

University of Oregon, School of Planning, Public Policy & Management
PPPM 465/565, Program Evaluation
Fall Quarter, 2023
As of Date: 10/26/23

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Important Information	
Course Location	GER 248
Course Meeting Times	M&W 1200-1320
Q&A With the Professor (Office)	M 0930-1030, T 1000-1100 (Virtual Teams Link)
Make an Appointment	arus+PE@uoregon.edu
Required Text	None! All readings from open source/UO available subscriptions.
Canvas Page	https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/230805
Professor's Teaching Philosophy	https://sites.google.com/pdx.edu/andrewrusso/home

Welcome Message

On behalf of the School of Planning, Public Policy, & Management, welcome to another academic year. As your professor this quarter, I want to convey that it is my goal to facilitate your learning in a welcoming and collegial environment.

As an educator, I firmly adhere to the idea that education goes beyond the mere transmission of facts and figures; it is a dynamic process aimed at empowering students to become critical thinkers with a profound grasp of the world. My educational approach is deeply rooted in open-mindedness and critical theory, recognizing the diversity of learning styles and backgrounds among students. Within my classroom, I strive to cultivate an environment that promotes candid discourse, encourages the interrogation of assumptions, and invites the exploration of diverse viewpoints. My primary objective is to facilitate learning rather than obstruct it, recognizing that each student has unique needs and preferences.

Important Items to Remember

- Textbooks and Readings: There are no required textbooks; all course materials are accessible journal articles or open-source content.
- Preparation: Please complete all readings before Monday's class begins.
- Class Timeliness: I acknowledge different cultural perceptions of timeliness. Please aim to arrive within the first 10 minutes of the class start time, but no later than 12:10.
- Support: If you encounter difficulties in the course, don't hesitate to discuss them with me. I'm here to help ensure your success.
- Freedom to Step Out: Feel free to step out of the classroom if needed.
- Class Attendance: If you need to miss a class, a simple email notification is sufficient. No justification is required; I just want to ensure your well-being.
- Health Considerations: If you're unwell or exposed to illness, follow healthcare recommendations. Whether it's the flu, COVID, or a common cold, take precautions.
- My Role: I'm here to facilitate your learning and provide a foundation for you to build upon.
- Diverse Perspectives: Embrace the diversity of experiences among each person. Class participation is an excellent way to benefit from this diversity.
- Assignments: Undergraduates and graduates sometimes have different assignments, which will be clearly indicated.
- Openness to Learning: It's okay not to know everything. Knowing how to find answers and solve problems is vital in our field and contributes to your success and reputation.
- Assignment Details: Detailed assignment prompts, templates, rubrics, and descriptions are on the Canvas page.

Course Overview

This course is intended to give you a foundational introduction, and an appreciation of, the contributions and limitations of program evaluation in the social sector. The social sector here includes organizations and agencies in the public, nonprofit, and public health domains. Together we will focus on the conceptual, organizational, methodological, and ethical problems that face evaluators, and build basic skills needed to conduct evaluations. The course is divided into three sections:

Section 1. Introducing Evaluation

Together, we begin by introducing evaluation and laying an ethical groundwork. We will answer questions such as:

- Where did this field originate?
- What is it meant to accomplish?
- How do professionals and social scientists use it?
- Who, or what, are stakeholders?
- Who critiques the field and why?
- Program Evaluation gone right, wrong, and sideways.

Section 2. Surveying A Program's Landscape and Evaluation Planning

We will investigate real-world applications and discuss the methods and frameworks used in the field. We will explore why program evaluation is a distinct domain worthy of its own course.

- Showcase tools and skills employed in the field.
- Discuss theoretical underpinnings.
- Evaluating programs aligned with organizational strategy and mission.
- Explore and refresh our understanding of methods and research design.
- Examine counterfactuals; evaluating what might have been.

Section 3. Doing Evaluation

This is all about putting it together and looking forward. In this section, we will:

- Examine the practical steps needed to conduct successful evaluations.
- Investigate Artificial Intelligence and its applications in the field.
- Discuss the critical perspectives in the field.
- Propose/Pitch an evaluation strategy for a program.

What will you gain from this course?

- Develop knowledge of and skills in culturally responsive evaluation & and identify potential ethical dilemmas in evaluation.
- Work with stakeholders to frame evaluation and performance measurement questions.
- Understand different models and how to apply them.
- Help different types of social sector organizations align their mission and strategy with their measurement practices.
- Design clear and useful data collection instruments for use in evaluation work.
- Design user-oriented reports to convey evaluation findings.
- Develop useful and feasible recommendations based on evaluation findings.

