SPRING 2021

Concepts and Methods of Program Evaluation	**Dr. NEAL H. HOOKER**
PUBAFRS 6080	Professor of Food Policy
4 credit hours	hooker.27@osu.edu
Asynchronous online	Virtual Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 1:00-2:00 PM
	and by appointment

Teaching Assistant
Nicloe Leach
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Virtual Office Hours: Wednesday, 1:00-2:30 PM

Course Description: To enhance the student's understanding of program evaluation and research design. To become a better consumer/initiator of evaluation research.

> **Learning Objectives**: By the end of this course students will be able to:
> - Critically assess evaluation plans/research designs and research in public affairs.
> - Conduct an evaluation study, and
> - Become a better policy analyst.

Textbook: Langbein, Laura. (2012) *Public Program Evaluation: A Statistical Guide*. 2nd Edition. ISBN-13: 978-0765626127; ISBN-10: 0765626128

Students can access textbook information via the Barnes & Noble bookstore website: www.shopOhioState.com as well as from their BuckeyeLink Student Center. This information is disseminated by B&N to all area bookstores. You may buy from a store of your choice and/or shop for books (always use ISBN# for searches) on line.

Carmen: Slides/handouts, additional readings and interesting links, announcements, grades, and other information as needed. You will need a recent version of an adobe/pdf reader. I suggest you first read the chapter then view the zoom, perhaps taking notes on the included powerpoint slides (pdf).

Expectations: Any indication of academic misconduct **must and will** be reported to The Ohio State University Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). Make sure you have read OSU's Code of Student Conduct http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/csc/. In particular, Section 3335-23-04 defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct. OSU and COAM expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct may constitute "Academic Misconduct." Sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:
- The Committee on Academic Misconduct web page: http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html
- Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity: http://oaa.osu.edu/coamtensuggestions.html
- Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity: www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.html

Grades

Citi Training	3%			
Assignments (best 6 of 7, 5% each)	30%	90-92.9% A-	93% or more A	
Exam 1	15%	80.0-82.9% B-	83.0-86.9% B	87.0-89.9% B+
Draft evaluation/data set	10%	70.0-72.9% C-	73.0-76.9% C	77.0-79.9% C+
Exam 2	15%	less than 60% E	60.0-66.9% D	67.0-69.9% D+
Presentation videos	5%			
Q&A on peer videos	2%			
Final evaluation	20%			
TOTAL	**100%**	Up to 5% bonus points throughout class		

Assignments, exams and papers are to be **individual work** and should be uploaded by 5:00pm on the due date. Late submissions may be deducted points.

Criteria	Draft Evaluation 10% of class grade	Final Evaluation 20% of class grade
Criteria	*Points*	*Points*
Grammar	10	10
Logic model	20	20
Evaluation question	10	10
Literature review	20	20
Supporting data – excel data set	40	40
Quality of design	0	40
Data analysis	0	30
Findings	0	30
Total	**100**	**200**

Assignments

The goals are to build/extend key sections of your final program evaluation and practice questions similar to those that will be in the exams. **Approximately** 500 words per assignment. Provide references to the work/words of others. Upload by 5pm on the due date. The best 6 of the 7 assignments will count, 5% each.

"Frequently" Asked Questions

Each week we will synthesize (anonymously) the most common/important student questions asked during virtual office hours and via email and provide answers on Carmen. If one student has a question, it most likely means we didn't explain things as well as we had thought and it is important for all students to be able to access these answers!

Accommodation Policy: Covid

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue

Student Wellness

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the **Office of Student Life Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS) by visiting https://ccs.osu.edu/ or calling 614-292- 5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 4th Floor of the PAES Building. 24 hour emergency help is also available through the National 24/7 Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/**

Writing Consulting

Students wishing to have additional help with the writing of their papers can meet with a consultant at the Writing Center (https://cstw.osu.edu/writing-center).

Library Assistance

The Glenn College has a dedicated librarian at OSU Libraries**,** Carly Dearborn, Assistant Professor, Public Policy Archivist and Interim Public Affairs Librarian, dearborn.8@osu.edu 614-247-1605 who can help provide research assistance. For more information and links to some common public affairs resources https://guides.osu.edu/c.php?g=290952&p=1950104

FERPA and Privacy in CarmenZoom Statement. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects **a**ll meetings held in CarmenZoom that include course content or student information. Please see this CarmenZoom privacy link to learn more.

"Video and audio recordings of class lectures will be part of the classroom activity. The video and audio recording is used for educational use/purposes and may be made available to all students presently enrolled in the course."

