GW | Public Policy & Administration

The Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration

Spring 2019

Basic Course Information

Course Number:	**PPPA 6016-11**
Course Title:	**Public and Non-Profit Program Evaluation**
Class Time:	Thursdays 3:30-6:00 p.m.
Location:	Monroe B33
Course Description:	This course is intended to give students an appreciation for public and non-profit program evaluation, including familiarity with the basic skills needed to conduct and use evaluations. Emphasis will be placed on the conceptual, methodological, organizational, political, policy, and ethical issues evaluators face. The tasks involved in conducting evaluation will be discussed, from developing the questions to presenting statistics and data analysis.
Prerequisites:	Preferably PPPA 6002 or an equivalent basic course on research design.
Professor:	Nick Hart, Ph.D. Telephone: 202-218-6762 (office) Email: nrhart@gwu.edu Twitter: @NickRHart Office Hours: By appointment. Please email me to arrange meetings about assignments outside of class via phone or skype.

Course Approach and Expectations

Student Learning Objectives: Through course discussions, readings, and assignments, students will develop knowledge and skills to enable them to:

1. work with clients to scope evaluations, frame relevant questions, and develop useful evaluation products;
2. design reliable data collection instruments for evaluation;
3. identify pertinent professional standards and ethical principles;
4. recognize and develop different types of evaluations;
5. develop useful performance measures and performance measurement systems;
6. design useful reports to convey evaluation findings;
7. develop useful recommendations based on evaluation findings;
8. review and assess quality and relevance of evaluations; and
9. understand ethical issues that may arise in designing and using evaluations.

Method of Instruction: The tasks, questions, constraints, and problems facing professionals involved in the design, implementation, and use of program evaluations will be explored through class participation in both in-class and written exercises. Assigned readings are selected to provide students a sample of relevant evaluation literature, and to expose students them to the issues which arise in conducting evaluations.

Course Effort: In 15-week semester, including exam week, students will spend a total of 128 hours of effort on the course. This includes 2 hours per week in class and an average of 6 hours per week on assigned reading, class preparation, and assignments.

Classroom Expectations: Higher education works best when it becomes a vigorous and lively marketplace of ideas in which all points of view are heard. Free expression in the classroom is an integral part of this process. At the same time, higher education works best when all of us approach the enterprise with empathy and respect for others, irrespective of their ideology, political views, or identity. We value civility because that is the kind of community we want, and we care for it because civility permits intellectual exploration and growth.

Guest Speakers: The instructor seeks to engage guest speakers throughout the semester to discuss ongoing and emerging evaluation issues. They will be announced as they are scheduled.

Respect for Diversity: It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. I strive to create an inclusive classroom and present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, and political affiliation.

University and Trachtenberg Policies

1. <u>Incompletes:</u> A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of I (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student and instructor will both sign the CCAS contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the School Director. Please consult the TSPPPA Student Handbook or visit our website for the complete CCAS policy on incompletes.

2. Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom: It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment. Students must submit written work electronically.

3. Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work: All work must be turned in by the assigned due date to receive full credit for that assignment, unless an exception is expressly made by the instructor.

4. Academic Honesty: Please consult the "policies" section of the GW student handbook for the university code of academic integrity. Note especially the definition of plagiarism: "intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information." All examinations, papers, and other graded work products and assignments are to be completed in conformance with the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity. See the GW Academic Integrity Code (http://www.gwu.edu/~integrity).

5. Changing Grades After Completion of Course: No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester, other than in cases of clerical error.

6. Syllabus: This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her/his discretion, change content and requirements during the semester. Excused absences will be given for absences due to religious holidays as per the university schedule, but please advise the instructor ahead of time.

