

PPL 806 - Policy Evaluation - Spring 2019

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Class Time: Thursdays 3 - 5:50PM

Class Location: Olds Hall 208

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30 to 1:30 or by appointment.

Course Description

The objective of this course is to learn the fundamental concepts, methods, and approaches in program and policy evaluation. Evaluations of policies and programs allow us to assess their effectiveness and efficiency given their intended objectives, design and implementation. Carrying out a successful program evaluation may not always be an easy endeavor. In its starkest form a good evaluation needs to be methodologically sound, carried out in a well-organized manner, informed by the specifics of the policy and the context involved, and relevant and clearly communicated. This course will address both the theoretical and practical aspects involved in carrying out a successful program evaluation. The material covered will include design tools and issues in program evaluation, as well as examination of program evaluations across a broad range of policy areas. The material will be covered mainly in the format of lectures and class discussions, with select lab exercises.

Course Requirements

This course will emphasize issues related to data collection and analysis for the purposes of program and policy evaluation. In particular, a good part of the course will focus on the statistical techniques for program evaluation in the context of experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental research designs. As such, previous enrollment in PPL 801 (or an equivalent introductory statistical class) is required as well as previous/concurrent enrollment in PPL 802 (or an equivalent class).

Evaluation

Your assessment will be based on performance in quizzes, three exams, weekly questions, presentation, and final evaluation project.

Quizzes: there will be weekly, or close to weekly, short quizzes at the beginning of the class on the reading material due for that class. The quizzes will start January 17th with the opportunity to drop one quiz. There will be no make-ups.

Exams: There will be three exams. The first exam, take-home, will be provided on Friday **February 15th** and will be due Monday **February 18th** by 5PM. All work should be individual with no consultation. The second exam will be in-class on Thursday **April 4th**, and the last exam will be provided on Monday **April 29th** and will be due on Thursday **May 2nd** by 5PM. Again, all work should be individual with no consultation.

Seminar questions and presentation: Students will be teamed up in groups of two for purposes of weekly questions and for a final project (and presentation). The groupings of two for questions and for the final project may be different (more on this in class).

- Questions for seminars: Each group must formulate two discussion questions (or reactions) to the week's readings. These must be emailed to me by **5PM of the Wednesday** before our class. In general you should be well prepared to discuss and react to the material of the week.
- Presentation: your group will do a 10 minute presentation (~5-7 slides) once in the semester on your chosen evaluation design/plan (see *Final Evaluation Project* below). The presentation will reflect the current stage of the proposal and is an opportunity to get feedback. The slide presentation needs to be emailed to me by 10am of the Thursday date you are presenting.

Final Evaluation Project: the final project will consist of an evaluation program design/plan done by your group. In particular, you (the group) may carry out one of the two assessments: 1) a proposal for an evaluation or 2) an original data analysis of a program/policy (this option involves extra credit). More details on the final project will be provided in class. Each group will hand-in one evaluation design/plan. Approval for the final project's topic should be sought by February 28th. The final project is due **Monday April 29th** by 5pm.

Grades

Course grades will be obtained based on the following weights:

Quizzes	10%
Presentation	5%
Questions	10%
Exams	55% (15%, 20%, 20%)
Final Project	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	100%

The conversion from your work into the 0 to 4 scale will be as follows:

90-100%	4.0
85-89	3.5
80-84	3.0
75-79	2.5
70-74	2.0
65-69	1.5

60-64 1.0
59 or below 0.0

Academic Honesty

We will abide by MSU's statements and policies regarding academic honesty, as detailed at the ombudsman's website at <https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>. As per the ombudsman, some of the relevant policies are detailed in Article 2.3.3 of the *Academic Freedom Report* General Student Regulations 1.0, *Protection of Scholarship and Grades*, the all-University Policy on *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades*, and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations.

Late Policies and Make-up Policies

Critical questions: No late questions will be accepted.

Make-up exams: No make-up exams are allowed unless a dire emergency arises and is well documented, as explained below.

If you experience a dire emergency or a university addressed absence (<http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/excuses.html>) that pre-empted the handing-in of any of the assignments in time or caused you to miss the exam, you must notify me on or before the due date or exam date (by email or by leaving a message in my answering machine at work) and provide a well-documented explanation (e.g., doctor's note, etc).

Observance for religious holidays: Accommodations can be made for missing an exam or class days due to the observance of a religious holiday. As per MSU policy: "it is the responsibility of those students who wish to be absent to make arrangements in advance with their instructors."

