Syllabi   Course Syllabi

Fall 9-1-2017

PSCI 595.50: Program Evaluation

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University of Montana
Political Science 595.50 Program Evaluation
Fall 2016
Online

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Instructor Information:
Instructor: Dr. Trish Miller
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Virtual office hours: by appointment

Course Information:
This is an online course so we will not meet in person. Online courses give
students more flexibility, but also require a tremendous amount of self-motivation.
In order to do well in this course, a student must possess time management skills as
well as understand the importance of being on time-this includes both discussions
and required assignments. This course will be based on our Moodle system. All of
our interactions and the homework assignments/final exam will be done through
Moodle. It is imperative that students have a working knowledge of this system
for maximum performance in this course.

Course Description:
Program Evaluation is essential (and oftentimes mandated by statute) to many
government programs as well as not for profit organizations (otherwise known as
NGOs). This course will focus heavily on the tools required for completing a
program evaluation. While each evaluation is different in nature, there are several
key components that can generally be found in every evaluation.
One scholar has described program evaluation as follows:

> Evaluation is an accountability tool: when individuals or agencies decide to
> finance a program, they have a right to ask what their funds bought.
> Evaluation is also a vehicle for improving public services. By finding out
> what efforts succeed and fail—and how new ideas and approaches fare
> against existing practices—policymakers and administrators can improve
> new policy and program designs, and devote resources to programs that
> work and fix programs that are inefficient or marginally effective (L. Peck,
> February 2007).

Course Objectives:
Students should be able to:
1. Understand the different types of evaluations and which one to use under which circumstances.
2. Implement the 4 C's of Evaluation
3. Outline a needs assessment
4. Evaluate an evaluation
5. Understand the components of an evaluation and be able to write effective evaluation questions
6. Write an effective evaluation design
7. Construct and utilize logic models

Course Readings:

Required texts for the course

1. Emison, G. A. (2007). *Practical Program Evaluation*. CQ Press: Washington, DC.
2. Frechtling, J. A. (2007). *Logic Modeling Methods in Program Evaluation*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.
3. Rossi, P. H, Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*, 7th ed. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.
   (Note: This book has a very good glossary)
4. Additional readings: If the need arises, I will post these or links to them on the weekly breakdown on Moodle.

Course grading:

The grade that you receive for this course will be based on four separate components: online discussion and participation, homework assignments, midterm analysis and presentation, and the final exam.

Online Discussion /Participation Each week students will be required to engage in an ***ongoing*** online discussion covering the reading materials for the week. The online discussions will comprise 20% of the course grade. In order for the online discussions to go smoothly, they will run as follows:

1. Each week there will be assigned student discussants (I will take the first week). The discussants will pose the questions for the week. Each discussant will post one question ("add a new topic") on Tuesday (before 9 p.m.) The remainder of the class will be considered respondents. If you are a respondent, you must respond to at least 2 of the discussants questions to receive full credit.

2. If you are a discussant, it is your responsibility to answer questions/comments about the question you pose. You should be actively engaging with the respondents throughout the course of the week. You do not have to address the other discussants' questions for your week. However, discussants should converse with one another *prior* to posting their respective questions to make sure that no questions are repeated by discussants.

3. If you are a respondent, you must thoughtfully prepare a response to the questions. Full credit will be given to respondents who answer at least 2 of the questions for the week. Full credit responses will also be completed early enough in the week that the respondent can engage with the discussion throughout the remainder of the week. These responses should be in professional paragraph form of approximately 100-200 words and the respondent should engage actively with the discussant and the other respondents throughout the week to keep the discussion flowing. A full credit response-when possible-should also include citations from the text. Discussions are not twitter posts. I should not see "I agree" as a comment without further explanation as to why a respondent concurs.

4. The discussion forum will close each week on Saturdays at 9 p.m.

Homework Assignments —there will be 5 homework assignments that make up 15% of the course grade (Homework #5 is worth more than the others). You will find the homework assignments on Moodle.

Midterm Analysis and Presentation—30% of course grade; Paper 25% and Presentation 5%. **Due: October 22, 2016**.

"Evaluating an Evaluation"

For this assignment, you will find one program evaluation on a topic of interest to you. While there are evaluations published in refereed academic journals, they are typically very long, so it is highly suggested that you find an evaluation **report** for this assignment, but you are welcome to use an academic article if you prefer.

- **Paper portion**: You will write a paper that analyzes how the evaluation you have selected aligns with what we have learned about evaluation up to that point in the semester. Here are the guidelines for the paper:

    - This paper should be 3-5 pages in length.
  - Please use 1 inch margins and 12 point font. You must remember to use proper citation and references.
  - Your paper should include an introductory paragraph that introduces the paper and a concluding paragraph that sums up your judgments about the evaluation you are evaluating. Since this assignment will include your abilities to evaluate only up to that point in the course, you will be assessed based on the following:
      - Explain what you have learned so far are important elements of program evaluation
      - Analyze the extent to which the evaluation paper or report that you are assessing exhibits these important elements
          - Note that in some cases the "exhibition" may be inferred from things in the evaluation report/paper, while in other cases a particular element may be very explicit
          - Given the elements you observe, what type of evaluation do you believe is being reported on?
      - Given what you have learned about evaluation, note if there are any particular strengths or weaknesses of the evaluation performed and/or of the way the evaluation is reported
- **Presentation portion:** You will present your findings to the class online.
    - Although this is an online course, each student will upload a presentation to Moodle. If you are unfamiliar with creating a YouTube video, here is link to help get you started. http://lifehacker.com/5804501/how-to-upload-videos-to-youtube-for-beginners. Students will be evaluated on the presentation using Figure 6-2 on p. 103 of the Emison text. This presentation will be 5-7 minutes long and include PowerPoint slides. A general rule of thumb when using slides is that you should have no more than one slide per minute (so 5-7 slides for the entire presentation).

