

University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Department of Public Administration

PADM 7380 PUBLIC PROGRAM EVALUATION

Fall 2016

Instructor: Nichola Driver, MPA, PhD

Class time: Mondays, 6pm – 8:40pm

Classroom: Ross Hall, Room 313

Office Hours: Mondays, 3:00pm – 5:00pm

Office: Ross Hall, 637

Email: nddriver@ualr.edu (best way to reach me)

Course Description:

Program evaluation is a critical component in designing and operating effective programs. Evaluations supply information to program managers and policymakers that can assist them in making decisions about which programs to fund, modify, expand, or eliminate. This course provides an overview of the “nuts and bolts” of evaluation methodology and evaluation tools commonly used to assess publicly funded programs.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will know how to:

- Articulate the concepts, methods, and applications of evaluation research
- Read evaluation research critically
- Use evaluation results to anticipate or improve program performance
- Propose an appropriate evaluation plan to assess the implementation and effectiveness of a program.

Required Texts:

Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman. *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach, 7th Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

In addition to the required text, you will have additional weekly readings (mainly articles/case studies). These will be uploaded to Blackboard.

Assignments & Requirements

All assignments should be submitted via Blackboard by 5pm on the due date (except discussion questions). Late assignments will only be accepted under extreme circumstances and will be given partial credit.

Class Participation

Please come prepared to contribute to class discussion by synthesizing the readings, integrating discussion about your course project or other work, and providing thoughtful feedback on the work of other students. You should be prepared to answer discussion questions about the assigned readings. Be ready to learn from others by holding yourself and others to high standards for analysis while honoring differences in experiences and values. Every effort should be made to attend all sessions. Attendance will be considered in your grade.

Discussion Questions

Each week, students are responsible for bringing **5 discussion questions** about the assigned readings. Questions should cover all readings. The questions should demonstrate that the student critically synthesized the material in each reading to what he/she learned in class. These should not be simple summary questions.

Assignment 1: Evaluating the Evaluation

This assignment is designed to jump start us into thinking about the logic of evaluation and the totality of an evaluation project. Find a completed evaluation via a web search, UALR online library, or from your workplace. (If you have questions about whether the evaluation is appropriate for the assignment, let me know.) Write a 2-3 page memo to describe and assess the program evaluation. Use the Evaluation Assessment Tool as a framework for the memo. Please also provide me with the link to the evaluation or an electronic copy.

Assignment 2: Evaluation Questions & Program Theory

This is the first assignment that will lead to your final project. We don't have time to do an entire evaluation, but you will complete an evaluation *proposal*. Carefully choose a project that will work well for the final goal of completing an evaluation design.

- Choose a program for which you can get good information on the program model, implementation, clients, and stakeholders.
- Consider a program from you job or volunteer work. (These work well because you have access to clients and information).
- Choose a program that is interesting, but not so complex that you will not be able to understand how it works within a week or two of work.

For this assignment, write a 4-5 page memo describing the program, the program theory, and the goals of the evaluation. About half of this first memo should describe the purpose of the program, its importance, the targeted clients, and the framework describing how the program works (a logic model), and recent literature that supports this theory. The other half of the memo should lay out the purposes of the proposed evaluation of the project and the key research questions that the evaluation will address. These evaluation questions should be clearly stated. [You don't need to provide information on your evaluation methods, outcomes, or indicators – that will come later.]

Assignment 3: Data Collection Plan & Instrument

For this assignment, you will continue with your evaluation project from Assignment 2. Here you will write a 4-5 page memo describing a plan for collecting and analyzing empirical evidence to answer your evaluation questions. You will want to revise and improve your evaluation questions from Assignment 2 as you will have learned more about the program and can briefly update those here. You should describe the research design and identify outcomes and indicators for your evaluation. Include a chart showing which data will address each of your evaluation questions.

You should also include the specific details on your instruments for data collection: target participants, questions for a focus group, short survey, interview protocol, and/or data extraction and manipulation plan for administrative data. In other words, how will you collect all of the data you need to answer your evaluation questions?

Final Evaluation Plan

Your final project will be a 10-15 page complete evaluation plan which includes the following sections. Any feedback given on the previous assignments should be incorporated into your final submission.

1. Introduction
2. Program Theory & literature review
3. Evaluation goals & research questions
4. Detailed data collection plan
5. Plan for data analysis
6. Plan for working/communicating with stakeholders
7. Limitations
8. Any instruments for data collection (Appendices)

CITI Human Research Training

Instructions given in class.

Grading:

Participation/Attendance	40 points
Discussion Questions	50 points
Assignment 1	20 points
Assignment 2	40 points
Assignment 3	40 points
Final Paper	100 points
CITI Human Research Training	10 points
Total	300 points

Range of Points	Range of Percentages	Grade
269 – 300	90% - 100%	A
239 – 268	80% - 89%	B
209– 238	70% - 79%	C
179 – 208	60% - 69%	D
0 – 178	0% - 59%	F

Classroom Etiquette:

Cell phones must be turned on SILENT! Do not use computers for anything other than the class work.

Arriving late in class and leaving early are very disruptive to the instructor and other students. Please let an instructor know prior to the beginning of class if you absolutely must leave early and make sure your exit distracts others as little as possible. Please make every effort to respect others. Disagreements are allowed and expected, but the focus should be on ideas rather than on the individual who expresses them. Signs of disrespect that will not be tolerated include but are not limited to, having background conversations when others are talking, packing up early when others are still talking or asking questions, and working on material for other classes.