7. University Policy on Religious Holidays:
- Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.
- Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
- Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities

8. Support for Students Outside the Classroom:
- *Disability Support Services (DSS).* Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: gwired.gwu.edu/dss/
- *Mental Health Services (202-994-5300)***.** The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. counselingcenter.gwu.edu/

9. Academic Integrity Code: Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see: studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity

Grade Scale

A	94+
A-	90-93.9
B+	87-89.9
B	84-86.9
B-	80-83.9
C+	77-79.9
C	74-76.9

Grading

1. Participation and Readings: **10%**
2. Policy Memos (x3): **15% [FEBP Definition / POTUS; Eval Assigned -/ SENATE ; Clearinghouse. Rec to mgr)**
3. Evaluation Critique: **25%**
4. Applied Evaluation Design Project: **30%**
5. Take-Home Final Exam: **20%**

Assignment Descriptions

1. **<u>Class Participation and Assigned Readings (10%):</u>** Attendance is required for successful completion of this course. In-class exercises will be held periodically throughout the semester in addition to weekly ethics or readings discussions led by students. Students are expected to complete required readings prior to the class meeting for which they are listed. Participation includes engagement during class discussions based on assigned readings.

   Required Readings:
   - Michael Lewis, *Moneyball*. 2004.
   - Dean Karlan and Jacob Appel, *Failing in the Field: What we Can Learn when Field Research Goes Wrong*, 2016.
   - Available on Blackboard:
     - Allan Kimmel, *Ethics and Values in Applied Social Research*, 1988.
     - Selected chapters from Kathryn Newcomer, Harry Hatry, and Joseph Wholey, *The Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*, 4th Edition, 2015
     - Selected chapters from Paul J. Gertler, Sebastian Martinez, Patrick Premand, Laura Rawlings, and Christel Vermeersch, *Impact Evaluation in Practice*, 2011.
     - Selected chapters from U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, *The Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking*, 2017.
     - Selected chapters from Kylie Hutchinson, *Evaluation Failures*
     - Selected articles from peer-reviewed academic journals, including *New Directions for Evaluation, Public Administration Review,* and the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management,* and other journals.
     - Selected evaluations and other readings as assigned.

Additional Resources: Additional resources and readings are provided on Blackboard and denoted throughout the syllabus. These readings are not required but may be helpful to students in completing assignments or understanding course concepts.

2. **Policy Memos (15%):** Policy memos are short, one-page responses to a target question or issue that will be assigned throughout the semester. Students will be provided the topic and target audience for each memo one week before the deadline. A total of three memos will be submitted during the semester. Each memo must present a recommendation that responds to the prompt along with supporting information based on assigned readings and class discussion.

   - ✓ ***Memo #1: Evaluation Concepts** due Feb. 7 (5% of grade)*
   - ✓ ***Memo #2: Evaluation Conclusions** due Feb. 28 (5% of grade)*
   - ✓ ***Memo #3: Evaluation Clearinghouse** due Apr. 4 (5% of grade)*

3. **<u>Evaluation Critique (20%):</u>** Students will critically review an impact evaluation. Students must have articles approved by the professor before beginning the critique.

   - ✓ ***Critique of an Impact Evaluation** (20% of grade). Topic due Feb. 21. Critique due Mar. 21.*

   The evaluation critiqued must present the evaluation design, results, and conclusions. Articles about how to conduct surveys or that summarize multiple research studies will not be permissible. There is no mandatory length for the paper, but students should aspire to address the following issues in 4-5 single-spaced pages, not including the table of threats. The critique should address each of the following:

   - The title and citation of the evaluation.
   - Description of the evaluation focus (i.e. a program or policy), type of evaluation, key evaluation questions, and findings.
   - Summary of the design, data collection methods, and types of analysis conducted. Explain the counterfactual and why it is or is not appropriate.
   - A discussion and **table** that contains a <u>systematic list</u> of threats to the reliability and validity. Threats should be clearly presented, including the type of threat and explanation. Identification of which threats the authors disclosed and addressed, which were not addressed, and which the authors did not acknowledge.
   - Suggestions for how the evaluation could be improved, including how to address identified threats.
   - An assessment of any policy recommendations or findings made and whether the analysis justifies them. (note if no recommendations apply the assessment to the findings/conclusions)

4. **<u>Applied Impact Evaluation Design Project (30%):</u>** All students must prepare a written program evaluation design report with at least one other student (but no more than two other students), designing a proposal for an impact evaluation. There are two options: (A) The primary way to satisfy the requirement is to prepare a proposal in response to a real Request for Proposals (RFP); OR (B) Students may prepare a comprehensive design and evaluation for a hypothetical evaluation. This is more difficult than responding to an RFP. Both options will be discussed in more detail in class. All projects must be approved by the professor before proceeding.

