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Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies
School of Public Policy and Administration

AP/PPAS 4310 3.00 – Program Evaluation I (Fall 2021)

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Time	Monday – 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. (synchronous remote delivery)
Delivery Method	Online Delivery via Zoom
Course Director	Shanon Kalra-Ramjoo
Email	shanonkr@yorku.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only. Please request an appointment via email.
Prerequisites and Exclusions	Prerequisites: AP/POLS 3300 6.00 or AP/PPAS 3300 6.00 Course credit exclusions: AP/POLS 4300 6.00, AP/PPAS 4300 6.00, GL/POLS 4300 6.00 NOTE: Students taking this course are strongly encouraged to also complete AP/PPAS 4320 3.00 offered in the subsequent term. The reason for this recommendation is that students typically work on the same program evaluation project in the two courses.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Program Evaluation I provides students with practical knowledge of the practice of program evaluation. Students will learn the fundamental methodological tools necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of government programs and includes a review of the extensive literature in this area. Students will learn techniques for evaluating assessments and will learn to develop research designs for formative evaluations, summative evaluations and needs studies. A combination of lectures and group discussions will be used during online classes as well as independent and group assignments. *Students are strongly encouraged to prepare for class by completing the readings, participate in the discussion and take an active role in the workshops.*

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

✔ Think critically and solve problems about the challenges in evaluating public sector programs.
✔ Design presentations and articulate key findings.
✔ Articulate policy research questions, search the literature, compile a relevant bibliography and identify potential data sources.
✔ Differentiate between different types of program evaluation, their objectives and methodological tools.
✔ Be aware of the limitations of program evaluation in terms of its design, methodology and practical feasibility, and interpret findings in a critical manner.
✔ Design and implement a suitable program evaluation scheme.
✔ Be aware of ethical issues in program evaluation.
✔ Communicate research findings in both oral and written format clearly and effectively.

COURSE DELIVERY METHOD

This course is delivered entirely remotely/on-line and replicates a classroom experience through live video lectures, presentation slide materials, on-line live discussions, and interactive forums and workshops. Lectures will provide the context for the readings, which should be completed before the start of each class. Discussions will build on the readings and lecture material and all students are expected to actively participate. Students will also have the opportunity to work together in groups to produce results/answers to questions/challenges presented in class.

Note: If you have a documented disability at York that you wish to have accommodated in this course, please email me immediately.

About eClass and Zoom

eClass (previously Moodle) is the learning platform used by York University to allow for a personalized learning platform/environment for our course. The free site allows students to access course materials, such as slide decks, assignments and videos, as well as a secure site for us to upload student work for assessment.

You can find links to resources for students about online learning and eClass at: https://going-digital.laps.yorku.ca/student-resources/

Zoom is a free video conferencing software app that allows classes to engage virtually for video, presentations, group work and chat rooms. More detail about these systems will be shared at the beginning of the course. Students shall note the following:
• Zoom is hosted on servers in the U.S. This includes recordings done through Zoom.
• If you have privacy concerns about your data, provide only your first name or a nickname when you join a session.

- The system is configured in a way that all participants are automatically notified when a session is being recorded. In other words, a session cannot be recorded without you knowing about it.

Note: For the online delivery method to work effectively, students are strongly encouraged to prepare for class by completing the readings, participate in the discussion and take an active role in the workshops.

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated based on a combination of independent and group assignments, tests and individual class participation as outlined below. Assignments are further described in greater detail and will be discussed in class. Students are encouraged attend class and to seek timely feedback and advice as they progress through the course.

Assignment	Mark (%)	Due Date
1. Critical Literature Review (individual)	15%	Week 5 (October 18) via eClass
2. Class Presentation (individual)	15%	Weeks 3 – 8 remotely in class
3. Final Take Home Test (individual)	20%	Week 10 (November 22) via eClass
4. Evaluability Assessment Report and Presentation to Client (group)	40%	Week 12 (November 29)
5. Attendance and Class Participation	10%	Throughout

1. Critical Literature Review

The critical literature review is an independent assignment and should be 3-4 pages long (font 11, 1 ½ line spacing) on a public policy evaluation of your choice. At a minimum, you should use 3-4 articles or reports on the subject, identify the main question of analysis, summarize the approach of each of the papers and their findings, and critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of each paper. Suggestions for further research and policy recommendations should be outlined as well.

NOTE: It is advisable that students seek timely guidance and feedback on their ongoing research efforts throughout the course.

2. Class Presentation:

The class presentation assignment can be based on a published program evaluation report or policy analysis article of your choice (but subject to Instructor's approval). See section that outlines various online sources in program evaluation available.

For each presentation you should prepare a PowerPoint file for sharing with the class online. The expected length of presentation should be about 10-15 minutes plus discussion. Presentations schedules will be discussed with the Instructor.

3. Final Test

The final take home test will be posted on eClass on November 17, 2021 and due at 7:00 p.m. on November 22, 2021 (Week 10).

