POGO 646 DL2 (previously POGO646-001) — Policy and Program Evaluation

SYLLABUS

Credit Hours: 3
CRN 76140
Date/Time: Monday 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm (synchronous)
Classroom: Blackboard Collaborate Ultra [session]
Website: http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu
Instructor: Katrin B. Anacker, Ph.D.
Office: Blackboard Collaborate Ultra [course room]
e-mail: kanacker@gmu.edu
Office Hours: Monday 6:15 pm – 7:15 pm
Tuesday 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm
or by appointment (kanacker@gmu.edu)

Course Description
This course introduces students to policy and program evaluation. Topics include understanding the nature and rationale of, and the need for program evaluation; assessing program theory and design; assessing program process and implementation; measuring and monitoring program outcomes; understanding the effects of impact evaluation, comparison group designs, and designs with strict controls; detecting, interpreting, and exploring program effects; assessing the economic efficiency of program; planning an evaluation; and understanding the social and political context of evaluation. The final project will be a program evaluation synthesis of a (a) federal, (b) state, (c) county, or (d) municipal program based on the student’s choice.

Learning Outcomes
At the conclusion of this course, students should
- be knowledgeable about the general fundamental concepts of policy and program evaluation;
- be knowledgeable about select data utilized in select policy and program evaluations;
- be knowledgeable about select methods utilized in select policy and program evaluations;
- possess the skills needed to interpret results of select policy and program evaluations; and
- possess the skills needed to communicate and present research questions/goals, data, methods, and findings of select policy and program evaluations to public policy makers and other non-technical audiences in a way understandable to them.
Class Website
This class uses Blackboard and Blackboard Collaborate Ultra in order to enhance the online learning experience of students. The Blackboard website contains the class syllabus, worksheets, and lecture slides. The Blackboard Collaborate Ultra website contains the venues for the synchronous class sessions.
Source for the Blackboard website: https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/ -> courses
Source for the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra website: https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/ -> courses -> tools -> Blackboard Collaborate Ultra -> session

Course Materials
Required Readings:

Course Requirements:
Prerequisite
Students who have not yet taken POGO 511, PUBP 511, PUBP 704, or an equivalent class need permission of the instructor.

Class Attendance/Participation/Behavior
Students are highly encouraged to attend class. Many studies have shown a high causation between class participation and high grades. Students are expected to prepare for class by studying the reading assignments before class, arrive on time, and to participate in class discussions.

Writing Assignments/Final Paper/Deadlines
The final project will be a program evaluation synthesis of six (6) evaluations of a (a) federal, (b) state, (c) county, or (d) municipal program based on the student’s choice. Class grades will be based on
• a first draft of the introduction of the synthesis of six (6) evaluations of the chosen policy or program (15% of the grade):
  ○ Microsoft Word document;
  ○ name of student;
  ○ title with name of discussed program and the term “synthesis;”
  ○ one page minimum, five pages maximum;
  ○ double spaced;
  ○ 12 pt. font;
  ○ document page number(s);
  ○ direct quotes need a page number; if there are no page numbers state “n.p;”
  ○ references in reference section in alphabetical order by last name;
  ○ American Psychological Association (APA) 7, author/year of publication style https://www.apastyle.org/;
  ○ to be submitted to kanacker@gmu.edu by September 14th, 7:20 pm;
• a second draft of the introduction and a first draft of the data and methods sections of the synthesis of six (6) evaluations of the chosen policy or program (15% of the grade):
  o Microsoft Word document;
  o name of student;
  o title with name of discussed program and the term “synthesis;”
  o two pages minimum, ten pages maximum;
  o double spaced;
  o 12 pt. font;
  o document page numbers;
  o direct quotes need a page number; if there are no page numbers state “n.p.”
  o references in reference section in alphabetical order by last name;
  o American Psychological Association (APA) 7, author/year of publication style https://www.apastyle.org/;
  o to be submitted to kanacker@gmu.edu by October 5th, 7:20 pm;
• a final presentation (10 minutes minimum; 15 minutes maximum, ppt; 25% of the grade);
• a final paper, i.e., a program evaluation synthesis (i.e., introduction; background/literature\(^1\) review; data; methods; results; public policy; conclusion) of the six (6) evaluations of the chosen policy or program; 45% of the grade)
  o Microsoft Word document;
  o name of student;
  o title with name of discussed program and the term “synthesis;”
  o ten pages minimum, thirty pages maximum;
  o double spaced;
  o 12 pt. font;
  o document page numbers;
  o direct quotes need a page number; if there are no page numbers state “n.p.”
  o references in reference section in alphabetical order by last name;
  o American Psychological Association (APA) 7, author/year of publication style https://www.apastyle.org/;
  o to be submitted to kanacker@gmu.edu by 10 pm on the day of the presentation.