   - ✓ ***Proposal** for Applied Evaluation Design Project due Mar. 28*

✓ ***Final Applied Evaluation Design Project and Logic Model** due Apr. 25 (30% of grade)*

This assignment is intended to provide you with training for developing an evaluation proposal and study design that could be submitted in response to an RFP as a "bid." You are asked to identify an RFP from a federal, state, or local government agency, a foundation, nonprofit organization, or international organization calling for an evaluation of a program, project, or demonstration. You will only propose the evaluation; you are not expected to conduct the actual evaluation itself. That means you are to prepare the technical component of an evaluation proposal not the business component; and you do not have to prepare a formal budget. These details will be discussed in class before you begin.

The proposal you develop will be in the form of a written product, like a report, and should have **all** of the components identified below:

- *Executive Summary:* Describe key attributes of your proposal with a 1-page summary.
- *Introduction and Background:* An introduction to the project, including the names of the team should be given along with a description of the scoping activities, including a brief description of the program, and a synthesis of relevant past research and evaluation findings; also, cite relevant literature on the program, which will likely require original research.
- *Evaluation Questions:* The issues that have been identified and the specific questions that are addressed, or should be addressed, must be provided. Explain the usefulness of the questions. If you believe the RFP misses some important aspects of how the study should be conducted, include these as well and explain why they are useful. Be sure to clearly identify the impact and outcome evaluation questions.
- *Program Design:* Develop and include a logic model that identifies inputs, activities, outputs, short- and long-term outcomes, impacts, and mediating factors. A **logic model** of the program/policy must be developed and presented in the body of the report with an appropriate introduction and explanation of key features.
- *Evaluation Design:* The design(s) under taken, or to be undertaken, including the concepts and variables, the theory underlying the policy/program, etc. should be provided. Explain what type of approach, why it is most appropriate, and how it answers the evaluation questions.
- *Data Collection Plan:* The sources of data available, measures used to address the research questions, data collection methods, and sampling procedures should be discussed.
- *Data Analysis Plan:* Proposed analytic strategies should be discussed and explain how you are answering the evaluation questions with the analysis. Describe the outcome and explanatory variables to be used, the statistical techniques to be used, and you will be able to draw inferences about the program's impacts. Discuss the size of the sample to be analyzed and indicate if it is large enough to obtain statistically significant findings if the program has the desired impact (i.e., conduct minimum detectable impact analysis.)
- *Reports and Products that will be Delivered:* The Proposed Presentation and Utilization Plan (e.g., how the evaluation findings will be presented): Strategies for presenting the results to key stakeholders and decision-makers and strategies for facilitating utilization should be provided
- *Potential Problems and Fall-back Strategies:* Identify the potential problems that may arise in conducting the evaluation and the strategies that will be used to either avoid the problem or deal with its occurrence. Also, there should be a **table** of limitations to validity and reliability, an assessment of the issues and types of threats posed, as well as actions undertaken in your proposal to reduce the impact of the limitations identified.

- *Suggested Deviations from the RFP:* If you believe the evaluation could be improved by modifying the outcome variables, analytical method, alternative data sources, or anything else, present your alternative strategies here and explain the pros and cons.
- *Proposed Summary Workplan and Schedule:* This section should be brief and consist of a Task List and schedule for tasks and the proposed project.
- *Conclusion:* A brief conclusion should be provided.

5. **Final Exam (20%):** A take-home, open-book essay exam covering the readings and content of the course will contribute 20% to the course grade.

    ✓ ***Take-Home Final Exam distributed on Apr. 25 in class and due May 6 at 11:59 p.m. EST.***

Notes About Assignments:

- **Written assignments must be submitted in electronic copy via Blackboard, on or before the due date.** Due dates are firm for all written assignments and are visible on all assignments posted to Blackboard.

