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 take-home midterm examination. The exam will be posted on iCollege at 9:00am on March 20. Your completed midterm is due on March 21 at 9:00am. You have to submit your midterm answers via iCollege. Submissions by email or after the deadline will not be accepted.

*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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program description and purpose of evaluation</td>
<td>January 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program theory of change</td>
<td>February 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation research design</td>
<td>March 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data and outcome measurement plan</td>
<td>April 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final evaluation proposal</td>
<td>April 26</td>
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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 Thursday April 26, and students will present their proposals in the last two weeks of class. 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<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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_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](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. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes after the class start time will be considered absent.

**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. Late submissions will not be accepted. Discuss any issues with the instructor prior to any deadline that will be missed.

**Course Schedule**

Note: The asterisk (*) indicates required readings

**Week 1 January 9-11**

**Introduction to Program Evaluation**


**Week 2 January 16-18:**

**Understanding the Program**

* Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide. At [https://goo.gl/ZABRnV](https://goo.gl/ZABRnV)
* Logic models: Templates and examples. At [https://goo.gl/6jgDnV](https://goo.gl/6jgDnV)

**Week 3 January 23-25**

**Developing Evaluation Questions**

* Morra-Imas et al., 2009. The Road to Results. Chapter 6

**Evaluation proposal - part 1 is due January 25th at 2:30pm**

**Week 4 January 30 – February 1**

**Process Evaluation**

Week 5  February 6-8
Impact Evaluation: Identifying and Measuring Program Outcomes

Week 6  February 13-15
Impact Evaluation: Counterfactuals, Causality, and Threats to Validity
Evaluation proposal - part 2 is due February 15th at 2:30pm

Week 7  February 20-22
Impact Evaluation: Randomized Experiments
J-PAL. Randomized Experiments Databas. At: https://goo.gl/WAlOSu

Week 8  February 27-March 1
Impact Evaluation: Pre-experimental & Quasi-experimental Designs I
* Rossi et al. Evaluation. Chapter 9

Week 9  March 6-8
Impact Evaluation: Pre-experimental & Quasi-experimental Designs II

Week 10  March 13-15
No class - Spring Break

Week 11:
March 20: Midterm Examination
March 22: Sampling
Evaluation proposal - part 3 is due March 22nd at 2:30pm

Week 12  March 27-29
Collecting the Data
NSF. The 2010 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation. Chapter 6
Week 13 ______ April 3-5

Cost-effectiveness and Cost-benefit Analysis
* Rossi et al. Evaluation. Chapter 9

Week 14 ______ April 10-12

Student Final Presentations
Evaluation proposal - part 4 is due April 12th at 2:30pm

Week 15 ______ April 17-19

Student Final Presentations

Final evaluation proposal is due April 26th at 5:00pm

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