Course Details and Schedule

This course will provide a solid foundation for students to build upon as they navigate the dynamic field of program evaluation. Starting with a comprehensive overview of the discipline, the course will gradually guide students toward the practical application of their knowledge by empowering them to design evaluations for real-world programs. Throughout the journey, students will develop the critical skills needed to effectively assess the impact and effectiveness of various initiatives. Ultimately, this course will equip students to not only evaluate programs but also to confidently present their findings, ensuring that they emerge from the class well-prepared to contribute meaningfully to the realms of nonprofit, government, and public health, armed with the ability to make data-driven decisions and effect positive change in their respective fields.

Though the following reading list looks exhausting, I promise it's light and informative. In many cases, the selections are only a few pages of much larger works or short practical overviews. Scholarly articles, chapters, and frameworks for reading were selected to complement, not replace, our in-class discussions.

UG = Undergraduate Reading

G = Graduate Reading (optional for undergraduate students)

Skim = Have a look and skim the content

Section 1

Week 1 – Introductions and Overview	
I ask you to read	UG&G Rossi, Lipsey, Henry, (2019) pp. 23-31 UG&G Skim Patton Flashcards (2017) G Wanzer (2021)
I ask you to complete BY 2359 October 1st	(1) Pick an Organization and Sector (2) Course Contract & Discussion Agreement
Week 2 – Frameworks and Tools	
I ask you to read	UG&G The KU Community Toolbox – Chapter 36 Section 1 UG&G Powell et al., (1996) UG&G OECD, (n.d.) G Skim CDC Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health
I ask you to complete By 2359 October 8th	(1) Organizational Overview and Assessment
Week 3 – Legitimacy, Dilemmas, and Ethics	
I ask you to read	UG&G AEAGP (2011) UG&G Bernstein and Aulgur (2017) pp 1-6 UG&G Gugerty and Karlan, (2014) G HMT Magenta Book pp 75-79
I ask you to complete By 2359 October 15th	(1) Ethical Issues in Program Evaluation

Section 2

Week 4 – Theoretical Underpinnings	
I ask you to read	UG&G Rossi, Lipsey, & Hendy, (2019) pp 102 - 144 UG&G Skim Kellog Foundation Logic Model G Brousselle & Champagne (2011) G Reichardt, (2022)
I ask you to complete By 2359 October 22nd	(1) Program Needs Assessment
Week 5 – Scope and Methods	
I ask you to read	UG&G GAO Report (2017) G Peterson, Schmid, and Kosoki (2019) G Prosek, (2018)
I ask you to complete By 2359 October 29th	(1) Take a Break!
Week 6 – Developing Your Plan	
I ask you to read	UG&G Rossi, Lipsey, Henry (2019) Chapters 11 and 12 (pp 393-429) UG&G KU Community Toolbox Section 5 G Mertens & Wilson (2018) Chapter 9 (pp 287-334)
I ask you to complete By 2359 Nov. 5th	(1) Self-Progress Assessment (2) Case Study – TEEN Action Program

Section 3

Week 7 – Executing Your Plan	
I ask you to read	UG&G Each Other’s Case Study Submissions G Hendricks et al. (2008)
I ask you to complete By 1700 Nov. 10th	(1) Professor Meeting
Week 8 – Stakeholders and Impacts	
I ask you to read	UG&G McLoughlin (2015)
I ask you to complete By 2359 Nov. 19th	(1) Evaluation Critique
Week 9 – Critical Perspectives	
I ask you to read	UG&G Sandberg et al (2022) UG&G Eikenberry & Kluver (2004)
I ask you to complete	(1) Work on Proposal
Week 10 – Looking Toward the Future; AI and Tomorrow’s Challenges	
I ask you to listen to	AI Could Solve Some of Humanity’s Hardest Problems.

Assignments, Expectations, and Grading

**All assignments are due by the Sunday of the corresponding week by 2359 / 11:59 PM.
Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis.**

For all assignments in class, I expect you to provide high-quality, well-constructed work. Poor-quality writing and poor-quality presentations will limit your academic and career success. So let us use this time to improve both. It is also easy to misinterpret evaluation findings, so clear and precise writing is essential.

