Georgia State University  
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies  
PMAP 4051: Evaluating Public Policy  
Fall 2017

Instructor: Zeynep Esra Tanyildiz  
Class Time: Monday 7:15pm – 9:45pm  
Class Location: Aderhold 225

Office: AYSPS V-56  
E-mail: esra@gsu.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

This course will survey research methods applicable to the evaluation of public policy. Course topics will cover fundamental techniques and practices of program evaluation for effectiveness in program administration. The course presents most common approaches, as well as the advantages of using evaluation as a mechanism for program improvement. Throughout the semester, we will focus on various aspects of program evaluation, including types and purposes of program evaluation, program theory of change, sources of bias and threats to validity in impact evaluation, experimental and quasi-experimental research designs, sampling and data sources for program assessment. We’ll conclude the course with a discussion on evaluation use, and the social context in which evaluation takes place.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the types and purposes of program evaluation.
- Develop a program theory that explains the underlying mechanisms through which a program is intended to achieve its objectives.
- Identify sources of bias and threats to validity in impact evaluation.
- Identify the strength and weaknesses of different evaluation plans.
- Identify appropriate data sources for program assessment and the different sampling methods used to collect these data.
- Develop a plan for a program evaluation that includes identifying the program objectives and theory of change, selecting a rigorous research design, developing measures for the outcomes of interest and identifying the process for collecting data.
- Understand the context within which evaluation takes place.
**Required Textbook:**


Other readings will be posted on iCollege throughout the semester

**Recommended Texts:**


**Course Requirements:**

**Quizzes/In-Class Assignments: (20%)**

In-class quizzes will be given over the semester. Quizzes will be based primarily on the weekly article readings, but may also incorporate content covered in previous weeks. A few in-class assignments will occasionally be given instead of a quiz. These cannot be made up: missing a quiz or an in-class assignment will result in a zero. However, the lowest quiz/in-class assignment scores will be dropped.

**Midterm Examination: (30%)**

Midterm Exam will cover material from the assigned readings, lectures, and the class discussions. Missing the exam will result in a zero unless evidence of a university excused absence is provided before the exam. Note that the Midterm Exam is scheduled to begin at 7:30 pm.

**Evaluation Plan: (35% Paper + 15% Presentation)**

For the evaluation project, students will design an evaluation plan for a specific program or policy program that demonstrates their understanding of the course materials. Brief portions of the project will be submitted over the course of the semester. Each section will be graded and returned to the student with comments for revision. Students may also present their paper sections to the class for feedback. The final submission is a paper that describes the entire evaluation plan in detail. Specific submission requirements and final paper requirements will be available. Project submissions are to be submitted BOTH electronically AND on paper in class on the respective due dates. The evaluation proposals will be presented in class and will be reviewed by your classmates and me. Project submissions will be divided as follows:
1. Program description
2. Program theory of change
3. Evaluation research design
4. Measurement plan
5. Final evaluation proposal
6. Presentation of the evaluation proposal

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes/In-Class Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10/16/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation Plan:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Description</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9/11/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Theory of Change</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9/25/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation Research Design</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10/23/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measurement Plan</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11/6/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Evaluation Proposal</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12/4/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of Evaluation Proposal</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11/27/2017</td>
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<td>12/4/2017</td>
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Grading Scale:

A+  >96.99
A   93.00-96.99
A-  90.00-92.99
B+  87.00-89.99
B   83.00-86.99
B-  80.00-82.99
C+  77.00-79.99
C   73.00-76.99
C-  70.00-72.99
D   60.00-69.99
F   <60.00

Course Expectations:
Students are expected to come to class regularly, complete the readings and assignments prior to class, and participate in class discussion. Students are also expected to be respectful of other students’ ideas and experiences.

Academic Honesty:
GSU guidelines on academic honesty will be enforced in this course, and students
should be familiar with the GSU Policy on Academic Honesty posted online in section 409 in the Faculty Handbook. The Faculty Handbook can be found at: http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/fhb.html. It is your responsibility to ask questions if you are unclear about what is appropriate. Academic dishonesty violations can result in a penalty of a’0’ on the assignment or test, class failure, and expulsion from Georgia State University.

**Accommodation:**
Students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students will only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that Plan early in the semester to instructors in which an accommodation is sought.

**Attendance Policy:**
You are expected to attend all class meetings and to come to class prepared to discuss the day’s readings. Notably poor participation or lack of preparation may result in a lower course grade. Please arrive before class begins and stay until it has concluded.

**Communication:**
Please contact the instructor for problems with course requirements or questions related to class content at esra@gsu.edu. I will be available by appointment, as well.

**Electronics:**
Please silence all electronic devices in class. Laptops and tablets may be used during class for note taking or other class related activities. Any disruptive use of electronic devices in class will not be tolerated.

**Course Evaluations:**
Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.
Course Schedule:

This syllabus provides a general plan for this course; deviations may be necessary.

Week 1  
Introduction to Program Evaluation  
8/21  
Weiss, Chapter 1; Gertler, Chapter 1  

*Last day to drop: 8/25 at 5:00 pm

Week 2  
Understanding the Program and Logic Models  
8/28  
Weiss, Chapter 3; Gertler, Chapter 2; additional readings will be posted.

9/4  
Labor Day, No Class

Week 3  
Planning the Evaluation  
9/11  
Weiss, Chapters, 4&5; Gertler, Chapter 2  
Program Description Due

Week 4  
Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement  
9/18  
Weiss Chapter 6; Babbie, Chapter 5

Week 5  
Collecting Data and The Logic of Sampling  
9/25  
Weiss Chapter 7; Babbie, Chapter 6  
Program Theory of Change Due

Week 6  
Randomized Experiments  
10/2  
Weiss, Chapter 9; Gertler Chapter 4

Week 7  
Survey Research  
10/9  
Babbie Chapter 8; additional readings will be posted.

*Last day to withdraw: 10/10

Week 8  
Midterm Examination  
10/16

Week 9  
Qualitative Research Methods  
10/23  
Weiss, Chapter 11, additional readings will be posted.  
Evaluation Research Design Due

Week 10  
Alternative Approaches to Evaluation  
10/30  
Gertler, Chapter 11

Week 11  
Evaluation in Use

**Measurement Plan Due**

**Week 12**

The Social Context of Evaluation

**11/13**

Weiss, Chapter 14; Gertler, Chapter 13; additional readings will be posted.

**11/20**

Thanksgiving Break, No Class

**Week 13**

Students Presentations

**11/27**

**Week 14**

Students Presentations

**12/4**

Final Evaluation Proposal Due

*This syllabus provides a general plan for this course; deviations may be necessary.*