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 three 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 three (3) evaluations of the chosen policy or program (12.5% of the grade):  
  - Microsoft Word document;  
  - name of student;  
  - title with name of discussed program and the term “synthesis;”  
  - one page minimum, fifty 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) style https://www.apastyle.org/;  
  - to be submitted to kanacker@gmu.edu by February 18th, 7:20 pm;
• a second draft of the introduction and a first draft of the background/literature review of the synthesis of three (3) evaluations of the chosen policy or program (12.5% of the grade):
  o Microsoft Word document;
  o name of student;
  o title with name of discussed program and the term “synthesis;”
  o three pages minimum, fifty 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) style https://www.apastyle.org/;
  o to be submitted to kanacker@gmu.edu by March 18th, 7:20 pm;
• a final presentation (15 minutes maximum, prezi; 25% of the grade);
• a final paper, i.e., a program evaluation synthesis (i.e.,
  o introduction;
  o background/literature review;
  o data;
  o methods;
  o results;
  o public policy;
  o conclusion)
of the three (3) evaluations of the chosen policy or program; 50% of the grade)
  o Microsoft Word document;
  o name of student;
  o title with name of discussed program and the term “synthesis;”
  o 10 pages minimum, 50 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) style https://www.apastyle.org/;
  o to be submitted in person on paper right after the presentation).

Assignment Submission, Late or Missing Assignments
Drafts are due at the beginning of class. Final papers are due as e-mail submission to the instructor. 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 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/](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/](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/)
Mason Libraries Arlington [http://library.gmu.edu/](http://library.gmu.edu/)
Mason Libraries Arlington POGO646: infoguides.gmu.edu/pogo646
University Life Arlington [https://ularlington.gmu.edu/](https://ularlington.gmu.edu/)
Mason Student Health Services Arlington [https://shs.gmu.edu/](https://shs.gmu.edu/)
Mason Counseling and Psychological Services Arlington [http://caps.gmu.edu/](http://caps.gmu.edu/)
YMCA Arlington [https://www.ymcadc.org/locations/ymca-arlington/?bid=03](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/](https://ehs.gmu.edu/emergencymanagement/plans-guides/)

**Course Outline**

**January 28**  
**Topic:** Introduction to Class, Introduction to Policy and Program Evaluation  
**Study Assignment for January 28th:**  

**Assignment (due February 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.

**February 4**  
**Topic:** What is Program Evaluation and Why is it Needed?  
**Study Assignments for February 4th:**  

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

**Assignment (due February 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.

**February 11 Topic: Social Problems and Assessing the Need for a Program**

**Study Assignments for February 11th:**


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

**Assignment (due February 18th, 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.

**February 18 Topic: Assessing Program Theory and Design**

**Study Assignments for February 18th:**

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

Assignment (due February 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.

February 25  Topic: Assessment of Program Process
Study Assignments for February 25th:


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

Assignment (due March 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.

March 4  Topic: Measuring and Monitoring Program Outcomes
Study Assignments for March 4th:


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

March 11  Spring break – no class
Assignment (due March 18th, 7:20 pm):
Prepare a second draft of the introduction and a first draft of the background/literature review of the synthesis of the chosen policy or program. Submit this summary to kanacker@gmu.edu.

March 18  Topic: Impact Evaluation: Isolating the Effects of Social Programs in the Real World
Study Assignments for March 18th:


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

Assignment (due March 25th):
Be prepared to talk about the status of your program evaluation synthesis in class.

Study Assignments for March 25th:


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

Assignment (due April 1st):
Be prepared to talk about the status of your program evaluation synthesis in class.
April 1  

**Topic: Evaluating Program Impact: Designs with Strict Controls on Program Access**

**Study Assignments for April 1st:**


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

note: April 3rd to April 7th instructor at academic conference of the American Association of Geographers (AAG) in Washington, DC – intermittent access to e-mail – apologies for delay in responding

Assignment (due April 8th):

Be prepared to talk about the status of your program evaluation synthesis in class.

April 8  

**Topic: Detecting, Interpreting, and Exploring Program Effects**

**Study Assignments for April 8th:**


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

Assignment (due April 15th):

Be prepared to talk about the status of your program evaluation synthesis in class.
April 15  Topic: Assessing the Economic Efficiency of Programs; In-class presentations of final project

Study Assignment for April 15th:


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

April 22  Topic: In-class presentations of final project

note: April 24th to April 27th instructor at academic conference of the Urban Affairs Association (UAA) in Los Angeles, CA – intermittent access to e-mail – apologies for delay in responding

April 29  Topic: In-class presentations of final project

May 6  Topic: In-class presentations of final project

May 13  Topic: In-class presentations of final project

Grades will be posted on patriotweb.gmu.edu after May 15th, 10pm.

Graded finals will be available after May 15th, 10 pm. Contact kanacker@gmu.edu.