

Program Evaluation

(PUENAF 428)

Course number 3111 Spring, 2007
Mary Ann Cofrin Hall, Room 225

Overview

"Even if 'research' is not your cup of tea, evaluating services and programs using scientifically credible research tools is a professional skill that you will find of great value" (David Royce, 2006). This course gives the undergraduate student a working understanding and key skills of program evaluations. Outcome assessment, evaluation design, data collection, data analysis, and utilization of evaluation findings will be discussed using the political and social context of "real" organizations. After completing this course, students will be able to understand the effectiveness of the programs that they administer or work within.

Readings

Selected chapters available by assigned date in the D2L system.

Instructor/Contact Information

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University policy for students with physical and learning disabilities: "Consistent with the federal law and the policies of the University of Wisconsin, it is the policy of the University of Wisconsin Green Bay to provide appropriate and necessary accommodations to students with documented physical and learning disabilities. If you anticipate requiring any auxiliary aides or services, you should contact me or the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities at 465-2671 as soon as possible to discuss your needs and arrange for the provision of services."

It is helpful, though not required, that students are familiar with SPSS and/or Excel.

Students wishing to complete all course work at home might consider purchasing the student version of SPSS at the bookstore. Otherwise students can use the UWGB server software to complete the final assignments.

Even though this is an 8:00 class, you are expected to attend nearly every class.

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the practical issues, ethical considerations, and social/political circumstances that make program evaluation different from social science research.
2. Explain the basic models of evaluation research and match an appropriate model to a particular evaluation question.
3. Draw up a program logic model and identify program outcomes and indicators.
4. Use sound research methods to develop measures of key evaluation variables.
5. Set up an analysis plan that makes key comparisons of the results of an evaluation.

Service Learning Component of Class

The objectives listed above will be accomplished using a “service learning” approach. Small groups of students will partner with local nonprofit programs to develop real life evaluation plans and tools. Throughout the semester, students will apply all assignments to these programs. For the final third of the semester, the whole class will work on the same project. Teams of students will analyze data for an Alzheimer’s program offered by NEW Curative Rehabilitation. For three years, Dr. Warner’s students have partnered with this program manager to help them apply for the grant, develop a survey, and now, to evaluate this program. We will present the results to Curative and they will report on the impact of their grant for its sponsor, the Helen Bader Foundation.

Grading Policies

93-100	A
88-92	AB
83-87	B
78-82	BC
73-77	C
68-72	D
Below 72	F

Missed or late assignments

Assignments must be turned in at or before the beginning of class on the day they are due (including e-mailed assignments). Points will be deducted for unexcused late papers according to the amount of time they are late. It is always better to turn in an assignment, no matter how late: partial credit is better than a zero. Extra credit is not offered. If you become concerned about your performance, please come in and discuss your situation as early as possible.

Group work guidelines

Effective group work will make or break our semester. Some ground rules developed by students:

- There should be balanced contributions and everyone is expected to learn the skills. You don't all have to do everything, but overall your time and efforts should balance out over the semester.
- Groups can expel an underperforming member if these conditions are met:
 - It can't be done until after Feb 28 (to give someone time to improve)
 - Written warning: a brief letter (hardcopy) signed by all other members that says specifically what needs improving, given to the student and me. At this point the person will still be in the group but will be put on notice, having a chance to improve for 2 weeks.
 - After two weeks, I need another letter from the group regarding recommendations.
- The expelled student is still responsible for turning in the assignments now done individually
- I reserve the right to make the final decision about whether to expel someone or not from a group, although I plan to rely heavily on your input. It has never happened.

Assignments and Student Evaluation

1. Participation and attendance

15%

Students will get early feedback on progress midway through the semester. Your preparedness and contributions to the class throughout the semester are essential. The following things will contribute to a higher grade: attendance, alertness during class, being involved in your group, learning the assigned readings, contributing ideas to the discussion, completing assigned work. You will also provide confidential narrative feedback on other group members, including describing contributions and effort, challenges, and amount of work being done by group members.

2. Planning Groups: Evaluation exercises

30%

Students will form “planning” groups of 4-5 to complete three exercises on a real program of your choice. You will have class time to work on each exercise as a group. Whether or not the groups will have to meet outside of class depends on how prepared and productive you are in class. The final exercise will be done individually with in-class work time.

- Ex 1 (Group) Program logic model and indicator worksheet 10%
- Ex 2 (Group) Data collection tool 10%
- Ex 3 (Group) Group research design 10%

3. Individual exercise 4 Preparing graphs for our analysis

5%

4. Analysis Groups: Analysis of real program data

25%

The last third of the semester, we will organize into new student task groups to complete analysis of real program data and present it to our client (NEW Curative Rehabilitation). Students will indicate their first and second choice of the following groups and I will assign them based on your performance on earlier assignments. Each group will be graded according to their own criteria. Proposed groups include:

- 1 Plan/manage the analysis (5-6 students)
- 2 Enter the data, including coding the qualitative items (4 students)
- 3 Producing and polishing attractive graphs (10-12 students with subgroups)
- 4 Writing the report (5-6 students)
- 5 Presenting the results to peers and client (4-5 students)

4. Test

10%

A test on readings and class materials will take place in class on February 15. It will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay.

5. Final Exam

15%

A final exam will take place in class on our scheduled final time, 8:00-10:00 a.m. on May 10. It will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay covering all material since the first test.

Class Schedule and Assignments

Date	Topic	Prepare/ Reading #	Activity/ what's due
Jan 16	Introduction, Goals, and Expectations Overview of program evaluation, its use and importance	1	
Jan 18	Planning an evaluation	2	Form groups
Jan 23	Ethics in evaluation	3	Group program choice finalized
Jan 25	Needs assessments, process evaluation, and cost-effectiveness analysis	4	
Jan 30	Logic models and outcome measurement (lecture and demonstration)	Module 1: sec 1, 2, 4 http://www1.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse/	
Feb 1	Logic models for your programs	5	Group work
Feb 6	Data sources and indicators of outcomes (lecture)	Module 1: sec 5, 6, 7 http://www1.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse/	
Feb 8	Identify indicators of chosen outcomes	6	Group work
Feb 13	Intro: Surveys and other data collection tools		Logic model/ indicators due (Ex1)
Feb 15	Test on readings 1-6		Test in class
Feb 20	Surveys and other data collection tools	7	
Feb 22	Surveys and other data collection tools	8	
Feb 27	Offsite- develop and research survey items		
Mar 1	Hands-on work		Groups-Computer lab
Mar 6	Hands-on work		Groups-Computer lab
Mar 8	Group Research Designs (GRDs)	9	
Mar 13-16	Spring break no class		
Mar 20	More on GRDs		Data tools due (Ex2)
Mar 22	Hands-on work		Groups
Mar 27	NEW Curative program evaluation	10	Guest speaker
Mar 29	Data analysis: the basics	11	GRD due (Ex3)
Apr 3	Graphing and presenting	12	
Apr 5	Group 2 meets to code & enter the data	13	Groups 1 & 2 meet
Apr 10	Group 1 meets to plan for our analysis		
Apr 12	Assign responsibility and set up the work		Group 1 leads class Computer lab (all)
Apr 17	Hands on work		Computer lab (all)
Apr 19	Hands on work		Graphs due (Ex4)
Apr 24	Prepare report and presentation		Groups 4-5
Apr 26	Prepare report and presentation (draft, dry run)		Entire class
May 1	Presentation to client		Presentation and written report due
May 3	Lessons and insights, prepare for final		
May 10	Final Exam on readings 7-13	8:00-10:00am	In class