

CSUS 429

Program Evaluation for Community Sustainability

Fall 2017

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:20-11:40 p.m.

001 Natural Resources Building

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11:40 – 12:40. Send e-mail me to schedule an appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Concepts, theories, and procedures in program evaluation. Practical methods and skills to plan and implement evaluations of programs related to community sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Whether government, business or non-profit, our world is filled with organizations that develop and operate programs that aim to address some type of problem. Billions of dollars and hours of effort are invested in these programs, but how do we know if the resources put into these programs are having the intended impact? How do we know whether changes should be made to the programs? How do we know whether investing program resources in other ways would better address the problems? The best answer to these questions is to evaluate the programs in some way. A properly conducted program evaluation can provide valuable information to those who manage programs, and can make programs more accountable to taxpayers, investors, donors, and the beneficiaries of the programs themselves.

Program evaluation is rapidly becoming a necessary part of most organizations, however, it is neither simple nor something any untrained person can do. Rather, evaluation is a rigorous research method that requires, among other things, logic, effective communication skills, critical thinking and the ability to analyze data. This course is meant to introduce students to the discipline of program evaluation and allow them to begin to develop their skills in this area. Whether they eventually help to evaluate programs or are “consumers” of them, students in this course will better understand the characteristics of effective and ineffective program evaluations.

READINGS

There are two recommended (not required) textbooks for this course and they are available at MSU main library's reserved textbook section. Readings will be assigned throughout the course of the semester and will either be found online, posted on D2L, or distributed in class. Students enrolled in this class are expected to complete all assigned readings by the assigned dates. Although class time will occasionally be spent covering subject matter from the readings, much of class time will be used to introduce new concepts and engage in activities not directly relevant to the assigned readings. This does

not mean that the readings are unimportant. This class is meant to be much more than just the readings, but the assigned readings are an important part of the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. develop a basic understanding of program development and the relationship between the program development and evaluation;
2. understand the major concepts and methods of program evaluation for community sustainability;
3. read evaluation research critically;
4. understand how to use evaluation findings to improve program performance;
5. differentiate between formative, process, impact and outcome evaluation;
6. conduct "evaluability assessment" of a program;
7. outline the steps of planning, conducting, and reporting of a program evaluation;
8. understand the basic elements, strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluation;
9. discuss, critique, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various evaluation models;
10. identify appropriate data sources for program assessment;
11. identify stakeholders and their role in evaluation;
12. use SPSS software for survey data entry and data analysis;
13. develop and propose an appropriate evaluation plan to assess programs; and
14. have a critical grasp of ethical issues at each stage of the evaluation process.

The above course objectives support the Department of Community Sustainability undergraduate program competencies of critical thinking, systems thinking, civic engagement, initiative and practical skills, ethics, and community. Successful completion of this course provides students with the background needed to frame complex problems and address them systemically in order to successfully complete additional courses in the major. Students can learn more about the Department of Community Sustainability undergraduate program competencies at http://www.csus.msu.edu/undergraduate/sustainability_core. In addition, this course supports Michigan State University's Undergraduate Learning Goals of analytical thinking, cultural understanding, and integrated reasoning. More information about MSU's Undergraduate Learning Goals is available at <http://undergrad.msu.edu/msu-goals>.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- To learn, challenge, be challenged, have fun, and build relationships
- To strike a balance of actively listening and verbally contributing
- To attend class and remain for its entirety, which includes refraining from loading backpacks until the class time is complete (see Attendance section in Course Policies).
- To complete all readings as assigned
- To be on time. Students who are late show disrespect to their peers and instructor

- To attend class mentally as well as physically. Students who use their cell phones, text, listen to iPods, work on assignments for other classes or in any other way engage in activities not part of the class, may be asked to leave and will not be given credit for being present for class
- To complete assignments with honesty and integrity (see the *Academic Integrity* section in Course Policies)

COURSE POLICIES

Class attendance – Students are expected to attend class and to be on time. Absences will be noted. If you are sick, please stay at home and get better. Though there are no “excused” or “unexcused” absences, students are encouraged to notify the instructor beforehand for anticipated absences or email the instructor as soon as possible for unexpected absences. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes and assignments from a fellow student.