Master's Program Goals (MA/MPA)

Goal 1 (G1): The ability to lead and manage in public governance
Goal 2 (G2): The ability to participate in and contribute to the policy process
Goal 3 (G3): The ability to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions
Goal 4 (G4): The ability to articulate and apply a public service perspective
Goal 5 (G5): The ability to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry
Goal 6 (G6): The ability to integrate, synthesize, and apply knowledge across the curriculum in a professional public service context
Goal 7 (G7): The ability to interact effectively with public policy and administration professionals from a broad range of sectors, using professional competencies common to the field

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- Methods 1 - Assess data quality and create surveys and sampling methods to address problems (G2, G3)
- Methods 4 - Seek and identify patterns in data (G1, G3, G4)
- Methods 5 - Understand the logic of a statistical argument and be able to produce them for varied audiences and in multiple ways (G2, G3, G7)
- Methods 6 – Support claims with statically sound quantitative and/or qualitative evidence (G2, G3, G4, G5, G7)

Class Schedule

Module #	Topic	Reading	Deliverable	Ongoing
1	Introduction	Stake & Mabry	**Citi Training 1/15**	**Data Collection**
2	Types of Evaluations	1	**Assignment 1 due 5pm 1/22**	
		Harper et al.		
3	Logic/Impact Models	McLaughlin & Jordan	**Assignment 2 due 5pm 1/29**	
		Morell		**Data Review 1-on-1 meetings**
4	Validity	2 & 3	**Assignment 3 due 5pm 2/12**	
Exam 1 due 5pm 2/19				
Draft Evaluation due 5pm 3/5				
5	Experiments	4	**Assignment 4 due 5pm 3/12**	**1-on-1 meetings**
		Hopkins et al.		
6	Quasi-Experiments	5	**Assignment 5 due 5pm 3/19**	**Data Analysis**
		White & Sabarwal		
7	Non-Experiments	6	**Assignment 6 due 5pm 3/26**	
		Linden		
8	Surveys + Meta Analyses	7 & 8	**Assignment 7 due 5pm 4/2**	**Final Evaluation 1-on-1 meetings**
Exam 2 due 5pm 4/9				
Presentation videos due 5pm 4/16				
Q&A on peer videos due 5pm 4/20				
Final Evaluation due 5pm 4/23				

Program Evaluation Paper

You will prepare a quantitative[1] process[2] or outcome evaluation for a program of your own choosing. The program may be local, state, national, or international. This will be a **real program evaluated with real data**. Select something you are interested in, for (at least) two reasons. First, this is a very detailed paper and therefore an opportunity to develop subject matter expertise. Second, if you do a good job then you could build on the study in another class, e.g., capstone.

The draft should be approximately 2,500 words. The final paper should be approximately 5,000 words.

1. **Briefly** describe the program you are evaluating. This explanation must include but should not be limited to a **logic/impact model**. That is, you must clearly articulate the **theory of change** for the program. Who is the client, and how is their behavior changed by the program?
2. Clearly state the **evaluation question**; linked to a measure of process or outcome. This step can only be achieved after developing the logic/impact model for your program. Be precise in your question and make sure it is linked to the data you will use to measure change.
3. Conduct a **literature review** that explains how past research/practice has informed your evaluation including the model specification for data analysis. Your review will include research from the following categories:
    - Previous evaluations of the same and/or similar programs including evidence of an effect size of the program on the process/outcome. This will help suggest variables/measures and data sources.
    - Empirical studies attempting to predict and explain your process/outcome variable(s) or similar, whether or not a study is focused on your program or a similar program. For example, identify any policy analysis conducted prior to the program getting approval.
    - In addition to explaining how this past research has informed your design, you must also critique the quality of this research (e.g., in terms of the validity of the designs used by these studies). This will help identify alternative explanations for changes in outcomes (external factors) and differing stakeholder perspectives.
4. Identify a **real data set** that you propose to use. **This step is much harder than it seems so start right away**. Include an Excel file with your data. In the report, describe the data including;
    - Unit of analysis? e.g., annual data, county-level, individual client information or aggregate/average, etc.
    - How do your variables actually evaluate the program under consideration? Identify and explain the program and/or outcome variable(s). For example, was the program implemented over time, did the budget/activities/outputs vary, did all clients experience the same "treatment", etc.?
    - Number of observations and timeline of the program.
    - Min/max/mean – describe how much your variables actually vary. What trends do you see in your data?
    - Strategies to link datasets if necessary and to "fill-in" missing observations.
    - What external factors (control variables) are you considering?
    - What do you know about non-participant/comparison groups?

Parts 1-4 are to be submitted as a DRAFT due 5:00pm on 3/5

5. Propose an **evaluation design**. Be sure to explain the following:
    - How it addresses the counterfactual – what else might explain any changes you see in your data?
    - The strengths and weaknesses with respect to internal validity and external validity.
    - Why you chose the design opposed to other perhaps stronger designs?
6. Explain your **data analysis**, including the following:
    - Conduct an appropriate statistical analysis of your outcome measure(s), such as pre/post, time series, comparison group, etc.
        - If this includes multivariate analysis, be clear to explain the type of regression.
7. Explain your **findings**, including the following:

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[1] If a student wishes to conduct a qualitative evaluation they need to demonstrate they are sufficiently prepared (prior coursework or experience with methods) and have access to enough information to merit consideration.
[2] A process evaluation won't be able to answer if a program is "working" merely is it implemented **as planned**. If you choose to conduct a process evaluation you will need to provide sufficient detail about the goals of the program and how your inputs, activities and outputs are measured.