Week 1: Pick an Organization and Sector

Select ONE of the following sectors and organizations to research throughout the course, constructing the final project from what you learn in class, from the readings, and from their available resources. There is no turning back after week 3. I have selected these due to their availability of data, history, and access to program information. All links go to their programs & and projects pages:

1. Nonprofit/NGO Sector
 - i. [Team Rubicon USA](#)
 - ii. [HIVOS International](#)
2. Public Health Sector
 - i. [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
 - ii. [PATH](#)
3. Government Sector

- i. [National Aeronautics and Space Administration \(NASA\)](#)
- ii. [Oregon Metro \(Metro\)](#)

Week 1: Course Contract and Discussion Agreement (5pts)

First, Review, modify, and submit contributions to our discussion agreement.

Second, I ask you to draw up a one-page learning and teaching contract with me. There is no required format. I will consider this contract when making a final grading decision. Your contract must be designed with the following parameters in mind:

1. What you want to learn.
2. How you will commit to learning.
3. How I can facilitate your learning in a way that suits your goals/needs.
4. One big question going into the class.

Week 2: Organizational Overview and Assessment (10 pts)

Undergraduates – In 2-3 pages, describe the organization you selected and the sector it is within. Answer these questions in your essay:

1. What is the organization's mission?
2. What programs does the organization run?
3. Why do you believe the organization is important to the sector at large?

Graduates – In 3-5 pages, examine the organization and sector you have selected and answer the following questions:

1. Why does the organization exist?
2. What challenges is the organization trying to overcome?
3. What academic research exists on the organization and what can that work tell you about it?
4. What programs are running and how long have they run?
5. Why do you believe the organization is important to the sector at large?

Week 3: Ethical Quandaries in Program Evaluation (15 pts)

Undergrads and Grads - Submit Final Organization & Sector Selection

Undergrads and Grads – Write a five-page paper on any ethical dilemma your organization faced, addressing the following:

1. What program went wrong and why?
2. What did the organization do to fix it?
3. Would you have done something different?
4. Please use at least 2 academic sources and 2 non-academic sources in your work.

Week 4: Program Needs Assessment (15 pts)

Undergrads- Your task is to create a presentation format Needs Assessment for your program/organization. You will present this assessment in class and your presentation must include the following components:

1. Program/Organization Overview: Provide a brief overview of the chosen program/organization, including its mission, goals, and the specific program you intend to evaluate.
2. Information Needs Assessment: Identify the key information and data that are crucial for evaluating the chosen program/organization effectively. Consider aspects such as program objectives, outputs, outcomes, and potential challenges.
3. Data Sources and Methods: Describe the sources of data you plan to use in your evaluation, including primary and secondary sources. Explain how you will access or collect these data.
4. Ethical Considerations: Address ethical considerations related to data collection, such as obtaining informed consent and ensuring data privacy.
5. Presentation/Written Report: You can choose to present your Plan to the class or submit a written report.

Graduate Students - Develop a Needs Assessment for your program/organization that goes beyond the basics. Choose between delivering a presentation to the class or submitting a comprehensive written report adhering to APA formatting guidelines. Your plan must encompass the following components:

1. Program/Organization Context: Provide an in-depth contextual analysis of the chosen program/organization, including its historical background, stakeholders, and the specific program under evaluation.
2. Information Needs Assessment: Conduct a thorough needs assessment to identify the precise information required for an effective evaluation. Consider program theory, logic models, and stakeholder perspectives.
3. Comprehensive Data Sources: Enumerate and justify a wide range of data sources, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative, primary, and secondary sources. Explain how each source contributes to a holistic understanding of the program's performance.
4. Data Collection Methods and Tools: Present a detailed plan for data collection, specifying the methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, archival data review) and tools (e.g., questionnaires, interview guides) you will use. Discuss how these methods align with your information needs.
5. Sampling Strategies: Describe your sampling strategies, addressing issues of representativeness and data quality.
6. Ethical Framework: Outline the ethical considerations that will guide your data collection efforts, emphasizing informed consent, confidentiality, and data security.

Week 5 – Take a Break.

Taking a step back and recharging are revolutionary acts in our society. So, I encourage you to take a break and focus on yourself.

Week 6 – Self-Progress Assessment & Teen ACTION Program Case Study (20 pts)

Undergrad Students – You work at the organization you selected to research for this course. Your supervisor asks you to put what skills you learned in college to good use and read the case study. Your supervisor asks you how you would have done things differently and if you can make any recommendations to improve the program at your organization. In 3-5 pages, please inform your supervisor about the following:

1. Summarize key takeaways; what did you learn from reading the case study? How might your organization benefit from these takeaways?
2. Did you notice any ethical concerns? What can your organization learn from them?
3. Reflect on, and summarize, how the program failed to conduct an evaluation that adhered to sound research practices and ethical principles.