Participation – Student participation includes quality of verbal responses, group interaction, comments and questions, as well as attentiveness in class and in all activities.

Professionalism – One aim of this class is to develop the skills students need to be successful in a professional setting. Students are expected to show respect to the professor and to one another. This is demonstrated in numerous ways including being on time, giving full attention in class, engaging in discussion and problem-solving, working collaboratively in groups, and taking responsibility for learning the material. Assignments must be neat with no grammatical and spelling errors, and they must indicate a serious effort to do a good job. All students are encouraged to express their points of view and opinions in this class. Disagreement, whether it is with the professor, another student or guest speaker, is a natural part of the learning process and all present can benefit from an informed debate. However, all participants in this class are expected to be respectful of others’ opinions and professional in such discussions. Being respectful, interested, attentive, and participatory will reflect well on your grade.

E-mail – Electronic communication has become a critical tool in our society. For this reason, you will be required to check your **MSU-assigned E-mail** on a daily basis. Throughout the semester, I will be corresponding with students via email and the information in these emails are considered official course communication for which students are responsible. If you regularly check a different email account than your “msu.edu” account, be sure to forward your MSU account to your other account. However, if you email me using such an account, beware that I may not receive it. MSU’s SPAM identification software often tags emails from public accounts as SPAM and I never receive them. For this reason, it is recommended that students check their MSU accounts on a daily basis and use this account for all communication with the instructor.

Assignments – Because poor presentation can reduce the credibility of otherwise good content, all assignments must be typed / word-processed (unless otherwise specified) and presented in a professional manner. Grammar and spelling must be correct on all submitted assignments. Proof-read your work! If you feel you need assistance in this area, see the instructor or any of a number of university resources so that help can be

provided and your grade will not be diminished. Unless approved in advance, I will only accept hard copies of all assignments.

Communication with Instructor – You are encouraged to ask questions in and/or outside of class. If you would like to communicate with the instructor anonymously, simply leave an unsigned note in my mailbox in the faculty mailroom (Natural Resources Building Rm. 151). Your suggestions and comments about the class structure, content, and rigor are welcome. You can leave a voice mail at Phone: 517-432-0295; or e-mail: suvedi@msu.edu

Accommodations

If you need accommodations in this class related to a disability or religious holidays, please make an appointment with me to discuss as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity

[Article 2.III.B.2](#) of the Academic Freedom Report states: “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the Department of Sustainability adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, [Protection of Scholarship and Grades](#); the all-University Policy on [Integrity of Scholarship and Grades](#); and [Ordinance 17.00](#), Examinations.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade in the course or on the assignment.

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course. This course is overseen by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

Consistent with MSU’s efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student’s work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student’s work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a ‘similarity score’. The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student’s work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool.

If requested by the instructor, students should submit papers to Turnitin Dropboxes without identifying information included in the paper (e.g. name or student number). The system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin.

Textbooks: Weiss, C. H. (1998). *Evaluation: methods for studying programs and policies*. (2nd Ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Frechtling, J. (2010). *The 2010 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation*. Division of Research, Evaluation and Communication, National Science Foundation. Available at: <https://www.westat.com/sites/westat.com/files/2010UFHB.pdf>

Cronk, B.C. (2013). *How to Use SPSS: A Step by Step Guide to Analysis and Interpretation*. Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Additional Reference Books/Online Resources:

Dillman, Don A. (2007). *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, Second Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Carter, Keith A and Beaulieu, Lionel J. (1992). <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/files/HE/HE06000.pdf>

Fear, F. (1988). "Community Needs Assessment: A Crucial Tool for Adult Educators." Paper presented at MAACE Mid-Winter Conference, Lansing, Feb. 4th.

On-Line Evaluation Resource Library: <http://oerl.sri.com/> [Note: OERL is supported by the Division of Research, Evaluation and Communication, Directorate for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation.