Acceptable Student Behavior:

“Students may not disturb normal classroom procedures by distracting or disruptive behavior. A faculty member may, at his or her discretion, eject a disruptive student from the classroom for the balance of the class period. The faculty member should document the bases for the ejection. Students are strongly urged, following an ejection, to meet with the faculty member to resolve the issue.” – UALR Office of the Dean of Students

Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating on exams, plagiarism, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Detailed explanations of the UALR’s standards of academic integrity for students may be found in the at <http://ualr.edu/deanofstudents/academic-integrity-1/>. If it is determined that a student has cheated on an assignment or has committed plagiarism, he or she will fail that assignment and will be reported to UALR’s Office of the Dean of Students.

Students with Disabilities

Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501-569-3143 (V/TTY) or 501-683-7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at ualr.edu/disability.

NOTE: I reserve the right to alter the syllabus to better suit the needs of the class.

Course Outline & Assignments

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment
Monday, August 22	Course Introduction, Syllabus Review, What is Program Evaluation?		
Monday, August 29	Evaluation Overview	<p>Rossi, Chapter 1</p> <p>Evaluation Assessment Tool & Worksheet</p> <p>Wolf, P., Gutmann, B., Puma, M., Kisida, B., Rizzo, L., Eissa, N., & Carr, M. (2010). Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Final Report. NCEE 2010-4018. <i>National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance</i>.</p> <p>Krueger, A. B., & Whitmore, D. M. (2001). The effect of attending a small class in the early grades on college-test taking and middle school test results: Evidence from Project STAR. <i>The Economic Journal</i>, 111(468), 1-28.</p>	Bring discussion questions
Monday, September 5	NO CLASS		
Monday, September 12	Tailoring Evaluations & Ethical Considerations	<p>Rossi, Chapter 2</p> <p>Davis, R.C. & Medina-Ariza, J. (2001). Results from Elder Abuse Prevention Experiment in New York City. <i>National Institute of Justice</i>.</p> <p>Oakes, J.M. (2002). Risks and wrongs in social science research: an evaluator's guide to the IRB. (only pp. 443-454)</p>	Bring discussion questions Assignment 1 Due
Monday, September 19	Program Theory & Evaluation Goals	<p>Rossi Ch 3 & 5</p> <p>Outcome Map Development</p> <p>Bernstein et al. (2009). Impact Evaluation</p>	Bring discussion questions CITI Human Research

		of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (skim)	training due
Monday, September 26	Needs Assessments	Rossi, Chapter 4 Collier AF, Munger, M, & YK Moua. (2012) Hmong mental health needs assessment: a community-based partnership in a small mid-western community. <i>American Journal of Comm Psychology</i> , 49(1):73–86.	
Monday, October 3	Implementation & Process Evaluation	Rossi, Chapter 6 Mye, S. C., & Moracco, K. E. (2015). “Compassion, pleasantry, and hope”: A process evaluation of a volunteer-based nonprofit. <i>Evaluation and program planning</i> , 50, 18-25. Curran, S., Gittelsohn, J., Anliker, J., Ethelbah, B., Blake, K., Sharma, S., & Caballero, B. (2005). Process evaluation of a store-based environmental obesity intervention on two American Indian Reservations. <i>Health Education Research</i> , 20(6), 719-729.	Bring discussion questions
Monday, October 10	Research Design & Outcomes	Rossi, Chapter 7 Harrell, A. V. (2007). Final report on the evaluation of the Judicial Oversight Demonstration. (Executive Summary & Survey Methodology)	Bring discussion questions Bring Assignment 2 draft to share with class
Monday, October 17	Impact Evaluation	Rossi Chapters 8 & 9 Comparing experimental, quasi-experimental and non-experimental designs: http://go.worldbank.org/7M4NUSKE10	Bring discussion questions Assignment 2 Due

Monday, October 24	Impact Evaluation	Continued	Bring discussion questions Bring draft of outcomes and indicators to share with class
Monday, October 31	Collecting Qualitative Data: Interviews & focus groups	Westat, J. (2002). An Overview of Quantitative & Qualitative Data Collection Methods. In <i>The 2002 User Friendly Handbook for Program Evaluation</i> . Arlington, VA: NSF. Sewell, M. The Use of Qualitative Interviews in Evaluation.	Bring discussion questions Bring draft qualitative protocol for project
Monday, November 7	Collecting Quantitative Data: surveys & administrative data	Fanning, E. (2005). Formatting a Paper-based Survey Questionnaire: Best Practices. <i>Practical Assessment, Research, & Evaluation</i> . 10(12). Solomon, DJ. (2001). Conducting Web-Based Surveys. <i>Practical Research Evaluation</i> . 7(19).	Bring discussion questions Bring draft quantitative protocol for project
Monday, November 14	Detecting, Interpreting & Analyzing Program Effects	Rossi, Chapter 10	Bring discussion questions
Monday, November 21	Cost Benefit Analysis, Evaluation Utilization	Rossi, Chapter 11 Barnett, W. S. (1995). Long-term effects of early childhood programs on cognitive and school outcomes. <i>The Future of Children</i> . 5(3), 25-50	Bring discussion questions
Monday, November 28	The Social Context of Evaluation	Rossi, Chapter 12 USAID. (2011) Conducting a Participatory Evaluation. Ryan, K. (2005). Democratic Evaluation Approaches for Equity and Inclusion. <i>The Evaluation Exchange</i> 11(3). Gauthie, B. (2004). Electronic Collaboration Tools: Opening Up a New World of Possibilities for Evaluators. <i>The Evaluation Exchange</i> , 10 (3).	Bring discussion questions Assignment 3 Due

		Love, A. & Muggah, B. (2004). Using Democratic Evaluation Principles to Foster Citizen Engagement and Strengthen Neighborhoods. <i>The Evaluation Exchange</i> , 10(3).	
Monday, December 5	Student Final Presentations		Final Paper Due