- **Written assignment submission requirements:**
    - Submissions must be single spaced
    - Submissions must have page numbers
    - Include your name in the header on EACH PAGE
    - Upload documents to blackboard with your name and submission title in a .docx format: “Name – Assignment.docx”

Key Dates

Evaluation Overview

January 17 – Session 1: Introduction to Field, Evaluation Components, and Types

January 24 – Session 2: Evaluation Process (Theory, Scoping, Stakeholders)

January 31 -- Session 3: Program Design and Performance Measurement, Monitoring, and Management

Evaluation Design and Analysis

February 7 – Session 4: Formative, Process, and Implementation Evaluation and Qualitative Data Analysis

- ✓ ***Policy Memo #1 Due Feb. 7***

February 14 – Session 5: Counterfactuals, Experimental Designs, and Quantitative Analysis

February 21 – Session 6: Non-Experimental Designs; Validity, Reliability, and Credibility

- ✓ ***Title and Citation for Evaluation Critique Due Feb. 21***

Evaluation Implementation Issues

February 28 -- Session 7: Learning from Evaluation Failures and Evaluation Planning (SOW)

- ✓ ***Policy Memo #2 Due Feb. 28***

March 7 -- Session 8: Data Collection, Access, and Measurement Issues (Part 1)

March 14 – No Class: Spring Break

March 21 – Session 9: Successful Evaluations and Forming Useful Recommendations

- ✓ ***Critique of Impact Evaluation Due Mar. 21***

Evaluation in Complex Systems

March 28 – Session 10: Data Collection, Access, and Measurement Issues (Part 2)

- ✓ ***1-Page Proposal for Applied Evaluation Design Project and Group Due Mar. 28***

April 4 -- Session 11: Economic Evaluation, Meta-Analysis and Systematic Reviews

- ✓ ***Policy Memo #3 Due BEFORE CLASS on Apr. 4***

April 11 -- Session 12: Evaluation Policy, Evaluation Capacity Building and Institutional Capacity

April 18 – No Class: Work Period for Group Projects

Evaluation Use and Conclusion

April 25 – Session 13: Using Evaluation, Review, and Concluding Remarks (*Final exam distributed in-class*)

- ✓ ***Applied Evaluation Design Project Due Apr. 25***
- ✓ ***Final Exam Due May 6***

Session Outlines

<u>January 17 / Session 1</u>: Course Overview, Introduction to Evaluation, Evaluation Components and Types

Assigned Readings:
- Cronbach 1980: "Where Evaluation Stands Today" pp. 12-22
- Gertler Chapter 1: "Why Evaluate?"
- Kimmel Chapter 2: "An Overview of Ethical Problems in Social Research"

Additional Resources:
- Wholey Chapter 2: "Federal Evaluation – What it is and Why it is Needed"
- Weiss Chapter 2: "Purposes of Evaluation"

Questions:
- What is program evaluation? How does program evaluation differ from other forms of analysis?
- What are the different types of evaluation?
- What are the main components of an evaluation?
- Where does evaluation take place and who conducts evaluations? What are the key steps?
- What is the relationship between performance management and evaluation?
- Who commissions or requests evaluations? And why?

<u>January 24 / Session 2</u>: Evaluation Process: Role of Theory, Scoping Evaluations, and Engaging Stakeholders

Assigned Readings:
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 1: "Planning and Designing Useful Evaluations"
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 2: "Analyzing and Engaging Stakeholders"
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 3: "Using Logic Models"
- Gertler Chapter 2: "Determining Evaluation Questions"
- American Evaluation Association: "Evaluation Guiding Principles"
- Castillo 2018: "Are you my amigo, or my chero? The importance of cultural competence in data collection and evaluation"

Additional Resources:
- McDavid and Hawthorne Chapter 2: Understanding and Applying Program Logic Models

Questions:
- What is the guidance provided to evaluators by the AEA professional Standards?
- What role should internal staff and external stakeholders play in evaluation?
- What role can the evaluator play in program development and design?
- What pre-design steps are desirable for the evaluator to take?
- What is the program theory? How can it be developed and refined?
- What is logic modeling?
- How might logic models guide evaluation?
- What is evaluability assessment? What are the steps? How can it be used to guide evaluation?
- How do we ensure more cultural competency in evaluation?