- o How you assess whether the program had the intended impact on the process/outcome variable(s). Specify what coefficients to pay attention to, why, and also how (e.g., direction of effect, statistical significance).
- o Cautionary remarks regarding the limitations of the design and analysis (e.g., correlation vs. causality, analysis concerns such as small sample size, measurement reliability, and validity, etc.).

Build from the feedback on your DRAFT
Include all 7 elements in your FINAL due 5:00pm on 4/23

Some random thoughts and suggestions on preparing an evaluation report. Keep asking questions and checking the FAQ module on the Carmen page throughout the semester for additional guidance.

1. Use section headings to break-up the report and make your various pieces clearer.
2. If you are close to the word count maximum, use a technical appendix for more detailed discussions of methods, data, etc. I won't count this towards the total. Also, you can use a table to summarize your literature review.
3. A logic model is often clearer if presented as a visual, such as the flow diagrams in the lectures. Be sure to include external factors, and how you think they may impact your evaluation (e.g., a plausible alternative reason why the outcome has changed or explanations of why certain client groups are not reached by the program). Also, think through how the client interacts with the program – once, or multiple times (e.g., a one-time tax refund or a weekly benefit; a one-day training program or a semester course, etc.). Make sure you have a feasible temporal sequence – the client is exposed to the program and then an outcome is measured.
4. The reason we consider the program as the sum of inputs, activities and outputs is to highlight that it is rarely a simple "binary" or on/off variable. Rather, the output (at the very least) should describe the scope and scale of your program. A "small" program is less likely to change the outcome as much as a "larger" one. This is what is meant by a treatment or exposure effect and is analogous to a dose response. For example, if the implementation of your program has seen more counties adopt each year, then a state-level outcome measure will change more each year given a larger number of clients. It is easier to "find" statistically a larger effect than a smaller one.
5. Your literature review should include a range of sources including the policy proposals that generated the legislative or regulatory basis of your program. For Federal programs this can include *Federal Register* rulemaking announcements or the *Congressional Record*. Similar records can be found at the state or local/municipal level. For non-profit organizations the equivalent could be a grant proposal. Such information provides context, background, suggestions of program need and effect, and when describing policies (programs) with significant economic impact a comparison of alternatives. You should also include any prior evaluations of similar programs (other states/cities, different client groups, etc.). Regardless, such sources should help you discover data, suggest possible measures/variables (including external factors or control variables), methods and ideally describe a program effect size to compare to any that you are able to determine.
6. The data review step (#4) is critical. Before analyzing the data with models describe the trends, strengths and weaknesses of the measures, and the timeline of your program. This review should help guide you towards the most appropriate analysis approach. It is rare to find all the data in one place (particularly outcome measures) so expect to "merge" sources and be clear to describe any assumptions/decisions made to facilitate this (e.g., unit of analysis state versus county, fiscal year versus calendar year, etc.)

Final Presentations

5% of your final grade.

Upload an approximately 5 minute presentation to the Assignment tab.

In the Discussion tab summarize your program and lead a Q&A with at least two discussion comments/responses on your peer's/your presentations – provide them feedback to help them improve their final reports.

Content of your presentation, 1 slide each (not counting title slide):

1. **Program**. Briefly describe who the program targets and how it acts.
2. **Prior studies**. Summarize previous/similar evaluations with a focus on data/measures, method and effect size.
3. **Evaluation question.** Introduce your data and measures for program, outcome(s) and control variables/external factors.
4. **Design**. Describe your analysis approach.
5. **Findings**. Present the evidence/show if the program has an effect.

Grading: 5% of your overall grade, out of 50 points:

Verbal	Excellent 20 pts	Good 15 pts	Satisfactory 10 pts	Poor 5 pts	No points
Articulate; proper volume; steady rate; enthusiasm; confidence; practiced	No room for improvement	Some room for improvement	Needs improvement	Needs much improvement	Needs major improvement
Timing	Excellent 10 pts		Satisfactory 5 pts		No points
Pace and completeness	Completes presentation on time		~1 minute too long or too short		More than 2 minutes too long or too short
Content	Excellent 20 pts	Good 15 pts	Satisfactory 10 pts	Poor 5 pts	No points
Program, prior studies, evaluation question, design, findings	Meets all content requirements with no room for improvement	Meets most content requirements with some room for improvement	Does not meet a few of the requirements and needs much improvement	Does not meet many of the requirements and needs major improvement	Does not meet any of the requirements and needs major improvement