

Course Number: PAD 5357 Semester: Fall Semester 2019

CRN: 34875 Thursdays: 5:00-8:00pm
Health and Sciences Building 219

Course Title: Public and Nonprofit Program Evaluation

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 3:00-5:00pm, or please email me for a time to meet

Course Description:

This course offers an introduction to the theory and practice of program evaluation, as well as an introduction to the profession of evaluation. By the conclusion of this class, you will develop the ability to conduct program evaluations in the public and nonprofit sector; and to better manage or interpret the work of a third-party evaluator. Specifically, you will learn skills that you can apply to your work with a client (public or nonprofit program professional) to develop and execute an evaluation plan that meets their program needs. You will also develop skills in communicating the results of your analysis to professional audiences. You will learn techniques in designing quasi-experimental research designs, as well as techniques in data collection and data analysis. You will also learn how to develop data collection and analysis procedures for measuring program impacts in areas that are often difficult to measure (such as the impact of social and human services on clients and communities); as well as techniques for utilizing program evaluation in strategic planning.

My goal for this course is to examine a number of evaluation practices that will lead to more effective public and nonprofit services.

Student Learning Objectives:

You will learn how to:

- Develop program logic models;
- Develop utilization-oriented evaluation questions;
- Design clear and useful data collection instruments for use in evaluation work;
- Identify pertinent professional standards and ethical principles affecting specific dilemmas confronting evaluators in the field;
- Design implementation, outcome, and impact evaluations;
- Present qualitative and quantitative data analyses to professional audiences;
- Perform analyses of program data to measure program outputs and outcomes;
- Design user-oriented reports to convey evaluation findings; and
- Develop useful recommendations based on evaluation findings.

Course Format:

Recognizing that students have different learning and working styles, this course will utilize a variety of learning and teaching formats. We will use lectures, discussions, case studies, examples from current events, examples from students' own personal professional experiences, and written assignments. The professor will utilize the UTEP *Blackboard* system to distribute class materials. The classroom sessions will include a combination of classroom discussion, lecture, and group activities. If any student engages in behavior that is seen to be disruptive, condescending or inappropriate, the professor may remove all credit for participation.

Because students learn from each other, as well as from the instructors, students are expected to attend all of the required classes. If, due to illness or emergency, you are unable to attend class, you should call or email the instructor before the class you will miss – this is expected for online sessions requiring participation. To the extent that missing class affects your ability to participate in class discussions, excessive absences will substantially affect your grade. Students missing class are responsible for retrieving notes and assignments from classmates. Students are responsible for maintaining access to the blackboard site for this course and their UTEP email accounts. Students are responsible for keeping up to date on email communication from the professor and fellow members of the class through their UTEP email accounts.

Students are expected to deliver their work on time. If, due to illness or personal emergency, you believe your work will be late, you are advised to discuss the matter in advance with the instructor. Late work will normally be penalized by at least ten points (e.g., from an A to a B), and more credit may be removed for failing to follow instructions. Unless an agreement has been made with the professor, a late assignment that has still not been handed in by the time the professor hands back the graded assignment to the rest of the class (normally about a week) will be deducted by 20 points. If a student will hand in an assignment late, it is his or her responsibility to commit to a revised deadline for handing in the assignment, in writing, with the instructor.

Policy on Meeting with Students and Reviewing Student Work:

Due to the online nature of much of this class, the preferred mode of communication with the instructor is email. My commitment to you is a response to any of your emails within 48 hours. If you and I deem that we need more interaction than we can achieve through email, then we will set up a phone call, skype session, or meet in person to work through any questions you have.

Course Requirements (Also please see grading criteria attached to this syllabus):

1. Class Participation (25%): This will involve the following factors: reading all course material and contributing to class, interacting with your peers, and demonstrating your abilities to follow the instructions of assignments.