January 31 / Session 3: Program Design; Performance Measurement, Monitoring, and Management

Assigned Readings:
- Lewis, *Moneyball*
- Nielson and Hunter 2013: "Challenges to and forms of complementarity between performance management and evaluation"

Additional Resources:
- Performance.gov
- HHS 2012: "Administration for Children and Families Performance Plan"

Questions:
- How does performance analysis apply to the real world?
- What is performance measurement? Monitoring? And management?
- What are the challenges to measuring performance?
- What is outcome monitoring?
- How might performance measurement and program evaluation be effectively coordinated?
- Drawing upon the Lewis book, why is selecting (or changing) what to measure about performance difficult in any organizational culture that has been shaped over many years?

February 7 / Session 4: Formative, Process, and Implementation Evaluation; Qualitative Data Analysis

Deadlines:
- ✓ *Policy Memo #1 Due*

Readings:
- Holcomb and Nightingale: "Conceptual Underpinnings of Implementation Analysis"
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 7: "Conducting Case Studies"
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 22: "Qualitative Data Analysis"
- Chapters 2 and 3 in EPA 2009: "Environmental Professional's Guide to Lean and Six Sigma"
- EPA 2011: "Evaluation of Region 7 Tribal Grants Programmatic Processes"

Questions:
- How should formative evaluations be designed?
- What makes a "good" case study?
- How do you measure program implementation?
- How do you use quantitative data in implementation and process analysis?
- How should feedback be incorporated in an implementation study?
- How should an implementation study be linked with an outcome study?
- What are rigorous procedures and useful strategies for analyzing qualitative data?

February 14 / Session 5: Counterfactuals and Experimental Designs

Assigned Readings:
- Gertler Chapter 3: "Causal Inference and Counterfactuals"

- Gertler Chapter 4: "Randomized Selection Methods"
- Yeh et al: "Parachute use to prevent death and major trauma when jumping from aircraft: randomized control trial"
- Shadish et al. Chapter 2: "Statistical Conclusion Validity and Internal Validity"
- Wasserstein 2016: "The ASA's Statement on p-values: Context, Process, and Purpose"

Additional Resources:
- Shadish et al. Chapter 8: "Randomized Experiments: Rationale, Designs, and Conditions Conducive to Doing Them"
- Shadish et al. Chapter 9: "Practical Problems: Ethics, Participant Recruitment, and Random Assignment"

Questions:
- What is a counterfactual and how do evaluators decide on a counterfactual?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using random assignment?
- What is the difference between random selection and random assignment?
- What types of bias can arise in random assignment studies?

February 21 / Session 6: Non-Experimental Designs; Validity, Reliability, and Credibility

Deadline:
- ✓ Evaluation Critique Topic and Citation

Assigned Readings:
- Gertler Chapter 10: "Operationalizing the Impact Evaluation Design"
- Shaddish et al. Chapter 5: "Quasi-Experimental Designs that use Both Control Groups and Pre-Tests"
- Newcomer paper: "Threats to Validity and Reliability"
- Shaddish et al. Chapter 2: "Construct Validity and External Validity"
- Kimmel Chapter 4: "Methodological Issues and Dilemmas"

Additional Resources:
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 23: "Using Statistics in Evaluation"
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 26: "Pitfalls in Evaluation"
- Shadish et al. Chapter 6: Interrupted Time Series Designs
- Shadish et al. Chapter 7: Regression Discontinuity Designs
- APPAM DID Article
- Example RDD Article
- Example PSM Article
- Example Time-Series Article

Questions:
- What are the most common threats to measurement validity and measurement reliability, and to internal, external, and statistical conclusion validity?
- What can the evaluator do to avoid pitfalls? Rectify problems when they arise?
- How can the credibility of evaluation findings be maximized?
- What are the commonly used designs to measure program outcomes?

