

PUBPL 6563/PADMIN 6563/FCS 6563
PROGRAM AND POLICY EVALUATION
Spring 2016

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| INSTRUCTOR: | Cathleen D. Zick, Ph.D. |
| CLASS TIME: | Mondays: 6:00-9:00pm |
| LOCATION: | Room: 350 AEB |
| CONTACT INFO: | Phone: 801-581-3147 or 801-581-8620 Email: zick@fcs.utah.edu |
| OFFICE HOURS: | Room 240 AEB, M 4:30-6:00pm, or by appointment |
| TEACHING ASST: | Torrey Lyons (Room 227 ARCH, email: email: torrey.lyons@gmail.com) |

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course provides a systematic introduction to program and policy evaluation as a basis for accountability. Emphasis is placed on strategies for impact assessment (including randomized and non-randomized designs), measuring efficiency, examining short-term and long-term consequences, identifying both intended and unintended impacts, and the social, political, and ethical context of evaluation. Students undertake a quantitative evaluation group project as part of the course work.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To become a critical consumer of evaluation research
- To learn the purposes and techniques of evaluation and assessment
- To apply appropriate research design techniques to “real world” policies and programs
- To learn how to do professional level policy/programmatic research
- To learn how to prepare a professionally written report and deliver clear, concise oral presentations of evaluation-related findings

Required Textbook:

Fink, Arlene. 2015. *Evaluation Fundamentals – Insights into Program Effectiveness, Quality, and Value*, 3rd edition. Los Angeles: Sage.

Other required readings listed on the course outline are available via links on the Canvas class website.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Class meeting time will be a mixture of traditional lecturing, discussion, small group activities, and student presentations. I believe that students “learn best by doing.” Consequently, there are several hands-on assignments in this course where students will have the opportunity to apply the concepts that have been presented in the lectures and readings. I also believe that it is vitally important that individuals working in the area of program and policy evaluation have strong research translation skills. Thus, class assignments will provide students with the opportunity to translate technical quantitative analyses into written and oral reports targeted

at lay audiences.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Spend a *minimum* of 3 hours per credit hour in preparing for this class, including completing reading assignments, written assignments, and studying for exams. As this is a 3 credit-hour graduate course, you should plan to spend at least 9 hours per week in preparation for this course in addition to class time.
2. Complete required reading assignments in a timely manner.
3. Complete written assignments on time, or make alternate arrangements for completing assigned work with the instructor in advance of assigned due dates. Twenty percent will be taken off for each day that an assignment is late. After five days, the assignment will receive no credit. **Assignments should be turned in via Canvas on the day they are due before the class begins.**
4. Attend class and participate in class activities and discussions.
5. Arrive on time for class and stay the entire class period – arriving late and/or leaving early will be disruptive to group work and class discussions.
6. Treat one another, the instructor, campus staff, and the classroom with respect.
7. Seek help from the instructor (and other resources such as the Center for Disability Services or the Writing Center) whenever necessary, and before minor problems become major barriers to learning.
8. Refer to the syllabus and the class webpage for important information pertaining to exams, written assignments, and class policies.
9. Be responsible for finding out what was covered in a class you missed.
10. Students' tests and papers will be kept for two months after the end of the semester in the instructor's office. After that time, they will be destroyed. Any student who wishes to pick up her/his exams or papers should do so before July 1, 2016.
11. For the full list of student rights and responsibilities at the University of Utah, see <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Being prepared for class.
2. Arriving on time or early for class and having all equipment set up.
3. Using a variety of teaching methods, including lecture, group work, discussion, etc. in an effort to create a stimulating learning environment and accommodate different learning styles.
4. Providing feedback on assignments in a timely manner.
5. Being available for individual consultation during office hours or by appointment.
6. Replying to email within 48 hours, not including weekends or holidays.
7. Following all official University of Utah policies regarding conduct within the classroom, incompletes, and accommodations. Accommodations will be considered on an individual basis and only with the required documentation. No exceptions will be made to this policy.
8. Complying with the final exam schedule by making the final papers/presentations (in place of exams) due during final exam week.
9. Not canceling classes – in an emergency situation, efforts will be made to inform students.

10. Treating students equitably and with respect. This includes enforcing responsible classroom behavior on the part of students. For the full list of faculty responsibilities at the University of Utah, see <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-12-4.html>.

ADA POLICY:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services. (www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/ada/guide/faculty/)

Accommodation Policy:

Some of the readings, lectures, films, or presentations in this course may include material that may conflict with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. If you have a concern, please discuss it with the instructor at your earliest convenience. For more information, please consult the University of Utah's Accommodations Policy, which appears at: www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/accommodations-policy.pdf

Wellness:

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness - www.wellness.utah.edu; 801-581-7776.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

- (1) Attendance and Participation: (8% of class grade)

Attendance and participation in PUBPL/PADMIN/FCS 6563 is important. While the instructor will lecture for some portion of each class meeting, there will also be numerous opportunities for active learning in the classroom. Thus, it is vitally important that you come to class prepared to participate (i.e., having done the readings for the week). To encourage you to make this commitment, 8% of your class grade will be based on attendance and participation.