Patton, Michael Quinn (1997). *Utilization Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Suvedi, Murari. *Evaluating Extension Programs: A Training Manual*.
<http://meas.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/MEAS-Training-Manual-on-Extension-Evaluation-Suvedi-MSU-Oct-2011.pdf>

Taylor-Powell, Ellen and Ellen Henert. (nd). *Developing a Logic Model*. University of Wisconsin-Extension. <http://fyi.uwex.edu/programdevelopment/logic-models/>

American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles For Evaluators. Available at: <http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=51>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A) SHORT ASSIGNMENTS ON PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION (5% EACH) 20%

i. Program Description *(Due September 19th)*

This semester you will choose a program for which you/your team will create an evaluation plan. For this assignment you will describe your chosen program including descriptions of the problem to be addressed by an educational/technological intervention; the intended target/beneficiaries of the program; the intended benefits of program; the logic/causal model; and (where appropriate) program theory. You will share this program with the class for possible team project consideration.

ii. HRPP/IRB Certification *(Due any time before October 12)*

For this assignment, you will complete the online SABA training program (two modules) about the protection of human research subjects. This online training program can be found on the website of MSU's Human Research Protection Program (<https://hrpp.msu.edu/>). When you get to this site, follow the links for "HRPP/IRB Certification" (Under Training and Education). Print the last page, "Certification" and bring it to the instructor to receive grade for this assignment.

iii. Evaluation Critique *(Due November 14)*

For this assignment, you will work individually. You will read a paper focusing on program/project evaluation that has been conducted. You will write 1-2 page critique on the evaluation report/publication.

iv. Data Analysis Assignment *(Due Dec 5)*

For this assignment, you will use SPSS software to analyze data for a given project and interpret the findings. Additional information (data for this exercise and specific exercise questions) will be provided in the Lab class.

B. Team Project: Evaluation Plan/Proposal *(Due the day of Team Presentation)* 20%

For this assignment, you will select a program/project for evaluation and describe your evaluation plan including: an evaluation goal statement; research questions; sampling design; description of indicators; develop data collection instrument (survey questionnaire, interview schedule, etc.), plan for data collection and data analysis. You will make a class presentation on the team evaluation proposal.

C) Midterm Exam 20% (Midterm will have short answer, multiple choice, and true/false questions)

D) Final Exam 30% (Final exam will have short answer, multiple choice and true false type questions)

E) Attendance and Class Participation 10%

Final Grade:	90-100 = 4.0	85-89 = 3.5
	80-84 = 3.0	70-79 = 2.5
	60-69 = 2.0	50-59 = 1.5
	40-49 = 1.0	39 and below = 0

Class Schedule Fall 2017				
Tuesdays			Thursdays	
	Date	Topics/Readings/Assignments	Date	Topics/Readings/Assignments
Week 1 (Class 1)			Aug 31	• Welcome to the class • Introductions to the course– why program evaluation? • Course organization, expectations and requirements Readings: <i>Syllabus and Course Outline</i> # 1, Weiss -- pp. 1-19. <i>#3, Suvedi, pp. 8-24</i>
Week 2 (Class 2-3)	Sept 05	Introduction to Program Evaluation ○ Reasons for conducting evaluations ○ Program development/evaluation cycle Types of Evaluation: ○ Formative evaluation ○ Summative evaluation Readings: # 2, NSF Handbook, pp.1-37.	Sept 07	Introduction to program evaluation Readings: # 2, NSF Handbook, pp.15-51. # 3, Suvedi, pp. 33-41. # 9, DHHS, pp. 6-12
Week 3 (Class 4-5)	Sept 12	• Evaluability Assessment • Planning the Evaluation ○ The right time to evaluate ○ Qualitative or quantitative study? ○ Ethics of evaluation Readings: # 1, Weiss, pp. 72-96. # 2, NSF Handbook, pp.75-96. # 9, DHHS, pp. 29-72.	Sept 14	• Needs Assessment • Methods of needs assessment Readings: # 7, Carter and Beaulieu # 6, Fear Reminder: Short Assignment # 1 (Due on Sept 19th)
Week 4 (Class 6-7)	Sept 19	Program Logic Model Readings # 3, Suvedi, pp. 25-32 Taylor Powell, http://ruby.fgcu.edu/courses/twimberley/10199/logicmodelsides.pdf	Sept 21	• Sharing Individual Program/Project for Evaluation--Presentations in the Class • Generate team project evaluation proposal ideas
Week 5 (Class 8-9)	Sept 26	Approaches to Evaluation Data Collection: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods Readings: # 1, Weiss, Chapter 4, pp. 72-90 # 3, Suvedi, pp 41-44	Sept 28	• Evaluation Data Collection ○ Sources of data ○ Ethical issues in collecting data ○ Methods of gathering credible evidence Readings: # 2, NSF Handbook, pp. 52-74.

