

University of Minnesota
Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, & Development/
Department of Educational Psychology

Course Number: EdPA 5501/EPsy 5243

Course Title: Principles and Methods of [Program] Evaluation

Term: Spring 2010

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Class Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:45 AM-11:00 AM
N647 Elliott Hall

Course Texts:

Course packet, class handouts, and exercises

Fitzpatrick, J. L., Sanders, J. R., & Worthen, B. R. (2004). Program evaluation: Alternative approaches and practical guidelines (3rd Ed.). New York: Longman.

Course Description:

An introductory course in program evaluation; planning an evaluation study, collecting and analyzing information, reporting results; overview of the field of program evaluation.

Course Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will

Know:

1. The historical development of program evaluation
2. The distinction between research and evaluation
3. The distinction between formative and summative evaluation
4. The distinction between internal and external evaluation
5. Various definitions and purposes of program evaluation
6. The difference between evaluation questions and data gathering questions

7. The categories of the Program Evaluation Standards
8. The uses of survey, interview, and observation methods

Understand:

1. How evaluation can lead to program improvement over time
2. Various approaches and theoretical frameworks
3. The principles and process of utilization-focused evaluation
4. The importance of culture in conducting evaluations
5. That several methodologies are available to evaluators
6. That evaluation practice is constrained by many factors
7. That ethical issues affect the evaluator's role
8. How to apply the Program Evaluation Standards
9. The logic and flow of the evaluation process
10. How to develop survey items and surveys
11. How to prepare and conduct individual and focus group interviews
12. How to analyze quantitative and qualitative data

Be able to:

1. For a given evaluation object:
 - a. Distinguish among clients, sponsors, audiences, stakeholders, and primary intended users
 - b. Write an object description
 - c. Determine the purpose or focus of an evaluation
 - d. Develop a program logic or theory of action
 - e. Formulate evaluation questions
 - f. Determine an appropriate evaluation approach
 - g. Determine appropriate data collection methods
 - h. Develop an evaluation budget
2. Structure an appropriate evaluation "report"
3. Design ways to encourage people to use the results
4. Analyze surveys for their strengths and weaknesses

Value/Appreciate:

1. The importance of program evaluation for organizations
2. The complexity of program evaluation
3. The difficulty of the evaluator's role

Course Requirements/Grading:

Because this is an introductory course, assessment is based on two things: 1) your knowledge of the evaluation field (closed book sections of the mid-term and the take-home final); and 2) the level of evaluation skills you develop (three projects, class exercises, and the open book section of the midterm). If (and only if) you score below an 80 on a written assignment, you are both allowed and encouraged to re-do it, and you can receive up to half of the possible points for the revision. (Note: Once you earn at least 80, no further revisions will improve your grade. Also, the revised version is

due no later than the day on which the next assignment is due). Incompletes are an option only when students are unable to complete work because of life intervening (e.g., illness, death in the family). Poor planning is not an acceptable excuse.

[Warning: “I” grades will automatically lapse to “F”s at the end of the next semester of a student’s registration. You must complete and sign an Incomplete Contract to receive a grade of I.]

Class attendance, exercises, and participation	25 %
Project A – Object description	10 %
Project B – Context analysis	15%
Project C -- Proposed evaluation design	20 %
Midterm	15 %
Final take-home presentation/exam	15 %
Total	100 %

University Senate Grading Policy

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|----|------|--------|---|
| A | 4.00 | 94-100 | Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. |
| A- | 3.67 | 90-93 | |
| B+ | 3.33 | 87-89 | |
| B | 3.00 | 84-86 | Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. |
| B- | 2.67 | 80-83 | |
| C+ | 2.33 | 77-79 | |
| C | 2.00 | 74-76 | Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect. |
| C- | 1.67 | 70-73 | |
| D+ | 1.33 | 67-69 | |
| D | 1.00 | 64-66 | Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements. |
- S Achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better (achievement required for an S is at the discretion of the instructor but may be no lower than equivalent to a C-).
- F Represents failure and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I. The F carries 0 gradepoints and the credits for the course do not count toward any academic degree program. The credit hours for the course shall count in the gradepoint average.
- N Represents no credit and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I. The N carries no gradepoints and the credits for the course do not count toward any academic degree program. The credit hours for the course do not count in the gradepoint average.
- I (Incomplete) Assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, a student is prevented from completing the work of the course on time. Requires a written agreement between instructor and student.

Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of F or N for the entire course.

Students who enroll for a course on the A-F grading system shall receive an F if such grade is warranted; students who enroll for a course on the S-N system shall receive an N if such grade is warranted.

How to Access Your Grades. You may view your grades online at www.onestop.umn.edu. To access your grades via telephone, call the Gopher Student Line at 612-624-5200.

Class Policies

Assignments: All assignments should be completed in a professional manner and on time, unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor or TA.