- (2) Group Presentations of the Pros and Cons of Specific Data Sources: (8% of class grade)

Evaluation studies always involve some sort of scientific data gathering and analysis. In this assignment student groups will research one of the following data sources and assess its advantages and disadvantages as they relate to evaluation research. The data sources are: Agency Records, Surveys, Trained Observers, Field Data, Internet Data, Semi-Structured Interviews, and Focus Groups. Each group will prepare and deliver a 15-20 minute presentation describing the data collection method and its advantages and disadvantages. In addition, each group should provide at least one example of published research that makes use of the data source in question. Basic information about each data source can be found in Fink (Chapter 5). But, it is expected that student groups will also incorporate information from other sources in preparing their presentation and will provide students with a copy of their source list. A copy of the

powerpoint presentation and the associated bibliography will be turned in to the instructor via Canvas by **Monday morning 9am on the day the presentation** is given. **Presentations will be given the evenings of March 7th and March 21st.**

(3) Critiquing Evaluations in Informing Public Policy: (8% of class grade)

What do evaluation studies tell us about the direction that public policy should take? In this assignment, students will work in groups of 5-6 to explore the evaluation literature as it pertains to one of the following questions:

- Do gun control laws reduce violent crime?
- Has the Affordable Care Act improved Americans' health?
- Are social impact bonds (aka, pay for success programs) effective?
- Can a carbon tax reverse global warming?

Each group will review the relevant evaluation literature and identify one reading that best represents the current literature on this topic. This reading will be assigned to the entire class. **The assigned reading must be submitted to the instructor by Mar. 7th.** On April 18th, the 4 groups will give 25-minute presentations that critically assess the literature and how the related evaluation studies inform answers to these questions. These presentations will also show how/if any of the social science evaluation research has been used to inform existing/proposed legislation and/or executive actions. Each presentation will be followed by 10 minutes of discussion in the class regarding what it is about the existing research that weakens/strengthens its ability to inform public policy.

(4) Annotated Bibliography: (8% of class grade)

In this assignment each student will create an annotated bibliography of the eight supplemental readings for the class. (See course outline below.) For each reading, the student will write a 2-3 paragraph annotation that will include:

- A brief summary of the article (e.g., the evaluation question it is asking/answering, methods used, and key findings).
- An assessment of the article's strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of best practices of evaluation research methods. The student should provide supportive reasoning for each strength/weakness listed.

The annotated bibliography should be submitted via Canvas by the beginning of class on April 18th.

(5) Exams: (40% of class grade)

There will be two in-class exams – one on February 22nd and the other on April 11th. The exams will be part essay and part multiple choice. Each exam will be 20% of the student's class grade and will last 90 minutes. The exams will include questions that cover the readings and lectures through the exam date. Example questions will be given in a review sheet posted on the class website a week before each exam.

(5) Community Stakeholder Evaluation Project: (28% of class grade)

Students will participate in one of four evaluation projects. (Descriptions of each evaluation project will be handed out before the first day of class and sign-ups will occur that night.) These

evaluation projects will involve working with real-world clients (i.e., stakeholders) to undertake a piece of policy/program evaluation research. All four research projects will have quantitative analysis components. Some may also involve in-depth interviews and/or survey data collection. Projects will be done in teams of 4-6 students. The end products will be: (a) an oral report, and (b) a written report. Both will be delivered to the client(s).

Student teams will set up initial meetings with the client(s) that the instructor will attend. The purpose of this first meeting will be to clarify the evaluation question(s) and agree upon the approaches and data that will be used to answer the questions. A time line for completing the project along with a date/time for the final presentation (done sometime between April 26 and May 3) will also be agreed upon at that meeting. Students may schedule subsequent meetings with various stakeholders as needed throughout the semester. There will periodically be some time in class for students to meet in their groups. However, students are also encouraged to set up regular group meeting times outside of class.

Student groups will be responsible for dividing up the tasks and insuring that each project moves forward at an appropriate pace. Each student group will also be required to submit two progress reports to the instructor. **The first is due Feb. 29th and the second is due Apr. 4th. Both reports should be submitted online.** These reports should be 1-2 pages long, typed, double-spaced and should provide the reader with information about project accomplishments to date, current challenges, and an updated time line for completion of specific tasks.

On April 18th, student groups will turn in a draft written report to the instructor via Canvas by the beginning of class that day. On April 25th student groups will do a draft presentation of the evaluation results for the class. Student groups will revise both the written report and the oral presentation in light of feedback. Final reports and presentations to clients will be made **April 29 - May 3**.

CLASS WEBPAGE:

The class webpage can be found on Canvas (linked to “my classes” on the university home page through the CIS). Login instructions are given on the home page. The class webpage will be used to post syllabi, online lectures, handouts, exam review sheets and important announcements.

