POGO646-002 — Policy and Program Evaluation

SYLLABUS

Credit Hours: 3  
CRN 81751  
Date/Time: Tuesday 4:30 pm – 7:10 pm  
Classroom: Arlington Campus, Founders Hall 470  
Website: http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu  
Instructor: Katrin B. Anacker, Ph.D.  
Office: Arlington Campus, Founders Hall 673  
e-mail: kanacker@gmu.edu  
Office Hours: Monday 6:15 pm – 7:15 pm  
Tuesday 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm  
or by appointment (kanacker@gmu.edu)

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, worksheets, and lecture slides. Source: https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/ -> courses

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 required to attend class. Many studies have shown a high causation between class attendance/participation 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 arrive on time and to participate in class discussions.

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 summary of the chosen policy or program (one page, double spaced, 12 pt. font, to be submitted to kanacker@gmu.edu by September 18th, 4:30 pm; 12.5% of the grade)
- a summary of three (3) evaluations of the chosen policy or program (three pages, double spaced, 12 pt. font, page numbers, references in alphabetical order by last name, consistent style; to be submitted to kanacker@gmu.edu by October 16th, 4:30 pm; 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 (i.e., a summary of the chosen policy or program, a summary of the three (3) evaluations of the chosen policy or program, and a discussion of the chosen policy or program; 10 pages, double spaced, 12 pt. font, page numbers, references in alphabetical order by last name, consistent style; to be submitted in person on paper; 50% of the grade).
Assignment Submission, Late or Missing Assignments

Summaries are due at the beginning of class. Summaries are due as e-mail submission to the instructor only. A summary 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 arrive at the beginning of class (4:30 pm), 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. 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 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 (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/

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:
- GMU Writing Center http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/
- GMU Libraries http://library.gmu.edu/
- GMU Libraries Arlington POGO646: infoguides.gmu.edu/pogo646
- GMU Counseling and Psychological Services http://caps.gmu.edu/

Course Outline

August 28  Topic: Introduction to Class, Introduction to Policy and Program Evaluation

Study Assignment for August 28th:

Assignment (due September 4th):
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 4  Topic: Introduction to Designing Evaluations  
Study Assignments for September 4th:


Guest Speaker: Helen McManus, Schar School Library Liaison.

infoguides.gmu.edu/pogo646

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

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:
(Overview; Section A: What Is Evaluation?; Section B: Why Do Evaluations?; Section Time-Out: The RUPAS Case; Section C: Who Does Evaluations?; Section D: Contracting for Evaluations)


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

Assignment (due September 18th, 4:30 pm):
Prepare a summary of the chosen policy or program. Submit this summary to kanacker@gmu.edu.
September 18 Topic: Evaluation Questions and Evidence of Merit

Study Assignments for September 18th:
(Section E: Who Are the Stakeholders for an Evaluation?; Section F: How Do You Strengthen Relationships with Stakeholders?; Section G: How Do You Describe the Program?; Section H: What Is the Organizational, Community, and Political Context of the Program?; Section I: How Do You “Understand” the Program?; Section J: What Are the Questions/Issues to be Addressed?)

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: Designing Program Evaluations

Study Assignments for September 25th:
(Section K: What Are Instruments for Collecting Quantitative Data?; Section L: What Are Instruments for Collecting Qualitative Data?; Section M: How Do Data Collection Issues Impact Potential Evaluability: Section N: Are the Questions Evaluable?)

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

Assignment (due October 2nd):
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 2  

**Topic: Sampling**

**Study Assignments for October 1st:**


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

Note: October 7th to 12th instructor at academic conference of the Housing Education and Research Association (HERA) in Savannah, GA – intermittent access to e-mail – apologies for delay in responding

October 8  

**Columbus Day Recess (university closed): Monday classes meet on Tuesday**

October 9  

**Columbus Day Recess: Tuesday classes do not meet this week**

**Assignment (due October 16th, 4:30 pm):**
Prepare a summary of three (3) evaluations of the chosen policy or program. Submit this summary to kanacker@gmu.edu.

October 16  

**Topic: Collecting Information: The Right Data Sources**

**Study Assignments for October 16th:**


Please bring the worksheet “Hemelt & Marcotte (2013)” to class, available on Blackboard.
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: Evaluation Measures
Study Assignments for October 23rd:


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

note: October 24th to 27th instructor at academic conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) in Buffalo, NY – intermittent access to e-mail – apologies for delay in responding

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

October 30  Topic: Analyzing Evaluation Data
Study Assignments for October 30th:


Please bring the worksheet “Leos-Urbel (2014)” to class, available on Blackboard.
Assignment (due November 6th):
Be prepared to talk about the status of your program evaluation synthesis in class.

November 6 Topic: Analyzing Evaluation Data
Study Assignments for November 6th:
(Appendix A: Factor Affecting Evaluation Use; Appendix B: An Evaluation Lesson by “Unknown Student”; Appendix C: Use Factors: Relationship to Research Compilations)


Please bring the worksheet “Feigenberg et al. (2014)” 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: Wrap Up
Study Assignment for November 13th:

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

November 20 Topic: In-class presentations of final project

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, 10pm.
Graded finals will be available after December 20th, 10 pm. Contact kanacker@gmu.edu.