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. Recordings will be available for 150 hours.
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):
  o Microsoft Word document;
  o name of student;
  o title with name of discussed program and the term “synthesis;”
  o one page minimum, five pages maximum;
  o double spaced;
  o 12 pt. font;
  o document page number(s);
  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 February 15th, 4:30 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 March 15th, 4:30 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.,
  o introduction;
  o background/literature\(^1\) review;
  o data;
  o methods;
  o results;
  o 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.

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\(^1\) “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).

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.

**Schar School Master of Public Administration (MPA) diversity statement:**
The Schar School MPA program is committed to create a learning environment that reflects the growing diversity of the modern workplace and of the communities that are being served by public service organizations. We welcome, value and foster respect for all individuals and their differences, including race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, sex, sexuality, gender expression and identity, national origin, first language, religion, ideology, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

**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 Safe Return to Campus https://www2.gmu.edu/Safe-Return-Campus
Course Outline

January 25  Topic: Introduction to Class, Introduction to Policy and Program Evaluation

Study Assignment for January 25th:


Assignment (due February 1st):
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.

February 1  Topic: Introduction and Overview

Study Assignments for February 1st:


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

Class visit Kimberly MacVaugh, Policy and Government Librarian.

Assignment (due February 8th):
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.
February 8  Topic: Ethnical and Cultural Issues in Program Evaluation
Study Assignments for February 8th:


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

Assignment (due February 15th, 4:30 pm):
Prepare a first draft of the introduction of the synthesis of the chosen policy or program. Submit this draft to kanacker@gmu.edu.

February 15  Topic: Needs Assessment
Study Assignments for February 15th:


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

Assignment (due February 22nd):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.
February 22  
**Topic: Survey Methods for Program Planning and Monitoring**

**Study Assignments for February 22nd:**


**Optional: 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](https://www.urban.org/events/realizing-promise-evidence-based-policymaking)

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

**Assignment (due March 1st):**
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

March 1  
**Topic: Selecting and Measuring Outcome Objectives**

**Study Assignments for March 1st:**


**Optional: 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](https://soundcloud.com/user-768286365/nick-hart-recommendations-of)
Please bring the completed worksheet “Heinrich et al. (2014)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due March 8th, 4:30 pm):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

March 8  Topic: Inference and Logic in Pragmatic Outcome Evaluation
Study Assignments for March 8th:


Optional: 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 completed worksheet “Hemelt & Marcotte (2013)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due March 15th):
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.

Study Assignments for March 15th:

Optional: 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 completed worksheet “Bennear et al. (2013)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due March 22nd):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

March 22 Topic: Single-Case Designs for Evaluating Programs and Practice  
Study Assignments for March 22nd:


Optional: 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 completed worksheet “Leos-Urbel (2014)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due March 29th):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.
March 29  Topic: Practical and Political Pitfalls in Outcome Evaluations

Study Assignments for March 29th:


Optional: 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 completed worksheet “Grant & Potoski (2015)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due April 5th):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

April 5  Topic: Analyzing and Presenting Data from Formative and Process Evaluations

Study Assignment for April 5th:

Optional: 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 completed worksheet “Sabol & Chase-Lansdale (2015)” to class, available on Blackboard.

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

April 12  
Topic: Analyzing Data from Outcome Evaluations;  
In-class presentations of final project  
Study Assignment for April 12th:


Optional: 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 completed worksheet “Fox et al. (2015)” to class, available on Blackboard.

Assignment (due April 19th):
Be prepared to talk about your final paper in class.

April 19  
Topic: Writing and Disseminating Evaluation Reports;  
In-class presentations of final project  
Study Assignment for April 19th:
Optional: 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

April 26   Topic: In-class presentations of final project
May 3      Topic: In-class presentations of final project
May 10     Topic: In-class presentations of final project

Grades will be posted on patriotweb.gmu.edu after May 12th, 10pm.

Graded finals will be available after May 12th, 10 pm. Contact kanacker@gmu.edu.