Grad Students – You too are tasked with analyzing a real-world program evaluation that faced significant challenges and ultimately did not provide the intended insights. The evaluation in question was conducted on a nonprofit organization's community health intervention program aimed at reducing childhood obesity. Unfortunately, the evaluation encountered several issues and yielded inconclusive results. Address the following in a presentation to a hypothetical board of directors:

1. Research Design Analysis: Examine the research design elements of the evaluation. Identify what aspects were lacking or problematic. Discuss issues related to data collection, sampling, measurement, and analysis that may have contributed to the evaluation's shortcomings.
2. Ethical Considerations: Evaluate the ethical considerations involved in the evaluation. Were there any ethical breaches or concerns related to informed consent, privacy, or data handling? Analyze how these ethical issues may have impacted the evaluation's validity and reliability.
3. Identification of Challenges: Identify and discuss the main challenges or obstacles that the evaluation faced, both in terms of research design and ethics. Consider issues such as inadequate resources, participant reluctance, or data quality problems.
4. Research Design Improvements: Based on your analysis, propose specific recommendations for improving the research design of the evaluation. What changes or enhancements could have led to more reliable and informative results?
5. Ethical Guidelines: Suggest ethical guidelines and practices that should have been followed to avoid or mitigate ethical dilemmas. How could a more ethical approach have enhanced the evaluation's outcomes?
6. Future Directions: Discuss how the lessons learned from this case study can inform future evaluations in nonprofit, government, or public health contexts. What best practices can be applied to ensure better outcomes in similar evaluations?
7. Summarize the key findings of your case study analysis, emphasizing the deficiencies in research design and ethical considerations.
8. Recap your recommendations for improvement and their potential impact on future evaluations.

Week 7 - Meet with the Professor and discuss your project proposal.

Arrange an in-person meeting during Q&A hours, after class, or schedule a Teams/Zoom meeting to discuss your final project proposal.

Week 8 – Evaluation Critique (10 pts)

Utilizing the provided templates, evaluate one of the template reports OR an evaluation report your organization has made publicly available. The purpose of this assignment is to become good evaluators of evaluation – so examine the provided report, budget forms, etc. critically and go deep in identifying possible problems.

Summarize the applicable program in your own words (200 – 300 words):

1. What is the program being evaluated?
2. What are the main questions the evaluation is trying to answer?
3. Who would be a potential user of the report?

Provide at least 2 examples (more is fine) of stakeholders the evaluation alludes to. For each of the stakeholders, explain the following:

1. Why were the stakeholders mentioned?
2. How did the stakeholders contribute to, or detract from, the program's outcome?
3. Do you feel any stakeholders are missing? Back up your claim with appropriate evidence.
4. Identity any Issues Propose Changes:
5. Propose one change (methodological, inclusivity, budgetary, etc.) in the evaluation approach that would have addressed any problem(s) you identified.

Weeks 9&10 – Final Proposal (due during finals week; 25 pts)

Undergraduate Students - Building upon your work thus far, submit a “pitch” presentation to the class in no more than 10 slides and 15 minutes of time. Your goal is to convince your higher-ups to either (a) continue to fund the program or (b) revive a finished program in a new context.

UNGRADED - Graduate students will issue a final “continue/no continue” and provide feedback. These are not considered in your grade but offer a chance to gain valuable insight from your colleagues and not just your professor.

Your presentation must include:

1. Why This Program?: Consider why you selected the program within the organization. Think about the social, health, or environmental issues you're passionate about.
2. Historical Context: Research the program's history within the organization. Explore its evolution, milestones, and any significant challenges it has faced. Understanding the program's background will provide context for your evaluation.
3. Impact and Importance: Highlight the potential implications of the program. How does it affect individuals, communities, or the broader society? Discuss the positive changes it aims to achieve.
4. Relevance: Explore why this program is relevant today. Are there emerging issues or changing needs that make it particularly important to evaluate now?
5. Approach: Outline your plan for conducting the evaluation. Discuss your data collection methods, sources, and ethical considerations. How will you ensure that your evaluation is both rigorous and respectful of participants' rights and privacy?
6. Evaluation Questions: Formulate specific evaluation questions that you intend to answer through your research. These questions should reflect the program's objectives and outcomes.

7. Data Analysis: Briefly explain your proposed data analysis techniques. Will you use surveys, interviews, or a mix of both? How will you interpret and make sense of the data you collect?