GRADING:

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| Two Exams (20% each) | 40% |
| Data Source Critiques | 8% |
| Evaluations Informing Public Policy Critiques | 8% |
| Annotated Bibliography of Assigned Readings | 8% |
| Evaluation Project: | |
| Progress Reports (2@2% each) | 4% |
| First draft written report | 5% |
| First draft oral presentation | 5% |
| Final written report and oral presentation | 14% |
| Attendance and Participation | 8% |
| TOTAL GRADE: | 100% |

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

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| Jan. 11 | Overview of Policy / Program Evaluation How Much Does Public Policy Research Really Matter? / Groups Organized & Community Stakeholder Group Project Meeting Time |
| | <u>Readings:</u> Fink, Chapter 1 |
| Jan. 18 | MLK Day – No Class |
| Jan. 25 | Validity Issues – Setting the Stage for Evaluation Research / Data Source Groups Meeting Time |
| | <u>Readings:</u> Fink, Chapters 2 & 6 |
| Feb. 1 | Designing Studies – Randomized Field Experiments/ Evaluation Critique Groups Meeting Time |
| | <u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fink, Chapter 3 • Simonsen, SE, KB Digre, et al. 2015. A gender-based approach to developing a healthy lifestyle and healthy weight intervention for diverse Utah women. <i>Evaluation and Program Planning</i> 51:8-16. |
| Feb. 8 | Designing Evaluation Studies – Quasi-Experiments / Community Stakeholder Group Project Meeting Time |
| | <u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mader, EM and CD Zick. 2014. Active transportation: Do current traffic safety policies protect non-motorists? <i>Accident Analysis & Prevention</i> 67:7-13. • Teague, WS, CD Zick, and KR Smith. 2015. Soft transport policies and ground-level ozone: An evaluation of the “Clear the Air Challenge” in Salt Lake City. <i>Policy Studies Journal</i> 43(3):399-415. |
| Feb. 15 | Presidents’ Day – No Class |
| Feb. 22 | Exam 1 / Data Source Presentations Instructions / Data Source Groups Meeting Time |
| Feb. 29 | Designing Evaluation Studies – Non-experimental Evaluations and Intro to Data Sources / Evaluation Critique Groups Meeting Time |
| | <i>Progress Report #1 due at the beginning of class.</i> <u>Readings:</u> Fink, Chapter 5 |
| Mar. 7 | Data Source Presentations (Part 1) / Community Stakeholder Group Project Meeting Time |
| | <i>Readings for Group Evaluation Critiques Due.</i> <i>Data Source Critique Presentations</i> |
| Mar. 14 | Spring Break – No Class |
| Mar. 21 | Data Source Presentations (Part 2) / Community Stakeholder Group Project Meeting Time |
| | <i>Data Source Critique Presentations</i> |
| Mar. 28 | Program Effects & Meta Analyses / Evaluation Critique Groups Meeting Time |
| | <u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fink, Chapter 8 • Houston, DJ and LE Richardson. 2006. Reducing traffic fatalities in the American states by upgrading seat belt use laws to primary enforcement. <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i> 25(3):645-659. • Greenberg, DH, C Michalopoulos, PK Robins. 2003. A meta-analysis of government- |

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| | <p>sponsored training programs. <i>Industrial and Labor Relations Review</i> 57(1)L 31-53.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durlak, JA, RP Weissberg, M Pachan. 2010. A meta-analysis of after-school programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. <i>American Journal of Community Psychology</i> 45: 294-309. |
| Apr. 4 | Cost-Benefit Analyses & Translating Evaluation Research for Stakeholders / Community Stakeholder Group Project Meeting Time |
| | <p><i>Progress Report #2 due at the beginning of class.</i> <i>Evaluation Critique Presentations</i> <u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fink, Chapter 9 • Bergevin, A, CD Zick, SB McVicar, and AH Park. 2015. Cost-benefit analysis of targeted hearing directed early testing for congenital cytomegalovirus infection. <i>International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology</i>, in press. • Utah Department of Workforce Services. 2015. Utah's Fourth Annual Report on Intergenerational Poverty, Welfare Dependency, and the Use of Public Assistance. |
| Apr. 11 | Exam 2 / Evaluation Critique Groups Meeting Time |
| Apr. 18 | Evaluation Critique Presentations |
| | <p><i>Annotated Bibliography due at the beginning of class.</i> <i>First draft of written report to stakeholders due at the beginning of class.</i> <u>Readings:</u> TBA based on group submissions on March 7th.</p> |
| Apr. 25 | Draft Evaluation Presentations |
| Apr. 29-May 3 | Evaluation Oral Presentations to Stakeholders |
| | Day/Time/Locations TBA: |
| | <i>Final written report due at the time of the presentation to stakeholders.</i> |

NOTE: The syllabus is not a binding, legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification.