Course Description
This course introduces students to policy and program evaluation. Topics include tailoring evaluations; identifying issues and formulating questions; assessing the need for a program; expressing and assessing program theory; assessing and monitoring program process; measuring and monitoring program outcomes; assessing program impacts; detecting, interpreting, and analyzing program effects; and measuring efficiency. 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 and be able to collect select data for policy and program evaluation;
- possess the skills needed to select methods appropriate for policy and program evaluation;
- possess the skills needed to interpret results based on policy and program evaluation; and
- be knowledgeable about and be able to communicate and present evaluation findings to public policy makers and other non-technical audiences in a way understandable to them.
**Class Website**
This class uses Blackboard in order to enhance the online learning experience of students. This website contains the class syllabus and the class readings. Source: [https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/](https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/) -> courses

**Course Materials**

**Required Readings:**


**Course Requirements:**

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

**Class Attendance/Participation/Behavior**
**Students are required to attend class.** Many educational studies have shown a high causation between class attendance and high grades. If students have to miss class for professional, i.e., a time conflict at work, or medical reasons they are expected to notify the instructor in advance and to familiarize themselves with the materials missed in class. Students are expected to participate in class discussions. Many educational studies have shown a high causation between participation in class discussions and high grades. Students are expected to arrive on time.

**Reading Assignments**
Students are required to familiarize themselves with and understand the class readings before each class. Readings will be discussed during class time.

**Writing Assignments/Final Paper/Deadlines**
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. Class grades will be based on

- a first draft (Microsoft Word document to be submitted to kanacker@gmu.edu by October 2nd; at least 200 words; 12.5% of the grade)
- a second draft (Microsoft Word document to be submitted to kanacker@gmu.edu by November 6th; at least 400 words; 12.5% of the grade)
- a final presentation (15 minutes maximum, prezi; 25% of the grade);
- **a final paper, i.e., a program evaluation synthesis** (eight evaluations minimum; 10 pages minimum, 12 pt. font, double spaced; excluding a potential technical appendix; 50% of the grade).
Assignment Submission, Late or Missing Assignments

Drafts are due as e-mail submission to the instructor only. 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. 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 be arrive at the beginning of class (7:20 pm), i.e., students are discouraged from arriving at the presentation time prediced by them. A presentation that was not held in person, i.e., in absence, is not considered a presentation. Students will lose 25 (out of 100) points for a presentation held in absence. Final papers are due on the day of the presentation at the beginning of the presentation. A paper that was handed in 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 (zero grade).

Final papers are due as paper submission to the instructor only. Students will lose 5 (out of 100) points for not submitting the final paper as a paper submission to the instructor at the beginning of the presentation.

Appeals on the paper grade must be made in writing within 72 hours after commented papers have been made available. Final class grades are non-negotiable.

Academic Accommodation for a Disability
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please 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/](http://schar.gmu.edu/current-students/masters-advising/academic-policies-forms/)

**Resources:**
GMU Writing Center [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/)
GMU Libraries [http://library.gmu.edu/](http://library.gmu.edu/)
GMU Counseling and Psychological Services [http://caps.gmu.edu/](http://caps.gmu.edu/)

**Course Outline**

**August 28**

**Topic:** Introduction to Class, Introduction to Policy and Program Evaluation

**Study Assignment for August 28th:**


**September 4**

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 present your thoughts in class.

September 11 Topic: Program Evaluation: A Prelude

Study Assignments for September 11th:


Guest Speaker: Helen McManus, SPP Library Liaison.

Please bring a laptop or tablet to class.
Please bring the worksheet “Nam et al. 2013” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due September 15th):
Think about a (a) federal, (b) state, (c) county, or (d) municipal program to be synthesized for the final project. Be prepared to present your thoughts in class.

September 15 Topic: Evaluation Questions and Evidence of Merit
(Friday 6 pm) Study Assignments for September 15th:


Please bring the worksheet “Weathers & Bailey 2014” to class, available on Blackboard.
September 18 Topic: Designing Program Evaluations

Study Assignments for September 18th:


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

Assignment (due September 25th):
Think about a (a) federal, (b) state, (c) county, or (d) municipal program to be synthesized for the final project. Be prepared to present your thoughts in class.

September 25 Topic: Sampling

Study Assignments for September 25th:


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

Assignment (due October 2nd):
Prepare a draft of at least 200 words about a potential program evaluation synthesis for a (a) federal, (b) state, (c) county, or (d) municipal program. Submit this abstract to kanacker@gmu.edu.

October 2 Topic: Collecting Information: The Right Data Sources

Study Assignments for October 2nd:

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

note: October 8th to 11th instructor at academic conference of the Housing Education and Research Association (HERA) in Lowell, MA – intermittent access to e-mail – apologies for delay in responding

note: October 11th to 15th instructor at academic conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) in Denver, CO – intermittent access to e-mail – apologies for delay in responding

October 9  Columbus Day Recess (University closed): Monday classes meet on October 10

October 10  Class held on Friday, September 15th at 6 pm

Assignment (due October 16th):
Think about a (a) federal, (b) state, (c) county, or (d) municipal program to be synthesized for the final project. Be prepared to present your thoughts in class.

October 16  Topic: Evaluation Measures
Study Assignments for October 16th:


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

note: October 18th to 22nd instructor at academic conference “Governance, Land, and Infrastructure in the 21st Century” at York University in Toronto/Canada – intermittent access to e-mail – apologies for delay in responding
Assignment (due October 23rd):
Think about a (a) federal, (b) state, (c) county, or (d) municipal program to be synthesized for the final project. Be prepared to present your thoughts in class.

October 23  Topic: Managing Evaluation Data
Study Assignments for October 23rd:


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

Assignment (due October 30th):
Be prepared to talk about the status of your program evaluation synthesis in class.

October 30  Topic: Evaluation Reports
Study Assignments for October 30th:


Please bring the worksheet “Imberman & Kugler 2014” to class, available on Blackboard.

note: November 1st to 4th instructor at academic conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) in Chicago, IL – intermittent access to e-mail – apologies for delay in responding

Assignment (due November 6th):
Prepare a draft of at least 400 words about a potential program evaluation synthesis for a (a) federal, (b) state, (c) county, or (d) municipal program. Submit this abstract to kanacker@gmu.edu.
November 6  Topic: Understanding and Applying Program Logic Models  
Study Assignments for November 6th:


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

Assignment (due November 13th):
Be prepared to talk about the status of your program evaluation synthesis in class.

November 13  Topic: Measuring Efficiency  
Study Assignments for November 13th:

Jacob Leos-Urbel (2014) “What is a Summer Job Worth? The Impact of Summer Youth Employment on academic Outcomes” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 33.4, 891-911. [available at GMU Libraries]

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

Assignment (due November 20th):
Be prepared to talk about the status of your program evaluation synthesis in class.

November 20  Topic: Threats to Internal and External Validity  
Study Assignments for November 20th:

Please bring the worksheet “Clayton 2014” to class, available on Blackboard.

**November 27** Topic: In-class presentations of final project

**December 4** Topic: In-class presentations of final project

**December 11** Reading Day – no class

**December 18** Topic: In-class presentations of final project

Grades will be posted on patriotweb.gmu.edu after December 20th, 10p.

Graded finals will be available at the following locations:
- from Thursday, December 21, 2017 to Saturday, June 30, 2018: Barbara Hill (Founders Hall 509; bhill11@gmu.edu; 703.993.3179)
- from Sunday, July 1, 2018 to Monday, December 31, 2018: GMU Records Management (please make arrangements with the instructor)
- after Tuesday, January 1, 2019 finals will be shredded