2. Website Summary (10%): Each student will be assigned one of the following organizations, and will write a 300-word summary of the organization's work in evaluation. Your summary should address: 1) General information on the organization, 2) The types of evaluations that they perform, 3) The Organization's intended audience, 4) The types of data and research designs that are most commonly adopted, 5) The techniques the organization uses to translate the findings for practice (utilization). The list of possible organizations is below.
 1. IES What Works Clearinghouse (education) <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
 2. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Programs OJJDP Model Programs Guide <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/programs/mpg.html>
 3. National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/
 4. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Effective Health Care <http://www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/what-is-comparative-effectiveness-research1/> <http://>
 5. The Campbell Collaboration <http://campbellcollaboration.org/>
 6. The Collaboration for Environmental Evidence at <http://www.environmentalevidence.org/>

3. Program Evaluation Critique (20%): Through consultation with the instructor, you will identify a program evaluation conducted for a public or nonprofit program or organization. The critique should address central issues from the class, including a theory of change and research design standards. The 3-4 page single-spaced (maximum) critique of the evaluation should be prepared in the following format:
 - 1) a brief description of the focus and findings;
 - 2) identification of the key evaluation questions addressed;
 - 3) a brief summary of the research design and data collection methods used;
 - 4) a table that contains a systematic list of threats to the: measurement validity, measurement reliability, internal validity, and external validity. AND
 - 5) the threats should be labeled as: those the authors acknowledged and addressed; threats the authors acknowledged but did not address; and those the authors did not acknowledge.**

You can find a sample evaluation to critique for this assignment at the following websites, or you may contact a local organization to request a copy of one of their open-access evaluations. You should email the instructor for approval of your selected program for the critique before you conduct it.

<http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=78>

<http://www.urban.org/research>

<https://www.gao.gov/browse/>

<https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-capabilities/case-studies#sort=relevancy>

4. Final Course Project – Developing an Applied Program Evaluation or Applied Evaluation Proposal (45%): In consultation with the instructor, each person will develop a proposal for a program evaluation OR an evaluation for a local organization. You will NOT need to interface with this organization, but you should conduct some web research on the nature of the program or organization in developing an evaluation proposal for them. You will be responsible for choosing your own project and determining whether to form a team with other students or work by yourself. You will be responsible for gathering appropriate information for the organization to develop a logic model, so should determine if you have enough information to for a logic model when you choose a project. If you perform the evaluation of a program, you will work with data provided by the instructor. This assignment will include: emailing the instructor your choice for a project (5%), a memo summarizing your plan for this evaluation (15%), and a final 8-10 page paper (single-spaced) on your evaluation or proposal (30%). You will need to have a strong plan for your final project by the time you hand in the memo. *A guide for the final paper is included at the end of the syllabus.*

Required Reading (for purchase):

Newcomer, Kathryn E., Hatry, Harry P., & Wholey, Joseph S. (2015). *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Optional Material (not required for purchase):

Shadish, William R., Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. 2002. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Evergreen, Stephanie D. H. 2017. *Effective Data Visualization: The Right Chart for the Right Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Other required and recommended material that is not in the book required for purchase will be available on *Blackboard* or handed out in class.

I. COURSE INTRODUCTION – August 29, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)
CHAPTER 1 – Planning and Designing Useful Evaluations
CHAPTER 5 – Performance Measurement

Materials on Blackboard:
American Evaluation Association Evaluation Guiding Principles

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) What is program evaluation?
- 2) Where does evaluation take place and who conducts evaluation?

- 3) How do current performance measurement efforts relate to program evaluation?
- 4) What the connection between evaluation and evidence-based decision-making?

II. SCOPING EVALUATIONS – September 5, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)

CHAPTER 2 – Analyzing and Engaging Stakeholders

CHAPTER 3 – Using Logic Models

Materials on Blackboard

Kellogg Foundation. 2004. *Logic Model Development Guide: Using Logic Models to Bring Together Planning, Evaluation, and Action*. Battle Creek, MI: Kellogg Foundation.

Newcomer's Guide for An Evaluation Design Matrix

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) What pre-design steps are desirable for the evaluator to take?
- 2) What role can the evaluator play in program development and design?
- 3) What is the guidance provided to evaluators by the AEA professional standards?
- 4) What is the program theory? How can it be developed and refined?
- 5) What role should staff and external stakeholders play in evaluation?

III. AN OVERVIEW OF CAUSAL INFERENCE AND DISCOVERY – September 12, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)

CHAPTER 4 – Exploratory Evaluation

Materials on Blackboard

Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2012. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Murnane, Richard J., and John B. Willett. 2011. *Methods Matter: Improving Causal Inference in Educational and Social Science Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. CHAPTER 3: Designing Research to Address Causal Questions

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) What are the purposes of deductive and inductive reasoning?
- 2) How does the maturity of the program influence design decisions?
- 3) What are the challenges of determining causal inference with human subjects research?

- 4) What are guiding principles in developing causal inference?

IV. EVALUATION DESIGN – September 19, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)

CHAPTER 6 – Comparison Group Designs

CHAPTER 7 – Randomized Controlled Trials

Materials on Blackboard

Shadish, William R., Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. 2002. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. CHAPTER 4: Quasi-Designs that Lack Controls or Pretest & CHAPTER 5: Quasi-Designs with Controls and Pretests

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) What are the commonly used research designs to measure program outcomes?
- 2) What are the differences between one-shot designs, pretest-posttest designs, and interrupted time series designs?
- 3) What are the considerations in selecting a design to evaluate program impact?
- 4) How do the evaluators weigh the tradeoffs in various designs?
- 5) What strategies are available for controlling or ruling out various rival explanations?

V. THREATS TO VALIDITY, GENERALIZABILITY, RELIABILITY, AND IMPLEMENTATION – September 26, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)

CHAPTER 26 – Pitfalls in Evaluation

Materials on Blackboard

Kathryn Newcomer, “Threats to Validity and Reliability”

JJEC. 2003. *Evaluability Assessment: Examining the Readiness of a Program for Evaluation*. Washington, DC: Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center (JJEC).

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) How do you measure program implementation?
- 2) How should feedback be incorporated in an implementation study?
- 3) How should an implementation study be linked with an outcome study?
- 4) What is evaluability assessment? What are the steps? How can it be used to guide evaluation? How can it be used as a management tool?
- 5) What are the most common threats to measurement reliability, internal validity and external validity?

VI. DATA COLLECTION: ARCHIVAL DATA – October 3, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)
CHAPTER 13 – Using Agency Records
CHAPTER 18 – Using the Internet

Materials on Blackboard

GAO. 2009. Program Evaluation: A Variety of Rigorous Methods Can Help Identify Effective Interventions. In *Report to Congressional Requesters*. Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office.

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) What is involved in planning data collection and analysis?
- 2) What are the advantages of archival data for the purposes of evaluation?
- 3) What procedures can enhance validity and reliability in measurement?

VII. DATA COLLECTION: PERCEPTUAL DATA – October 10, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)
CHAPTER 14 – Using Surveys
CHAPTER 19 – Semi-Structured Interviews
CHAPTER 20 – Focus Group Interviewing

Materials on Blackboard

GAO. 2017. Annual Agency-Wide Plans Could Enhance Leadership Support for Program Evaluations. Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) What is involved in planning data collection and analysis?
- 2) What are the advantages of perceptual data for the purposes of evaluation?
- 3) What data collection techniques can assist in capturing perceptual data?
- 4) What is the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning?

VIII. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING – October 17, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)
CHAPTER 23 – Using Statistics in Evaluation

Materials on Blackboard

Shadish, William R., Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. 2002. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. CHAPTER 7: Regression Discontinuity Design

Evergreen, Stephanie D. H. 2017. *Effective Data Visualization: The Right Chart for the Right Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

CHAPTER 2: When a Single Number is Important: Showing Mean, Frequency and Measures of Variability.

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) What are appropriate uses of two-sample t-tests, descriptive statistics, or regression discontinuity designs?
- 2) What are some general rules for visualizing descriptive statistics?
- 3) What are characteristics of effective data presentation?
- 4) How can data communicate causality?

IX. DATA VISUALIZATION – October 24, 2019

Materials on Blackboard

Evergreen, Stephanie D. H. 2017. *Effective Data Visualization: The Right Chart for the Right Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

CHAPTER 3: How Two or More Numbers are Alike or Different: Visualizing Comparisons

CHAPTER 7: How this Thing Changes when that Thing Does

Cairo, Alberto. 2016. *The Truthful Art: Data, Charts, and Maps for Communication 1st Edition*. Berkeley, California: New Riders.