- What are the considerations in selecting a design to evaluate program impact?
- How do the evaluators weigh the tradeoffs in various impact designs?
- What strategies are available for controlling or ruling out various rival explanations?
- What is propensity scoring, and how do you implement the technique?
- What designs are applicable for longitudinal data?
- What are “multi-method” evaluations?
- What procedures can be developed for maintaining the credibility and fairness of evaluation?

<u>February 28 / Session 7</u>: Learning from Evaluation Failures and Evaluation Planning

Deadline:
- ✓ Policy Memo #2 Due

Guest Speaker: Patricia Shaffer, National Endowment for the Arts and Independent Evaluator

Readings:
- Karlan and Appel, *Failing in the Field*
- Kimmel Chapter 6: “Special Problems in Applied Settings”
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 29: “Contracting for Evaluation Products and Services”
- Davidson: “The scope creep train wreck: how responsive evaluation can go off the rails”

Questions:
- Why has the tendency been to focus on accountability rather than learning?
- What is the ethical role of evaluator as policy advocate?
- What is the role of credibility in useful evaluation?
- What skills are required for effective evaluation practice and for oversight of evaluation projects?
- What problems can be anticipated in a real-world evaluation? What solutions can be applied?
- What should be contained in a Statement of Work (SOW)?

<u>March 7 / Session 8:</u> Data Collection, Access, and Measurement Issues (Part 1)

Assigned Readings:
- Gertler Chapter 11: “Choosing the Sample”
- Gertler Chapter 12: “Collecting Data”
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 13: “Using Agency Records”
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 14: “Using Surveys”
- CEP Chapter 2: “Secure, Restricted Access to Confidential Data”
- Noga 2018: “The best laid plans of mice and evaluators: dealing with data collection surprises in the field”

Additional Resources:
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 17: “Collecting Data in the Field”

Questions:
- How can/should data on individuals, households, or firms be collected and be managed?
- What is involved in planning data collection and analysis?

- What are the relative advantages of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods?
- What are the advantages and considerations of using program administrative data?
- What procedures can enhance validity and reliability in measurement?
- What design characteristics bolster the validity of survey instruments?
- How are program participants most effectively surveyed?
- When are focus groups most helpful?
- How should focus groups be designed and implemented?

March 14 -- NO CLASS: Spring Break

March 21 / Session 9: Successful Evaluations and Forming Useful Recommendations

Deadlines:
- ✓ *Critique of Impact Evaluation Due*

Guest Speaker: Giovanni Dazzo, U.S. Department of State and Washington Evaluators

Assigned Resources:
- Newcomer et al. Chapter 27: “Providing Recommendations, Suggestions, and Options for Improvement”
- HUD Family Options Study
- NIJ Second Chance Evaluation

Questions:
- What are the characteristics of successful evaluations?
- What do useful recommendations look like?
- What can be done during evaluation design and implementation to enhance utilization?
- What are characteristics of effective data presentation?
- How are null and negative results most appropriately reported?
- How should results be displayed?

March 28 / Session 10: Data Collection, Access, and Measurement Issues (Part 2)

Deadlines:
- ✓ *One-Page Proposal for Applied Evaluation Design Project Due*

Assigned Readings:
- Hart and Wallman 2018: “Transparency, Accountability, and Consent in Evidence Building”
- Kimmel Chapter 5: “Confidentiality and the Right to Privacy”
- CEP Chapter 3: “Enhancing Privacy Protections for Federal Evidence Building”
- OMB 2014: “Statistical Policy Directive No. 1”
- Lauger et al. 2014: “Disclosure Avoidance Techniques at the U.S. Census Bureau”

Questions:
- What protections should be given to participants in an evaluation?
- What procedures are possible in ensuring confidentiality?
- What are the essential elements and desired format for informed consent agreements?
- What are Institutional Review Boards and why are they important?

- What is disclosure avoidance and why does it matter for evaluation?
- What practices can organizations deploy to protect confidential data?
- What is the role of transparency and accountability for data management?