Required Textbooks

The required texts for this class are:

- 1) Evaluation: A Systematic Approach. 8th Edition. Rossi, Lipsey and Henry. 2018. Sage Publications. NOTE: please obtain this latest edition.
- 2) Public Program Evaluation: A statistical guide. 2nd Edition. Laura Langbein. 2012. ME Sharpe.

Note: the Rossi et al. textbook will be available on 1/11 from Amazon but is already available from the publisher at: <https://www.vitalsource.com/products/evaluation-peter-h-rossi-v9781506307893?term=9781506307909>

There will be as well required readings from journal articles and reports, which will be available from either the MSU library electronic resources or on our D2L class site.

Course Outline

Note: Below I provide a course outline. But depending on how the course develops, some of the dates and material may change. I will keep you amply informed but you are responsible for all announcements made in class and through D2L.

RLH is the acronym for the Rossi, Lipsey, and Henry textbook (the Evaluation: A systematic approach book) and **L** is the reference to the Langbein textbook (Public Program Evaluation: A statistical guide). Most weeks will also have an extra reading (**E**) of an applied evaluation, available in D2L. These may change given the development of the class.

WEEK 1. January 10. Overview of the class.

WEEK 2. January 17. Overview of Program Evaluation

Readings: RLF Chapter 1
 E: Erik Hanser MPP Capstone
 E: Ruggeri et al. Chapter 4 on behavioral insights for policy

WEEK 3. January 24. Assessing Program Theory.

Readings: RLH Chapter 3
 E: McLaughlin and Jordan.
 E: Haas and Springer: Chapter 6
 Class guest: Jessica AcMoody from CEDAM
 <http://cedamichigan.org/about/jessica-acmoody/>

WEEK 4. January 31. Assessing the Need for a Program.

Readings: RLH Chapter 2
 E: Lee et al. 2007
 E: Michigan's Infrastructure Report Card
 Class guest: Ben Thompson from Lansing Save (City of Lansing)
 <https://www.lansingmi.gov/674/Lansing-SAVE>

WEEK 5. February 7. Assessing and Monitoring Program Process.

Readings: RLH Chapter 4
 E: Haas and Springer: Chapter 11
 E: Odendaal et al.
 Class guest: Brian Rakovitis from CEDAM
 <http://cedamichigan.org/about/brian-rakovitis/>

WEEK 6. February 14. Assessing Program Outcomes and Introduction to Impact Evaluation

Readings: RLH Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 (p.141-149)
L Chapter 3
LAB I

WEEK 7. February 21. Impact Evaluation: Randomized Control trials

Readings: RLH Chapter 8
L Chapter 4
E: Barrera-Osorio et al. or report by speaker
Class guest: Colleen Garber: <http://publicpolicy.com/staff/colleen-e-graber/>

WEEK 8. February 28. Impact Evaluation: Quasi-experimental designs - Reflexive Designs.

Readings: RLH Chapter 7
E: Bingham and Felbinger Chapter 11
E: Bingham and Felbinger Chapter 12

**** Spring Break****

WEEK 9. March 14. Impact Evaluation: Quasi-experimental designs - Group Comparisons

Readings: L Chapter 5
E: Bingham and Felbinger Chapter 8.
E: Loftin.

WEEK 10. March 21. Impact Evaluation: Non-experimental designs

Readings: L Chapter 6
E: Currie et al. 2010
LAB II

WEEK 11. March 28. Program Effects and Meta-evaluations.

Readings: RLH Chapters 9.
L Chapter 8
E: Bingham and Felbinger Chapter 16.

WEEK 12. April 4. **Exam #2** (*in-class*).

WEEK 13. April 11. Cost-benefit and Cost-effectiveness.

Readings: RLH Chapter 10
 E: Bingham and Felbinger Chapter 13.
 Guest speaker TBA

WEEK 14. April 18. Data Collection: Surveys. *Student Presentations*

Readings: L Chapter 7
 E: Newcomer and Triplett.

WEEK 15. April 25. Wrap up. *Student Presentations*

Readings: RLH Chapter 11 and 12

FINAL PROJECT: is due Monday April 29th by 5pm **

FINAL EXAM (Exam # 3): is due Thursday May 2nd by 5PM **

Journals specific to Evaluation

Evaluation Review

Evaluation

American Journal of Evaluation

Evaluation and Program Planning

Evaluation News and Comment

A few sources for Evaluation Studies

Applied Survey Research (<http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org/about/index.html>)

Virtual Library: Evaluation (<http://www.policy-evaluation.org/>)

Western Michigan University Evaluation Center (<http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/>)

Rand Corporation (<http://www.rand.org/pubs/online/>)

Online Evaluation resource Library (<http://oerl.sri.com/>)