Students often ask whether they can turn in assignments late. Our approach is to treat you like professional evaluators. An evaluator can turn reports in belatedly, but does so at the risk of offending clients or losing business. If, however, there is an excellent reason for an untimely report, most people understand. Letting me know in advance is important. Your job is to inform us as soon as possible that you are unable to complete the assignment (no later than the day before the due date). Work that is merely submitted late without prior explanation will be marked lower since it is unfair to allow some people extra time for assignments without allowing extra time for all.

Attendance and participation: The faculty of the University of Minnesota affirms the importance of prompt and regular attendance on the part of all students. Quality instruction clearly depends upon active student participation (hands-on and collaborative) in the classroom or its equivalent learning environment. If you are not there, you simply cannot experience the content. If an absence is anticipated, the student should notify one of the instructors, preferably in advance. Students are encouraged to assist each other with class notes for missed classes.

Cell phones: Please remember to turn your cell phone off BEFORE class begins. We sincerely discourage texting and e-mailing during class since it may distract you and others near you.

Examinations: The midterm will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The take-home final will be essay questions and a collaborative class presentation. The midterm and final will cover the material in the required text, other readings and exercises, and class discussions.

Academic honesty and integrity: Scholastic misconduct is defined broadly as

. . . any act that violates the right of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work. Scholastic dishonesty includes (but is not necessarily limited to): cheating on assignments or examinations;

plagiarizing, which means misrepresenting as your own work any part of work done by another; submitting the same paper, or substantially similar papers, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of all instructors concerned; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student's work.

Don't do it. **Again, scholastic misconduct in any portion of the academic work for this course shall be grounds for a grade of F for the entire course.**

Accommodation. It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me to discuss their individual needs for accommodation.

Student preparation and participation: As a MINIMUM, all students are EXPECTED to have read and thought about the information provided in the assigned chapters BEFORE class. This is a professional responsibility to yourself and your classmates. Active participation in class discussions is an important element of a collegiate program; it is evaluated by instructors and is reflected in the assignment of course grades. Participation includes the quantity and quality of comments and class discussions, lively fellowship, positive contributions to group assignments, ability to respond to questions by classmates and the instructor, and the ability to work as a member of a group. We expect students to synthesize, analyze, and integrate all reading assignments. It is obvious that consistent attendance and being on time are essential ingredients of participation.

Picking up course materials at the end of the course. At the end of the course, your completed materials will be available in Professor King's U of MN office, or they can be mailed to you if you provide us with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Any materials not picked up a month after the course ends will be recycled.

Evaluation Project Information

Four formal projects are required for this course. Their purpose is to give you experience in planning and designing an evaluation study. The projects can be done individually or in groups of two to three (no larger). Group projects often result in higher grades and are, for most people, the recommended way to conduct the projects. You are, however, welcome to work individually. **Please attach the appropriate grading sheet (handed out in class) to your project when you turn it in.** You will also be graded on the quality of your projects' presentation.

Project A: Object Description

The object description, based on an interview with key project personnel and limited document review, will clarify the program that you will evaluate. It must include the following components:

1. Title / name of object/ description of the procedures used to gather information for Project A (i.e., how did you get the information that your description is based on?)
2. Background and program history (optional)
3. Program rationale/"philosophy"
4. Program goals /outcomes (not the evaluation's goals)
5. A logic model or program theory for the program
6. Setting
7. Program staff
8. Program clients/participants
9. Organization/structure/administration
10. Activities/events
11. Program budget

The best object descriptions are those that avoid judgmental language; the focus here is to describe, not to judge. If there are previous evaluations of the program, they can be mentioned in Project B.

Suggested length: A total of 4-6 double-spaced typed pages. You may add appendices if necessary.

Project B: Evaluation Context

The description of the evaluation context places the object in its setting. Analyzing and understanding the evaluation context is an essential first step in a successful evaluation study. The context description must include the following components:

1. Title of object/ 1-2 sentence description of it/ procedures used to gather information for Project B (i.e., how did you get the information that your description is based on?)
2. Purpose of the evaluation (from list of purposes discussed in class) with rationale
3. Evaluation audiences/stakeholders and their concerns (chart format; must be in landscape format with header rows repeating)
4. Primary intended users of the evaluation (specific people, not groups, from the audience/stakeholder list)
5. Evaluation questions (not data collection questions) – 3 to 5 broad overarching questions and the concerns upon which they are based (from your stakeholder/concerns chart)
6. Constraints affecting the evaluation (e.g., ethics, politics, resources; not constraints on the program)
7. Original Project A with grading sheet (as an attachment)

Suggested length: No more than 8 double-spaced typed pages. You may add appendices if necessary.