4. Evaluability Assessment Report

The Evaluability Assessment (EA) is a group research design project where students are required to put together a proposal to evaluate a given program or public policy assigned by the Course Director. Detailed components of an EA are outlined in greater detail below and is to be implemented in AP/PPAS 4320 3.00 Program Evaluation II in Winter 2022. Students will work in groups for this assignment. Please take note that your Evaluability Assessment report will be marked both on soundness of analysis and professional presentation. It is suggested that when students are presenting their EA to client groups in Week 12, that it be done in PowerPoint for ease of sharing screens in a virtual learning environment.

<u>Evaluability Assessment Requirements</u>

Length:
The Evaluability Assessment (EA) should be 10-15 pages long single-spaced, font 12, including cover page and references, but excluding the Appendix, which may contain e.g. sample forms and other supporting information.

Components:
A typical Evaluability Assessment will include the following components:

- Executive Summary (typically one page in length) of the Evaluability Assessment report (this is the first part of the report and summarizes the purpose, process and findings of the EA. A note for students is that this should be written last!)
- Introduction (context and motivation, why is this project and evaluation important? What is it trying to achieve?)
- Legislative/policy background (if applicable)
- Background information on program/policy and stakeholders (brief history, mandate, size, organization, etc.)
- Literature review of relevant theoretical and empirical research (Think outside the box, adopt an interdisciplinary perspective!). Note: The literature review should

cover both program theory and empirical research on similar evaluations and their findings and methods
- Program Logic Model
- Data sources (existing, proposed)
- Outline of evaluation method(s) including their advantages and limitations
- Research ethics (issues, safeguards, relevant forms and sample consent form in appendix)
- Expected timeline and resources needed for implementation
- Summary and conclusions of the Evaluability Assessment (i.e. is the program or policy evaluable?)
- Reference list (in alphabetical order by author's last name)
- Appendix: e.g. sample questionnaires, informed consent forms, data tables etc.

5. Attendance and Class Participation:

For an active class discussion attendance is a must, but passive attendance will not be assessed positively. In order to be able to participate in class discussion, it is important that you do the readings in advance of each class. For this course to work, students must attend and participate in class discussions. In a class of this size it is impossible for all students to participate all the time. Students should, however, strive to attend class, demonstrate that they have read the assigned readings, thought about the material and the discussion at hand, and add value to the classroom discussion. Students will be provided with a participation rubric and be given a mid-term participation grade with detailed feedback. See class participation expectations outlined below and point value per half term.

Class Participation Expectations

Activity/Expectation	Point Value per half term
• Sporadic attendance/not punctual • Passive attendance most of the time	1
• Good attendance/punctual • Awake/attentive most of the time	2
• Above, plus: • Regularly participates – demonstrating a contribution to the discussion • Does not necessarily demonstrate a preparedness or command of the reading • Perhaps a cursory understanding of the topic	3
• Above, plus: • Regularly and clearly prepared by reading the material • Actively seeking to be engaged in the discussion • Does not over participate or dominate the conversation • Respectful of other opinions • Does not participate just for the sake of participating, but to make a contribution to the collective understanding of the issue/topic	4
• Above, plus:	

• Fully engaged at a superior level • Not only demonstrated a command of the material, but brings reflections/thoughts to the conversation • Takes a leadership role in the presentation of ideas • Contribution is thoughtful, does not take the classroom discussion off track • Brings questions to class that are provocative • Successfully brings in personal/work experiences that enhance/enrich the discussion	5

GRADING, ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION, LATENESS PENALTIES AND MISSED TESTS

1. Grading

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ - 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.) (For a full description of York's grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar - http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/pdfs/ug2004cal/calug04_5_acadinfo.pdf)

2. Assignment Submission and Lateness Penalty

Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. Otherwise, late penalties of 10% per day will be strictly applied and assignments will not be accepted after 3 days. If you expect to have difficulty in completing an assignment on time, please discuss this with the instructor in advance of the due date.

3. Missed Tests

Students with a documented reason for missing a course test, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., which is confirmed by supporting documentation (e.g., doctor's letter) may request accommodation from the Course Director. The accommodation is to be discussed with the Course Director. Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Text:

Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P. and Wholey, J. S.(editors) (2015): *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (4th edition), Jossey-Bass. (ISBN: 978-1-118-89360-9)

Note:
Additional required readings are journal publications that can be accessed free of charge through York Libraries eResources (note: search by journal title). Such additional readings will be based on specific student interests and will be announced in due time as the course proceeds. Please check the course website regularly for updates and class agenda.

