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

Instructor: Mahmoud A. A. Elsayed  
Office: 346B AYS Building  
Class Time: Wed. 4:30-7:00 p.m.  
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**Course Description**

Does teacher training improve students' performance? What is the impact of the Affordable Care Act on health insurance coverage? Does raising the minimum wage reduce employment? Do conditional cash transfer programs improve the schooling and health outcomes of children in developing countries? What is the effect of receiving federal financial aid on college enrolment and attainment? Does the death penalty reduce homicides?

These are critical questions for policy makers, legislators, public administrators, policy analysts, and the general public. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the conceptual foundations of program evaluation and the analytical tools that can be used to answer such cause-and-effect questions. 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, and cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis.

**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.
- Understand the differences between experimental and quasi-experimental designs and the strengths and limitations of each.
- 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.

**Required Readings**

There are two required books


Other readings will be posted on iCollege throughout the semester.

**Recommended Textbooks**


**Course Requirements**

*Class attendance and participation.* Class preparation and participation are important for this course. Students are expected to come to class regularly, complete the readings and assignments prior to class, and participate in class discussion.

*Midterm examination.* There will be a daylong online midterm examination. The exam will extend from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday March 8.

*Program evaluation proposal.* Students will prepare an impact evaluation proposal of a selected program. The proposal should include four components:

1. Program description and purpose of evaluation
2. Program theory of change
3. Evaluation research design
4. Data and outcome measurement plan

Final evaluation proposal

The individual components of the evaluation proposal will be submitted at different points during the semester. Each component will be reviewed and returned for revision in the final proposal. The final evaluation proposal is due Wednesday April 26, and students will present their proposals in the last two class sessions. More
information about each component of the evaluation proposal will be posted on iCollege prior to the due date.

Course grades will be distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program evaluation proposal</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Policies:**

**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: https://goo.gl/MrghSs. 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 melsayed4@gsu.edu. Office hours will be posted, but 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, and may result in a 5-point grade deduction per violation.
Make-Up and Extra-credit Work
There is no scheduled make-up or extra-credit work in this course. Be sure to submit all work by the deadlines. Discuss any issues with the instructor prior to any deadline that will be missed. Late work may not be accepted, or accepted with a 25% penalty.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 11): Introduction to program evaluation

Week 2 (January 18): Understanding the program
* Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide. At https://goo.gl/ZA8RnV
* Logic models: Templates and examples. At https://goo.gl/6jgDnV

Week 3 (January 25): Identifying and measuring program outcomes
Evaluation proposal - part 1 is due

Week 4 (February 1): Counterfactuals, causality, and threats to validity

Week 5 (February 8): Randomized experiments
Examples of randomized experiments: see Lance et al., 2014. How do we know if a program made a difference?. pp. 42-54.
Evaluation proposal - part 2 is due

Week 6 (February 15): Non-experimental designs, difference-in-differences, and interrupted time series

Week 7 (February 22): Regression discontinuity, matching, and other techniques
Week 8 (March 1): Sampling
Evaluation proposal - part 3 is due

Week 9 (March 8): Midterm examination

Week 10 (March 15): No class - Spring break

Week 11 (March 22): Collecting the data
NSF. The 2010 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation. Chapter 6

Week 12 (March 29): Cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis
Evaluation proposal - part 4 is due

Week 13 (April 5): Evaluation use

Week 14 (April 12): Qualitative research methods; Student presentations

Week 15 (April 19): Student presentations (continued)

April 26: Final evaluation proposal is due

Note: This syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.