Project C: Proposed Evaluation Design

In light of your work in Projects A and B, you will describe in general terms how you might conduct an evaluation of the object. The design must include the following components:

1. Object title (include a brief description of the object)
2. Purpose (summary repeated from Project B) and approach(es) to accomplish the purpose (from Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen) with a rationale for your selection
3. The (revised) evaluation questions with an explanation of why you are using these
4. Design of the evaluation by question (chart format, must be in landscape format, with header rows repeating):
 - a. Evaluation question
 - b. The information needed to answer the question
 - c. The source of the information
 - d. Recommended methods / strategies (match the information source with the strategy and an indication of the sample)
5. A rationale for the methods selected (narrative format, detailed explanation of your sampling procedures)
6. Methods constraints posed by this study, i.e., weaknesses of the methods you propose AND how you will counter each of them (chart format)
7. A proposed budget for the evaluation (landscape chart format; cf. pp. 278-279 in Fitzpatrick et al. text)
8. A plan to promote use of the study based on the principles of utilization-focused evaluation
9. Original projects A and B with grading sheets as an attachment

Suggested length: No more than 12 double-spaced typed pages (chart formats for #4 [landscape], #6 and #7 [landscape]).

This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact *Psychological Foundations Program, 206 Burton Hall, 612-624-6083*.

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EdPA 5501/EPsy 5243 Principles and Methods of Program Evaluation
Initial Schedule¹

Spring 2010 – King/Pejsa

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due²
1/19	<i>Introductions and course overview</i>	[NA]	
1/21	<i>What, exactly, is program evaluation?</i>	<i>Two object examples Chapter 1 plus pp. 169-189 and 203-212</i>	<i>“Minnesota State of Mind” assignment</i>
1/26	<i>The historical development of evaluation The difference between research and evaluation</i>	<i>Chapter 2 [Chapter 1, pp. 5-8]</i>	<i>Evaluation history assignment</i>
1/28	<i>Qualitative and quantitative paradigms overview</i>	<i>Chapter 13</i>	<i>Possible object form</i>
2/2	<i>Writing an object description Program theory, theory of change, and systems theory</i>	<i>[pp. 169-189 and 203-212] pp. 205-207 Logic model websites</i>	<i>Review object descriptions (on Moodle)</i>
2/4	<i>Data collection methods for evaluation</i>	<i>Chapters [13] and 14</i>	<i>Rationale assignment Finalize object selection</i>
2/9	<i>Utilization-focused evaluation overview The program evaluation standards (PES)- didn't get to Purposes and alternative views of evaluation (move to next week—didn't get to)</i>	<i>p. 143 pp. 444-448 Chapter 3</i>	
2/11	<i>Peer review of object description Survey analysis/critique</i>		<i>Draft object description</i>

¹ This is the schedule planned at the beginning of the semester. In all likelihood it will evolve. It is your responsibility to keep up with revisions.

² The assignment is due on the day it is listed (e.g., the “Minnesota State of Mind” assignment is due on January 21).

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due²
	<i>Brainstorm topics for survey project</i>		
2/16	Analyzing the evaluation context Developing overarching evaluation questions	Chapters 11-12	
2/18	Survey item development Topics and teams for survey project		Project A (object description)
2/23	Evaluator roles and constraints Review context analysis	Chapters 10-12	Revise Tai Chi Club questions
2/25	Quantitative analysis/interpretation- survey data <i>Survey group work session</i>	Chapter 15	Prepare quantitative analysis
3/2	The politics of conducting an evaluation <i>Case discussion/multi-site evaluations</i>	Chapters 17 and 19	Prepare "Fighting Back" case
3/4	Individual and collaborative interviewing <i>Think alouds on your group surveys</i>		Bring 5 copies of survey draft
3/9	Review for mid-term Real world of evaluation		Prepare questions for review
3/11 [MESI]	Mid-term examination	Review Chapter 3	(Study for mid-term)
3/16, 3/18	<i>[Spring break]</i>		
3/23	Overview of approaches <i>Work session on approach presentations</i>	Chapters 4-9	
3/25	<i>Peer review of context analyses</i> Approach presentations	[Chapters 4-9]	Draft context analysis
3/30 [Passover]	Approach presentations (if necessary) Evaluation design Planning how to conduct the evaluation	[Chapter 13]	
4/1	Focus and collaborative group interviewing Qualitative analysis/interpretation- interview data	[pp. 358-364]	Project B (context analysis) Prepare qualitative analysis

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due²
4/6	Evaluation reporting and use	[pp. 282-285, p. 294] Chapter 16	
4/8	Budgeting an evaluation		
4/13	Intercultural issues in program evaluation	"Yes is Better than No"	Intercultural evaluation assignment
4/15	<i>Peer review of evaluation design</i> Intercultural issues (cont.)	[TBD]	<i>Draft evaluation design</i>
4/20	Administer surveys Evaluation ethics	Review pp. 358-364	Bring 25 copies of final survey (or have us make them)
4/22	Evaluation ethics (cont.)	Review pp. 415-432	<i>Project C (evaluation design)</i>
4/27	Evaluation ethics (cont.) Meta-evaluation	Chapter 18	Final take-home questions available
4/29	Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators	Stevahn et al. (2005)	ECPE self-assessment
5/4	Survey reports		
5/6	Survey reports (cont.) Course summary and final words Course evaluation forms	Chapter 21	
5/13 [8-10 a.m.]	Final exam		Take-home questions