CHAPTER 8: Revealing Change

CHAPTER 9: Seeing Relationships

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) What types of comparisons do I need to draw from my data?
- 2) What are key lessons for communicating data results effectively?
- 3) What does it mean to develop stand-alone visuals?
- 4) How does visualization relate to organizational strategy?

X. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS & REPORTING – October 31, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)

CHAPTER 8 – Conducting Case Studies

CHAPTER 22 – Qualitative Data Analysis

Materials on Blackboard

George, & Bennett. (2004). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge and London: MIT Press.

CHAPTER 3: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison

Evergreen, Stephanie D. H. 2017. *Effective Data Visualization: The Right Chart for the Right Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

CHAPTER 8: When the Words Have the Meaning: Visualizing Qualitative Data

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) How does qualitative data inform our understanding of programs and program impact?

- 2) How can qualitative data complement quantitative data?
- 3) What are principles for mix-method research designs?

XI. EVALUATION & DECISION-MAKING – November 7, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)

CHAPTER 27 – Providing Recommendations, Suggestions, and Options for Improvement

CHAPTER 28 – Writing for Impact

Materials on Blackboard

GAO. 2005. Managing for Results: Enhancing Agency Use of Performance Information for Management Decision Making. Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) When are findings from evaluations sufficient to constitute such “Evidence?”
- 2) Why is it difficult to transfer evaluation and research findings into practice?
- 3) What is practice-based evidence?
- 4) What do useful recommendations look like?

XII. TRENDS IN EVALUATION– November 14, 2019

Coursebook: Newcomer, Hatry, and Wholey (2015)

CHAPTER 29 – Contracting for Evaluation Products and Services

CHAPTER 30 – Use of Evaluation in Government

CHAPTER 31 – Evaluation Challenges, Issues, and Trends

Materials on Blackboard

Pew-MacArthur. 2014. Evidence-Based Policymaking: A Guide for Effective Government. Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Key Questions to Keep in Mind in Reading the Material:

- 1) Is the model proposed to support evidence-policymaking proposed by the Pew and MacArthur foundations feasible for states to implement?
- 2) What are the tradeoffs between accountability and innovation in evaluation planning?
- 3) Who are the key audiences of program evaluations?

XIII. COURSE REVIEW AND FEEDBACK ON STUDENT PROJECTS – November 28, 2019

XIV. STUDENT PRESENTATIONS – December 5, 2019

FINAL PAPER DUE – December 12, 2019

EVALUATION PROPOSAL (OPTION A)

This will involve developing a proposal for an evaluation for a real-world program in the public or nonprofit sector.

You are asked to develop a scoping and evaluation design paper for a program. You will conduct the scoping activities but will only propose the evaluation; you are not expected to conduct the actual evaluation itself. You do not need to communicate with a nonprofit or government program before doing this assignment. You may find it helpful if you can contact somewhere there, but it is not required. While the instructor may provide some guidance to you on the subject of your topic, you are responsible for selecting a project that will provide you with the information you need to complete this assignment.

Scoping out the evaluation entails collecting information on the program through interviews with key contacts (decision-makers, staff, etc.) on current information needs, and conducting a synthesis of past related research and evaluation studies. You should conduct research on 1) the type of program that you are proposing an evaluation for (you should understand the topic, program, and ways that services are provided to clients); 2) similar evaluations that have been carried out for a program like this in the past. Students are expected to research evaluations undertaken on similar sorts of programs to offer a comparative perspective. You should only select a program that you have determined that you can access adequate information for as it is your responsibility to access information for this assignment.

With the focus of the evaluation identified, the project will then involve laying out an evaluation design, data collection plan, analysis plan, and briefing and presentation plan. Students are expected to prepare a logic model, and design data collection tools and pretest them, e.g. surveys or interview schedules. The design should be developed with clear awareness of the political aspects of the situation and tailored to the needs of the agency leadership. Strategies for encouraging the use of the resulting evaluation findings also should be discussed.

The report should have all of the components identified in APPENDIX I.

EVALUATION PROPOSAL (OPTION B)

This will involve developing a proposal for an evaluation for a real-world program in the public or nonprofit sector.

You are asked to develop a scoping and evaluation design paper for a program. You will conduct the scoping activities but will only propose the evaluation; you are not expected to conduct the actual evaluation itself. You do not need to communicate with a nonprofit or government program before doing this assignment. You may find it helpful if you can contact somewhere there, but it is not required. While the instructor may provide some guidance to you on the subject of your topic, you bear the full responsibility for selecting a project that will provide you with the information you need to complete this assignment.

