MPPA 5311 Program Evaluation in Public Management

Fall 2016

Dr. Siobhan Fleming
Meeting Time: MWF, 11:10AM – 12:00PM
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Required Text:

None – I will provide you with readings and supplementary materials available in the public domain. The book listed below is a good resource for development of your program evaluation plan, but it is not required. You can rent this book on Amazon for $30.19. I will supply you with PDFs of other resources throughout the semester.


Course Description:

Program Evaluation is the systematic use of empirical data to assess and improve the effectiveness of public or non-profit programs and policies. Most, if not all, funding sources, regulatory agencies and policy makers require a certain amount of accountability and evidence of the efficient use of resources. In addition, most organizations incorporate an evaluation process into their systems of performance management and monitoring.

This course introduces you to the framework of evaluation, the development of plans for formative and summative evaluations, and the data collection tools for implementing evaluation. Program evaluation is research that involves the systematic collection and analysis of data, it is applied, not basic, social science. This means we are using existing research to solve current problems or improve the current situation. We are not conducting pure research. There are a variety of types of program evaluation: e.g., needs assessments, process, outcomes, accreditation, cost/benefit analysis, effectiveness, efficiency, formative, summative, goal-based, proactive, interactive. They each use a mix of theories and research methods to accomplish their goals.

The goal of this course is to expose you to the field of program evaluation – its orientation, values, theories, methods, and professional standards – and to provide you with an opportunity to perform a program evaluation yourself. This will be a working course whereby you will conduct a program evaluation during the course of the semester.
Course Learning Objectives:

By the end of this class you will:

- Develop a framework for program evaluation.
- Analyze performance: the differing types and levels of metrics
- Define logic models: connecting inputs to performance outcomes
- Define program goals: choosing and prioritizing objectives
- Analyze data to report on performance
- Conduct a program evaluation.

Exams and Grading:

- Class presentations/participation 20% of final grade
- Workbook sections 15% of final grade
- Program evaluation 40% of final grade
- Comprehensive exam 25% of final grade

Students are expected to prepare for each class session, to submit written materials on time, and to participate actively and constructively in class. Attendance is critical. All written work is expected to be in a professional manner: spelling, grammar, punctuation, proper referencing, and organization will be graded as well as content and presentation. All quotations and significant paraphrases should be properly cited.

Workbook sections

Each week you will complete one or more sections of the Workbook. These will serve as the building blocks of your program evaluation. You will take from the readings and discussions and glean from them the salient information and how it relates to your program evaluation. These are meant to be part of a working document for your evaluation. The completed sections should:

- Demonstrate your ability to provide an analytical viewpoint on the topic.
- Clarity and organization of the plan.
- Correct grammar, spelling and form.
- Unexcused late workbook sections will be reduced by one-half a grade per day.

Program evaluation

Your final project will be a complete evaluation plan which includes the program goals and objectives, evaluation methods, the data collection plan and how they will address the evaluation goals and questions, results of data collection, and a plan for working and communicating results to stakeholders to affect change.
Class Rules:

- Attendance and participation is required and worth 20% of your overall grade
- Arriving late is strongly discouraged
- Reading course assignments is expected
- All Electronic devices are to be muted during class – period
- Showing respect to other students and the professor is expected
- Make up work will be limited to special circumstances (and with prior notification only)
- Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will result in a failing grade.

Academic Integrity:

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy and reported to the University’s Academic Misconduct Committee. As stated in the Academic Misconduct Code for the University of St. Thomas, academic misconduct includes: (a) cheating (using an authorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement; (b) assisting others in any such act; or (c) attempting to engage in such acts.

Plagiarism is using the work or another person and claiming it as your own. The most common types of plagiarism include:

- Using a paper or portion of a paper prepared by someone else;
- Quoting someone else's language or words without proper quotation or citation; and
- Paraphrasing someone else's ideas, framework, or insights without giving credit to the original author in a citation.

Academic misconduct in any form is unacceptable and suspected violations will be pursued aggressively.

Students with Disabilities:

If you have any condition, such as a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical or learning disability, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as outlined in this syllabus, please notify me and the Office for Counseling and Testing Services in the first week of the course so that we may make appropriate arrangements. All information and documentation of disability is confidential. Course materials are available in alternative formats upon request.
Schedule (Subject to change)

Week 1: August 22, 24, 26: Introduction to Program Evaluation.
   Friday: submit reflection paper (one page) on what new information you learned this week and what you want to gain from this class.

Week 2: August 29, 31, Sept. 2: Selecting a program to evaluate.
   Friday: submit and discuss program you will evaluate this semester and complete section, “Preparing for an Evaluation” in the Workbook.

Week 3: (Labor Day Sept. 5): Sept. 7, 9: Using a framework for program evaluation.
   Friday: Submit and discuss completed section, “Program Stakeholders” in the Workbook.

Week 4: Sept. 12, 14, 16: Standards of Program Evaluation
   Friday: class discussion.

Week 5: Sept. 19, 21, 23: Program description.
   Friday: submit and discuss completed section, “Overview of Program to Be Evaluated” in the Workbook.

Week 6: Sept. 26, 28, 30: Defining the goals and objectives of the program.
   Friday: submit and discuss completed section, “Logic Model” in the Workbook.

Week 7: Oct. 3, 5, 7: Assessment Methods
   Friday: submit and discuss completed section, “Evaluation Plan Template” in the Workbook.

Week 8: (Fall break, no class Oct. 10): Oct. 12, 14: Conduct assessment. Discussion of available data resources. Friday: submit and discuss completed section, “Analyze the Information” in the Workbook.

Week 9: Oct. 17, 19, 21: Issues or hurdles with assessing in real-time. Class presentations about what assessments you are doing.

Week 10: Oct. 31, Nov. 2, 4: Class presentations of results from assessments done.
   Friday: submit and discuss completed section, “Plan to Share the Evaluation Results” in the Workbook.

Week 11: Nov. 7, 9, 11 (Veterans Day): Interpreting results. In class presentations/discussions about what you found.

Week 12: Nov. 14, 16, 18: Using results to inform decision-making.


Week 14: Nov. 28, 30, Dec. 2: Presentations of final program evaluations.

Week 15: Dec. 5 Last Day of Classes: Review

Week 16: Mon Dec 12: Final exam.