Suggested Readings in Program Evaluation (in reverse chronological order):

Pirog, M. A. (editor) *Social Experimentation, Program Evaluation, and Public Policy*, Journal of Policy Analysis & Management Classics Series, Wiley Periodicals, Inc., 2008. (ISBN: 9781405193931) Note: The articles published in this book can be also accessed free of charge through York Libraries eResources and the *Journal of Policy Analysis & Management.*

Spaulding, D. T. *Program Evaluation in Practice: Core Concepts and Examples for Discussion and Analysis*, Jossey-Bass (A Wiley Imprint), 2008. (ISBN: 978-0-7879-8685-8)

Owen, J. M. *Program Evaluation: Forms and Approaches* (3rd edition), The Guilford Press, 2007. (ISBN: 13 978-1-59385-406-5 or 10 1-59385-406-4)

Posavac, E. I. and R. G. Carey. *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies* (6th edition), Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Online Sources in Program Evaluation:

Various on-line journals are available through York Libraries eResources, for example:
    Canadian Evaluation Society – Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation
    Journal of Policy Analysis and Management
    Evaluation and Program Planning
    Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis

 For interesting program evaluations in developing country contexts see:
    Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Curriculum and Academic Standards

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Curriculum & Academic Standards webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents) - http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/senate/

- York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures/Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards
- Religious Observance Accommodation

SPPA Ethics Committee Review

All research involving human participants for graduate and undergraduate courses; Undergraduate theses, Independent projects and Graduate Major Research Papers (MRPs) that is non-funded and minimal risk must be reviewed by the relevant unit level Delegated Ethics Review Committee - in this case at the School of Public Policy and Administration (SPPA). Research subject to review includes, but is not limited to surveys, questionnaires, interviews, participant observation and secondary data analysis.

For the purposes of research ethics review, "minimal risk" research is defined by the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans as research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research.

NOTE: Research conducted by students that is more than minimal risk and /or involves Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples and/or involves clinical trials**, must be** reviewed by the Human Participants Review Committee (HPRC). For these types of research, students are required to complete the HPRC protocol form. Please contact the Office of Research Ethics (ORE) at ore@yorku.ca for further information.

For more information on ethics review requirements for Graduate and Undergraduate course-related research and MRPS, please go to, "Ethics Review Requirements" for Course-Related Research by Students.

Please visit: https://www.yorku.ca/research/human-participants/ for more information.

Once you are ready to submit your ethics forms for review and have received approval from the Course Director, please use the SPPA Ethics Committee Review MachForm (click here) to
- Enter information (name and email address, title of project/ paper, course name and course number (with section), course director/professor, names of all group members, etc.)
- Upload the relevant documents, which for undergraduate students are

- ➢ Tri-Council Policy Certificate of Completion for each group member
- ➢ Office of Research Ethics (ORE) Protocol Form
- ➢ Project/Paper Proposal as approved by Course Director
- ➢ Informed Consent Form

The MachForm will automatically send a confirmation email to students (or the Student Lead in the case of group projects) containing their submission. Course Director may request that students forward this confirmation email to them (and other group members) for record keeping and as proof of submission.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week / Date	Topics / Readings / Due Dates
Week 1 / September 13	Introductions, course structure and expectations Overview of assignments, tests and due dates *Required Reading:* Wholey Chapter 1 – Planning and Designing Useful Evaluations
Week 2 / September 20	*Required Reading:* Wholey Chapter 2 – Analyzing and Engaging Stakeholders ***IMPORTANT: Students will be asked to sign-up for a date to do their class presentation on a public policy / program evaluation topic.***
Week 3 / September 27	*Required Reading:* Wholey Chapter 3 – Using Logic Models Wholey Chapter 4 – Exploratory Evaluation **** Scheduled Class Presentations***
Week 4 / October 4	*Required Reading:* Wholey Chapter 5 – Performance Measurement Wholey Chapter 6 – Comparison Group Design **** Scheduled Class Presentations***
October 11	*Fall Reading Week*

Week 5 / October 18	*Required Reading:* Wholey Chapter 7 – Randomized Control Trials and Nonrandomized Designs Discussion of Research Ethics *Required Reading:* Ethics Review Requirements How and Where to get Ethics Review and Approval **Familiarize yourselves with the SPPA Ethics Committee Review Machform (click here)** *Recommended Reading:* Blustein, J. (2005) "Toward a more public discussion of the ethics of federal social program evaluation," Journal of Policy Analysis and Management Vol. 24, Issue 4, pp. 824-846. *** Scheduled Class Presentations** *** Due Today: Critical Literature Review**
Week 6 / October 25	*Required Reading:* Wholey Chapter 22 – Qualitative Data Analysis *** Scheduled Class Presentations**
Week 7 / November 1	*Required Reading:* Wholey Chapter 23 – Using Statistics in Evaluation *** Scheduled Class Presentations**
Week 8 / November 8	*Required Reading:* Wholey Chapter 24 – Cost Effectiveness and Cost Benefit Analysis *** Scheduled Class Presentations**
Week 9 / November 15	*Required Reading:* Wholey Chapter 14 – Using Surveys Wholey Chapter 20 – Focused Group Interviews
Week 10 / November 22	*** Final Take Home Test Due* ** Questions and Answers on Evaluability Assessment Reports*
Week 11 / November 29	*Required Reading:* Wholey Chapter 26 – Pitfalls in Evaluation *** Questions and Answers on Evaluability Assessment Reports*
Week 12 / December 6	*** Evaluability Assessment Report due and presentation to client group*