Final Exam—35% of course grade. **Due: December 16, 2016**.

- This exam will include some short-answer questions, but the largest portion will be an essay asking you to design an evaluation for a scenario that you will be given.

Help with Technology:

If you have previously taken an online course, you are probably familiar with the Moodle system. If this is your first time, and you find yourself in need of technological assistance, you can contact the online help by phone or email at: UM Online by phone, (406) 243-4999 or email umonline-help@umontana.edu. There is **no on-call assistance during nights and weekends.** For a total Moodle system failure, students will be sent an email by the University of Montana. Your instructor cannot provide IT support so please contact the appropriate University staff if an issue arises.

Grades/Late Policy:

I will not accept assignments that are late unless you have a documented excuse. I also will not give extra credit.

Grading Scale:

The University of Montana uses the Plus/minus grading system and a Credit/No Credit system (the CR/NCR replaces the Pass/Fail system used in the past). General education courses must be taken using the traditional letter grade to count toward one's general education requirements. To accommodate the Plus/Minus system the grading scale shown below will be used.

Grade	Point Scale	Point Range	GPA
A	93-100	8 points	4.00
A-	90-92	3 points	3.67
B+	87-89	3 points	3.33
B	83-86	4 points	3.00
B-	80-82	3 points	2.67
C+	77-79	3 points	2.33
C	73-76	4 points	2.00

C-	70-72	3 points	1.67
D+	67-69	3 points	1.33
D	63-66	4 points	1.00
D-	60-62	3 points	.067
F	59 or lower	N/A	0.00

Class preparation and participation:

As an online course, participation is absolutely crucial to gaining the most knowledge from this course. In order to successfully participate, students must have a clear understanding of the materials which will require that students have thoroughly read the materials prior to the online discussions.

Academic honesty:

It is imperative that students at this level of their educational careers understand the importance of doing their own work. This includes online discussions, homework assignments, your midterm paper and presentation and your final exam. You must do your own work. If you are using information from another author, you must give them credit for their work. If you take words from another author, you must use quotation marks. If you are merely paraphrasing a thought or idea from another author, **you still must cite their work**. Plagiarism is a major offense, do not take this lightly. If you are unsure of how to properly cite sources (and citations must be given in all assignments) there are resources available. If you have questions regarding plagiarism, please contact me. It is much better to be safe than sorry! I will not take off points for overuse of citations (this does not mean that you can cut and paste entire pages from other authors). However, if I find that you have plagiarized, this is cheating and grounds for failure.

Classroom etiquette:

Although this is an online course, this is still a classroom setting, particularly for online discussions. I expect that each of you will treat your fellow classmates and the instructor with respect. This is not social media commentary, and as such I will expect professionalism in all of your online discussion postings.

COURSE SCHEDULE: Fall 2016

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course schedule.

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments
Week 1: August 29- September 4th	**Introduction and Overview**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Chapter 1; Frechtling, Appendix **Due:** Discussions
Week 2: September 5 –11 (Labor Day is September 5th)	**Practical Program Evaluations: Learning the C's of Evaluation**	**Read:** Emison, Preface, Chs. 1-7 (entire book) **Due:** Discussions
Week 3: September 12-18	**Tailoring Evaluations**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 2 (remember Emison, Ch. 4) **Due:** Discussions, Saturday, 5 p.m. **HW #1 is** due Saturday, 5 p.m.
Week 4: September 19-25	**Identifying Issues and Formulating Questions And Introducing Logic Models**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 3; Frechtling, Pref., Chs. 1-5 **Due:** Discussions
Week 5: September 26- October 2	**Assessing the Need for a Program**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 4 **Due:** Discussions, Saturday, 5 p.m. **HW #2** is due Saturday, 5 p.m.
Week 6: October 3-9	**Expressing and Assessing Program Theory Using Logic Models**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 5; Frechtling, Chs. 6- **7** **Due:** Discussions
Week 7: October 10-16	**Assessing and Monitoring Program Process**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 6 **Due:** Discussions

		HW #3 plus A copy of (or link to) the evaluation you plan to analyze for the Midterm
Week 8: October 17-23	**Measuring and Monitoring Program Outcomes**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 7 **Due:** Discussions **Midterm papers and presentations due Saturday, 5 p.m.**
Week 9: October 24-30	**Challenges with Logic Models**	**Read:** Frechtling, Chs. 8-12 **Due:** Discussions
Week 10: October 31-November 6	**Assessing Program Impact: Randomized Field Experiments**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 8 **Due:** Discussions
Week 11: November 7-13	**Assessing Program Impact: Alternative Designs**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 9 **Due:** Discussions **HW #4 is due**
Week 12: November 14-20	**Detecting, Interpreting, and Analyzing Program Effects**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 10 **Due:** Discussions
Week 13: November 21-27		**Read: Thanksgiving break** **Due:** **Enjoy your time!**
Week 14: November 28-December 4	**Measuring Efficiency**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 11 **Due:** Discussions

		HW #5 due
Week 15: December 5-11	**The Social Context of Evaluation**	**Read:** Rossi et al., Ch. 12 **Due:** Discussions
Week 16: December 12-16	**Final Exam**	**No additional reading** **Final exam due Friday,** **December 16th by 5 p.m.**