Graduate Students - Building upon your work thus far, submit a plan to conduct an evaluation of an existing program at your organization. Your outline should address the following:

1. Program/Organization Context: Provide a thorough contextual analysis of the program/organization, incorporating historical, political, and social factors. Explain how this context informs the evaluation.
2. Information Collection Integration: Describe how the information collected aligns with the program's logic model or evaluation framework. Detail how various data sources contribute to a comprehensive assessment.
3. Evaluation Questions and Hypotheses: Formulate clear evaluation questions and hypotheses that guide your analysis. Ensure that these questions address the program's objectives and impact.
4. Data Analysis Strategies: Elaborate on your data analysis strategies, encompassing advanced statistical techniques, qualitative methodologies, and data management protocols.
5. Ethical Framework: Reiterate the ethical considerations guiding your data collection, interaction, and relationship with stakeholders, and your alignment with the organizational mission.
6. Reporting and Dissemination: Outline how evaluation findings will be reported and disseminated to stakeholders, including the creation of actionable recommendations.
7. Budget and Resources: Estimate the budget and resources required to execute the evaluation, accounting for personnel, data collection tools, and analysis software.
8. Evaluation Timeline: Create a detailed timeline with milestones for data collection, analysis, reporting, and stakeholder engagement.

Grading Components: As a 400/500 level course, the grading components and course expectations are different for graduate and undergraduate students. In general, writing assignments will be graded based on (a) clarity & and thoughtful analysis; (b) quality of research and analysis; (c) structure and professionalism. Presentation assignments will be graded based on (a) Slide organization; (b) Slide design; (c) evidence for findings; (d) professionalism

Final Grades will be assigned based on your score out of 100 points as follows:

Grade Distribution	
A	94-100%
A-	90-93.99%
B+	86-89.99%
B	84-85.99%
B-	80-83.99%
C+	76-79.99%
C	74-75.99%
Below Here? Let's Talk ASAP.	
C-	70-73.99%
D+	66-69.99%
D	64-65.99%
D-	60-63.99%
F	Under 60%

Documented Disabilities

Students who have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course should make arrangements with me as soon as possible. Feel free to stop by my office, speak with me before/after class, or email me.

Academic Misconduct

You are expected at all times to do your own work. Copying content from other students or other authors and submitting it as your own work is grounds for failing the class. The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. For example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from me. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas). If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is your obligation to clarify the question with me before committing the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at: www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

Class Artificial Intelligence Use Policy

In this mixed graduate and undergraduate class, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and technologies is not only permitted but actively encouraged to enhance your learning and research experiences. AI can be a valuable resource for your assignments, projects, and research endeavors within the scope of this course. However, to ensure transparency and maintain academic integrity, we must establish some guidelines for the responsible use of AI in this learning environment.

You are required to submit the prompts or input data you used when using AI-generated content. This step is crucial to maintaining transparency in your work. By providing the prompts, you allow me to assess your understanding of the assignment and the AI's role in completing it. It also ensures that your use of AI aligns with the course's learning objectives. When submitting prompts, please ensure they are clear, relevant to the task, and adequately document any modifications made during the AI generation process. We value your creativity and innovation but also seek to evaluate your proficiency in setting up AI tools effectively.

As the instructor, I am here to support your exploration of AI technologies. Though we will not discuss AI until the final week, I will provide guidance on the appropriate use of AI tools and technologies to help you maximize their benefits. I will also evaluate your AI-generated content based on the provided prompts and offer feedback on both the output and the quality of the prompts. These prompts, if AI is used, will be part of your assignment grade.

Misuse of AI, including failure to submit prompts or using AI for academic misconduct, will have consequences in line with the university's policies on academic integrity. However, in cases of unintentional misuse or a lack of understanding, I am committed to providing education and guidance to help you use AI tools ethically and responsibly.

Inclusion & Duty to Report Sexual Assault

The School of Architecture and Allied Arts, the administrative home of the PPPM department, is a community that values inclusion. We are committed to equal opportunities for all students to develop individually, professionally, and academically regardless of ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs and traditions. We are dedicated to an environment that is inclusive and fosters awareness, understanding, and respect for diversity. If you feel excluded or threatened, please let me know. If you are reluctant to speak to someone in person, please know that the University Bias Response Team is also a resource that can assist you. Find more information at their website at <http://bias.uoregon.edu/index.html> or by phoning 541-346-2037. In addition, we are also committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender based stalking. If this happens to you or a student you know, I will counsel you/and or the student to seek confidential assistance at the University Health Center and the University Counseling Center. I am required by the University to report this to the PPPM Department Head and the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity so that the incident can be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Overall

Respect and understand each other's shared humanity; our challenges; our backgrounds; our dreams; and our desire to lead rich and fulfilling lives.