Scoping out the evaluation entails collecting information on the program through interviews with key contacts (decision-makers, staff, etc.) on current information needs, and conducting a synthesis of past related research and evaluation studies. You should conduct research on 1) the type of program that you are proposing an evaluation for (you should understand the topic, program, and ways that services are provided to clients); 2) similar evaluations that have been carried out for a program like this in the past. Students are expected to research evaluations undertaken on similar sorts of programs to offer a comparative perspective. You should only select a program that you have determined that you can access adequate information for as it is your responsibility to access information for this assignment.

With the focus of the evaluation identified, the project will then involve laying out an evaluation design, data collection plan, analysis plan, and briefing and presentation plan. Students are expected to prepare a logic model, and design data collection tools and pretest them, e.g. surveys or interview schedules. The design should be developed with clear awareness of the political aspects of the situation and tailored to the needs of the agency leadership. Strategies for encouraging the use of the resulting evaluation findings also should be discussed.

The report should have all of the components identified in APPENDIX I.

APPENDIX I: FINAL PAPER OUTLINE (EVALUATION OR PROPOSAL)

The suggested contents and order of presentation for the report are as follows:

- I. **Executive Summary:** Similar to the memo, the executive summary should address all major components of the analysis.
- II. **Introduction and Background:** An introduction to the project, including a brief description of the program, and a synthesis of relevant past research and evaluation findings. Also, cite relevant literature on programs related to the one under investigation.
- III. **Evaluation Questions:** The issues that have been identified and the specific questions to be addressed, or that should be addressed if the project is an evaluation plan.
- IV. **Evaluation Design:** A brief summary of the design(s) undertaken, or to be undertaken, including the concepts and variables, the theory underlying the policy/program, etc. should be provided. A **logic model** of the program/policy must be developed and presented in the body of the report with an appropriate introduction, i.e., stating what it is, how it was developed and how it may be used by the client.
- V. **Data Collection:** The sources of data available, measures used to address the research questions, data collection methods, and sampling procedures should be discussed. Also, there should be a list of limitations to each type of validity and reliability, as well as actions undertaken to reduce the impact of the limitations identified. Use of a *design matrix* to cover all of these issues is strongly recommended.
- VI. **Data Analysis:** Appropriate tables and figures should be constructed in accordance with guidance given in class for projects that are completed.
- VII. **Proposed Presentation and Utilization Plan:** Strategies for presenting the results to key stakeholders and decision-makers and strategies for facilitating utilization should be provided,
- VIII. **Potential Problems and Fall-back Strategies:** Identify potential problems that may arise in conducting the evaluation and the strategies that should be used to either avoid the problem or deal with its occurrence.
- IX. **Key Recommendations.**
- X. **Conclusion:** A brief conclusion should be provided.

Course Policies

1. Incompletes: A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of “I” (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student and instructor will both sign the contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the Program Director. Please consult the Student Handbook for the complete policy on incompletes.
2. Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom: It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment, even those submitted online through SafeAssign.
3. Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work: All work must be turned in by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit for that assignment, unless an exception is expressly made by the instructor.
4. Academic Honesty: Please consult the “policies” section of the student handbook for the university code of academic integrity. Note especially the definition of plagiarism: “intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.”
5. Changing Grades After Completion of Course: No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester, other than in cases of clerical error.
6. The Syllabus: This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her/his discretion, change content and requirements during the semester.
7. Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: In order to receive accommodations on the basis of disability, a student must give notice and provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services at UTEP.
8. Instructor’s Policy on Grade Contestation: Students wishing to contest a grade are required to draft a brief memo explaining the reasoning behind their dispute, and to then schedule a meeting with the instructor to discuss it.

Grading Criteria

A

Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.

B

Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student with some evident weaknesses. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but the understanding or application of some important issues is less than complete.

C

Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; rarely meets minimal expectations for the course. Work is poorly developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstandings of important issues.

F

Unacceptable: Work fails to meet minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has consistently failed to meet minimum course requirements. Weaknesses and limitations are pervasive.