Week 6 (Class 10-11)	Oct 03	Evaluation Data Collection # 5, Dillman, pp 3-31 # 3, Suvedi, pp. 36-73	Oct 05	Introduction to SPSS; Lab Session 1: - What is SPSS? - Why SPSS? - Practicing data entry - Saving data files Readings: Cronk, Chapter 1, Getting Started
Week 7 (Class 12-13)	Oct 10	Collecting Evaluation Data (Continued) Readings: Same as in Class # 10 Reminder: Complete Assignment # 2 (Due October 12)	Oct 12	SPSS; Lab Session 2: - Practice data entry - Modifying data Readings: Cronk, Chapter 2, Entering and Modifying Data
Week 8 (Class 14-15)	Oct 17	Midterm Exam (online)	Oct 19	Analyzing Data Using SPSS Lab Session 3: - Charts, Frequency Counts - Descriptive Statistics Readings: Cronk, Chapter 3, Descriptive Statistics Describe Assignment 2 (due Nov 2)
Week 9 (Class 16-17)	Oct 24	Team Project: Planning Your Team Evaluation Project Team proposal presentation	Oct 26	Analyzing Data using SPSS Lab Session 4: Data Manipulation Techniques - Transformation (Computing/Recoding) - Cross-tabulations and Chi Square test Readings: - Cronk, Chapter 2, Modifying Data
Week 10 (Class 18-19)	Oct 31	Focus Group Readings: # 3, Suvedi, pp. 63-65. # 8, Suvedi, Focus Group Notes	Nov 02	Analyzing Data using SPSS Lab Session 5: - Handling Open-ended Responses - Example from the field research
Week 11 (Class 20-21)	Nov 07	Qualitative Data Collection: Observation by Trained Observer	Nov 09	Analyzing Data using SPSS Lab Session 6: Bivariate Correlations and Regressions Readings: Cronk, Chapter 5, Prediction and Association
Week 12 (Class 22-23)	Nov 14	Qualitative Data Collection: Case Study Use of Mixed Methods Due: Assignment # 3	Nov 16	Analyzing Data using SPSS Lab Session 7: - t-test (One Sample, Independent Sample and Paired Sample t-test) - Oneway Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Readings: Cronk Chapter 6, pp. 51-69. #3, Suvedi, pp. 81-96

Week 13 (Class 24-25)	Nov 21	Sampling: When and how to select a sample Readings: # 3, Suvedi, pp. 74-80.	Nov 23	Thanksgiving Day -- No Class
Week 14 (Class 26-27)	Nov 28	Communicating evaluation findings: • Various methods of reporting • Format of an evaluation report • Reporting negative findings • Maximizing use of evaluation results Readings: # 3, Suvedi, pp. 98-101.	Nov 30	Review of Data Analysis Using SPSS Team Project Data Analysis
Week 15 (Class 28-29)	Dec 05	Team Project Presentation Team Project: Submit team project proposal including background, evaluation questions, data collection methods, data collection questionnaire/instrument, and plan for data analysis. Due: Assignment # 4	Dec 07	Team project Presentations Team Project: Submit team project proposal including background, evaluation questions, data collection methods, data collection questionnaire/instrument, and plan for data analysis
Week 16 Class 30	Dec 14	Final Exam (Online) 10:00-12:00 noon		