/subscriptions.

Course Schedule

The following is the schedule for class meetings, with reading assignments for each. For each date, students should do the readings *in advance*, to permit participation in discussion (all readings are required, with the few optional readings identified as such). It's not called an *intensive* for nothing! But I guarantee useful return on your investment of time and energy.

Day One: January 11, Friday

Introduction to each other, to course methods and to course substance
Discussion on applied evaluation projects

Approaches to evaluation

House, pp.15-64 (online)

What is program evaluation?

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapter 1

Tailoring evaluations & evaluation in practice: getting started with applied projects

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapter 2

Assessing need & defining the problem: size, scope, place, time, people, and institutions

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapter 4

Day Two: January 12, Saturday

Describing the intervention & articulating evaluation questions: describing goals, the logic/causal model and the nature of causation, the implementation/operational model, overlaying the evaluation lens

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapters 3, 5

Process/implementation evaluation: program operations, connection between design and practice, monitoring program inputs, process and outputs

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapter 6

Measurement: operationalization, levels of and changes in outcomes, reliability, validity, monitoring outcomes

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapter 7

Day Three: January 25, Friday

Determining program impacts I: experimental design in theory and in practice

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapter 8

Determining program impacts II: non-experimental evaluation designs

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapter 9

Data analysis & interpretation: pre-post/treatment comparisons, regression adjustment

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapter 10

Day Four: January 26, Saturday

Cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit

Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapter 11

Research synthesis and meta-analysis

Cooper, Hedges, & Valentine, Chapter 1 (online); Shadish, Cook & Campbell, Chapters 13 (online); Yang & Lester (online) - example

Data collection: ethics, human participants and confidentiality considerations; data collection logistics, timing, planning; instrument/survey design

Shadish, Cook & Campbell, Chapters 9 (online)

Day Five: February 15, Friday

Validity

Shadish, Cook & Campbell, pp.33-82 (online); Peck, Kim, & Lucio (online)

Use

Patton (1997), Chapter 15 (online); Peck & Gorzalski (online)

Developmental evaluation

Patton (2011), Chapter 1 (online)

Time to finalize draft and presentation plans

Day Six: February 16, Saturday

Student presentations

Feedback for final reports

Academic Integrity

The ASU Graduate College bulletin summarizes the university's statement on academic honesty as follows: "The highest standards of academic integrity are expected of all students...

Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, fabrication, tampering, plagiarism, or facilitating such activities..." In particular, "'fabrication' means falsification or invention of any information or citation" and "'plagiarism' means representing the words or ideas of another as one's own." Both the university and I take these issues very seriously. If you have any questions about how to cite someone else's work (including words, ideas, charts/graphs), please ask; using others' ideas to generate your own is part of the learning process, and it is important to give appropriate credit along the way.

Note:

The syllabus is subject to change by the instructor.

Bring a laptop in class and use the laptop when is asked by the instructor