\(^1\) “The literature”, i.e., what others, not the author/s of a study, have done/found.
Assignment Submission, Late or Missing Assignments
Drafts are due as an e-mail submission to the instructor (kanacker@gmu.edu) at the beginning of class. A draft that was submitted after the deadline is considered late. Students will lose 20 (out of 100) points every 24 hours after the deadline. After five days assignments will not be evaluated by the instructor (i.e., zero grade). Final papers are due as an e-mail submission to the instructor (kanacker@gmu.edu) by 10 pm on the day of the presentation. On the first day of class a sign up list for the final presentations will be made available. On presentation day, students are expected to arrive at the beginning of class, i.e., students are discouraged from arriving at the presentation time predicted by them. A presentation that was not held in person, i.e., in absence, is not considered a presentation (i.e., zero grade). A final paper that was submitted after the deadline is considered late. Students will lose 20 (out of 100) points every 24 hours after the deadline. After five days assignments will not be evaluated by the instructor (i.e., zero grade). Students will lose 5 (out of 100) points for not submitting the final paper as a hard copy (paper) submission to the instructor at the end of the presentation.

Appeals on the paper grade must be made in writing within 72 hours after grades have been posted on patriotweb.gmu.edu. Final class grades are non-negotiable.

Academic Accommodation for a Disability
Students with a disability or who need academic accommodations are encouraged to see the instructor and contact the Office of Disability Services. All academic accommodations must be arranged through Disability Services (http://ds.gmu.edu).

GMU/Schar School Policy on Plagiarism
The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus, any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the Schar School. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable. Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the Schar School takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For international students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g., F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.
To help enforce the Schar School policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The Schar School policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it. http://schar.gmu.edu/current-students/masters-advising/academic-policies-forms/

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a Responsible Employee and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (703.380.1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (703.993.2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703.993.8730 or e-mailing cde@gmu.edu.

Resources:
Mason Writing Center Arlington http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/
Mason Libraries Arlington http://library.gmu.edu/
Mason Libraries Arlington POGO646: infoguides.gmu.edu/evaluation
University Life Arlington https://ularlington.gmu.edu/
Mason Patriot Pantry https://ssac.gmu.edu/patriot-pantry/
Mason Student Health Services Arlington https://shs.gmu.edu/
Mason Counseling and Psychological Services Arlington http://caps.gmu.edu/
YMCA Arlington https://www.ymcadc.org/locations/ymca-arlington/?bid=03
($2 per visit w/ Mason student ID)
Mason Emergency Preparedness Guides https://ehs.gmu.edu/emergencymanagement/plans-guides/
Mason Safe Return to Campus https://www2.gmu.edu/Safe-Return-Campus

Course Outline
August 24  Topic: Introduction to Class, Introduction to Policy and Program Evaluation
Study Assignment for August 24th:
Assignment (due August 31st):
Think about a (a) federal, (b) state, (c) county, or (d) municipal program to be synthesized for the final project. Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

August 31 Topic: What is Program Evaluation and Why is it Needed?
Study Assignments for August 31st:


Please bring the worksheet “Wolf et al. (2013)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Class visit Kimberly MacVaugh, Policy and Government Librarian.

September 7 Labor Day – University Closed

Assignment (due September 11th):
Think about a (a) federal, (b) state, (c) county, or (d) municipal program to be synthesized for the final project. Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

September 11 Topic: Social Problems and Assessing the Need for a Program (Friday 6 pm)
Study Assignments for September 11th:

Please bring the worksheet “Pacula et al. (2015)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due September 14th, 7:20 pm):
Prepare a first draft of the introduction of the synthesis of the chosen policy or program. Submit this draft to kanacker@gmu.edu.