April 4 / Session 11: Economic Evaluation, Meta-Analysis and Systematic Reviews

Deadline:
- ✓ Policy Memo #3 Due BEFORE CLASS

Assigned Readings:
- King 2017: "Using Economic Methods Evaluatively"
- Newcomer Chapter 24: "Cost-Effectiveness and Cost-Benefit Analysis"
- Petrosino et al. 2013: "Scared Straight and Other Juvenile Awareness Programs for Preventing Juvenile Delinquency: a systematic review"
- Skim one of the following:
  - IES What Works Clearinghouse: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
  - HIV/AIDS Prevention Research Synthesis: www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/research/prs/
  - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Programs: http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/programs/mpg.html
  - Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: http://www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/what-is-comparative-effectiveness-research1/
  - The Campbell Collaboration: http://campbellcollaboration.org/

Additional Resources:
- McShane and Bockenholt 2018: "Want to make behavioral research more replicable? Promote single paper meta-analysis"
- Mrozek and Taylor 2002: "What Determines the Value of Life? A Meta-Analysis"
- Ringquist 2005: "Assessing Evidence of Environmental Inequities: A Meta-Analysis"
- Weiss Chapter 10: "Extensions of Good Design"

Questions:
- What is meta-evaluation and how is it best conducted?
- What is cost-effectiveness and what is the role of cost information in evaluation?
- What are systematic reviews?
- What is an evidence gap map?
- What is "evidence-based" policy/management/practice?
- When are findings from evaluations sufficient to constitute "evidence?"
- Why is it difficult to transfer evaluation and research findings into practice?
- What are evaluation clearinghouses and how can they affect evaluation use?

April 11 / Session 12: Evaluation Policy, Evaluation Capacity Building, and Institutional Capacity

Assigned Readings:
- Hart 2016, Chapter 2: "Institutional Evaluation Capacity: Theory and Literature"
- CEP Chapter 5: "Strengthening the Evidence-Building Capacity within the Federal Government"
- HHS-ACF Evaluation Policy
- Hart et al. 2018: "Evidence Use in Congress (volume 1)"

- Nightingale et al. 2018: "Learning Agendas"

Additional Resources:

- Center for Effective Philanthropy 2016: "Benchmarking Foundation Evaluation Practices"
- American Evaluation Association's Evaluation Roadmap

Questions:

- What is evaluation capacity building?
- What are the key components of an institutionalized evaluation function?
- What does the AEA recommend in terms of institutionalizing evaluation?
- What difference does the source of evaluation expertise make in terms of approach, methods and use?
- How do auditors (Inspector General offices) approach evaluation?
- What skills are required for effective evaluation practice and for oversight of contracted evaluation work?
- What are complex, adaptive systems? And what are the key concepts relevant to program evaluation from systems thinking?
- How do funders approach the evaluation process?
- How are the challenges facing nonprofit agencies in monitoring and evaluation similar or different to those faced by government agencies?

<u>April 18 – NO CLASS: Group Project Work Session</u>

<u>April 25 / Session 13:</u> Using Evaluation, Review, and Concluding Remarks

Deadlines:

- ✓ *Applied Evaluation Design Project Due*
- ✓ *Final Exam (25% of grade) will be distributed April 25 at the end of class. The take-home exam is due on May 6.*

Assigned Readings:

- Cronbach's 95 Theses
- Hart and Martinez 2017: "Enhancing Collaboration in the Federal Evidence Ecosystem"
- Gertler Chapter 13: "Producing and Disseminating Findings"
- Kimmel Chapter 8: "Conclusion and Recommendations"

Questions:

- What do stakeholders do with the findings?
- In what ways can evaluation be useful to nonprofits?
- Why is the use of evaluation challenging in political debates?
- What factors influence utilization of evaluation results?
- What are the various types of utilization? How can they be measured?
- How do evaluators work with other professions?
- What is the relationship between evaluation, statistics, data science, etc.?
- What's next for the field of evaluation?
- What are critical issues facing the evaluation profession?