September 14 Topic: Assessing Program Theory and Design
Study Assignments for September 14th:


Event: American Enterprise Institute 06/28/18: Building the Comprehensive Income Dataset
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHH8uQOJOpM

Please bring the worksheet “Bowen et al. (2014)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due September 21st):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

September 21 Topic: Assessment of Program Process
Study Assignments for September 21st:

The Journey to the Evidence Act 2019, Part I
Event: Urban Institute 10/03/17: Realizing the Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking
https://www.urban.org/events/realizing-promise-evidence-based-policymaking

Please bring the worksheet “Browne & LaLumia (2014)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due September 28th):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

September 28 Topic: Measuring and Monitoring Program Outcomes
Study Assignments for September 28th:

The Journey to the Evidence Act 2019, Part II
Podcast: The Lab @ DC 11/05/17: Recommendations of the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking
https://soundcloud.com/user-768286365/nick-hart-recommendations-of

Please bring the worksheet “Heinrich et al. (2014)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due October 5th, 7:20 pm):
Prepare a second draft of the introduction and a first draft of the data and methods sections of the synthesis. Submit this draft to kanacker@gmu.edu.
October 5    Topic: Impact Evaluation: Isolating the Effects of Social Programs in the Real World

Study Assignments for October 5th:


The Journey to the Evidence Act 2019, Part III
Podcast: The Lab @ DC 11/05/17: Encouraging Government to Use a Portfolio of Evidence  
https://soundcloud.com/user-768286365/kathryn-newcomer-how-do-we

Please bring the worksheet “Hemelt & Marcotte (2013)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Fall break cancelled, see e-mail from Interim Provost Ginsberg, 08/24/20, 2:13 pm

Assignment (due October 12th):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

October 12    Topic: Impact Evaluation: Comparison Group Design

Study Assignments for October 12th:


The Journey to the Evidence Act 2019, Part IV
Event: Urban Institute 04/24/18: Using Evidence in Policy and Program Decisions  
https://www.urban.org/events/using-evidence-policy-and-program-decisions
Please bring the worksheet “Bennear et al. (2013)” to class, available on Blackboard.

note: October 18th to October 21st instructor at virtual academic conference of the Housing Education and Research Association (HERA) – intermittent access to e-mail – apologies for delay in responding

October 19  No class -- class held September 11th, 6 pm

Assignment (due October 26th):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

October 26  Topic: Evaluating Program Impact: Designs with Strict Controls on Program Access

Study Assignments for October 26th:


The Journey to the Evidence Act 2019, Part V
Event: Urban Institute 10/18/18: Building Evidence and Learning Agendas
https://www.urban.org/events/building-evidence-and-learning-agendas-federal-agencies

Please bring the worksheet “Leos-Urbel (2014)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due November 2nd):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

November 2  Topic: Detecting, Interpreting, and Exploring Program Effects

Study Assignments for November 2nd:

**The Journey to the Evidence Act 2019, Part VI**
Event: BPC 03/15/19: A New Era for Federal Evaluation: Implementing the Evidence Act  

Please bring the worksheet “Grant & Potoski (2015)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Note: November 4th to November 8th instructor at virtual academic conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) – intermittent access to e-mail – apologies for delay in responding

**Assignment (due November 9th):**
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

**November 9 Topic: Assessing the Economic Efficiency of Programs; In-class presentations of final project**

**Study Assignment for November 9th:**


**The Journey to the Evidence Act 2019, Part VII**
Event: Urban Institute 04/02/19: Using Evidence for Improvement in the Foundation for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act  

Please bring the worksheet “Sabol & Chase-Lansdale (2015)” to class, available on Blackboard.
Assignment (due November 16th):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

November 16 Topic: Planning an Evaluation; In-class presentations of final project

Study Assignment for November 16th:


The Journey to the Evidence Act 2019, Part VIII
https://www.urban.org/events/delivering-evidence-act-how-agencies-can-engage-stakeholders-learning-agenda-process

Please bring the worksheet “Fox et al. (2015)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due November 23rd):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

November 23 Topic: The Social and Political Context of Evaluation; In-class presentations of final project

Study Assignment for November 23rd:

The Journey to the Evidence Act 2019, Part IX
Event: AEI 01/27/20: How is the Evidence Act Changing Federal, State, and Local Policymaking?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lNe5wtI5sTk

November 30 Topic: In-class presentations of final project

December 7 Reading Day – regular classes or exams may not be held
December 14  Topic: In-class presentations of final project

Grades will be posted on patriotweb.gmu.edu after December 16th, 10pm.

Graded finals will be available after December 16th, 10 pm. Contact kanacker@gmu.edu.