

COURSE NUMBER: PSC 511P (WEB)

COURSE TITLE: Program Evaluation

CREDIT: 1.0 Semester Hour

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CATALOG DESCRIPTION: The course will review the purpose of program evaluation and the different types of evaluation approaches commonly used to assess the performance of for profit and not for profit programs. This will include the use of needs assessment, formative research, process evaluation, monitoring of outputs and outcomes, impact assessment, and cost analysis. Students will acquire knowledge about the mechanics and application of program evaluation through a process involving the design of a conceptual framework, development of assessment indicators, selection of data collection methodology and measures, and development of an evaluation plan to measure impact.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: By the end of this course, students will be able to articulate and apply the following:

1. Basic components of conducting a program evaluation
 - a. Types of evaluations (formative, summative) and their purpose
 - b. Study designs, including true experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental designs
 - c. Sources of evaluation data
 - d. Different data collection methodologies (interviews, surveys, focus groups, record reviews, report reviews, cost analysis)
2. Basic steps in conducting program evaluation
 - a. Design of a conceptual framework
 - b. Determining objectives and indicators
 - c. Collecting data – focus groups, interviews, surveys, comparative design (pre-post group comparisons)
 - d. Analysis of data
 - e. Interpretation of findings
 - f. Compilation of an evaluation report
3. Professional standards in conducting an evaluation
 - a. Ethical and philosophical issues in evaluation research
 - b. Costs and benefits to doing a program evaluation
 - c. Knowledge and skills of a good evaluator

- *4. Program evaluation in resource development process
 - a. Program logic models that summarize a program's processes, goals, and outcomes
 - b. Spreadsheet development to summarize and report results

**Not required for Undergraduate students*

ASSIGNED TEXT: Wholey, J.S., Hatry, H. P., Newcomer, K. E. (eds). Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation (3rd Edition). JosseyBass Publishers, San Francisco, 2010.

Note: Although the assigned textbook contains a significant number of pages, it was selected to be very readable and easily accessible to upper level undergraduate as well as graduate students. As a “practical” handbook on program evaluation, it periodically contains sections that are very applied in nature and other sections that go into more technical detail. One key aspect of upper level undergraduate or graduate studies (and of professional worklife) is the ability to rapidly scan written materials to hone in on particularly pertinent or salient information – this textbook is no exception. So, as you read, try to discriminate between information that will be important in the construction of your proposed program evaluation and information that can be read quickly.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Brief Overview – In this online course you will be expected participate in weekly class discussions and feedback opportunities, produce weekly versions of your program evaluation plan as it is being developed (to receive feedback), and create a 3-5 page single-spaced proposal to conduct a program evaluation. Grades will be determined by four criteria: (1) sharing 3 insights each week from the readings **and** responding to at least two postings from classmates; (2) sharing incremental versions of your proposed program evaluation with a classmate; (3) providing feedback to that same classmate on her/his evaluation plan; and (4) submitting a formal proposal to conduct a program evaluation.

1. *Posting* – Class Discussion/Participation

Participation is mandatory for this on-line class. The purpose of your participation is to generate thoughtful discussion and to share ideas and experiences with your peers. You are expected to participate by posting responses each week that cover the assigned chapters and offer evaluative responses to postings from other students.

Points will be assigned to your posts based on completeness of responses. Participation responses should be on topic, respectful of others, and use proper grammar. A response such as “I agree” followed by a restatement of points made in a post from another student is not acceptable. The response must reflect serious consideration of the response by adding to it, questioning it, or suggesting a source for addressing the question or issue. You may do this by incorporating outside material into the

conversation, for example, you might relate something from recent reading, personal experience, or go online and see what other information is available.

Responses should be posted as soon as possible each week but no later than **Sunday at 11:59 p.m.** Do not wait until the last minute to post your responses to the assigned reading as that will not allow sufficient time for your classmates to post comments. This activity is required and will be a component of your grade. Please be interactive, the more interactive you are the more likely you will be able to earn the maximum point total for class participation. To receive the full points you must be engaged in an on-going conversation and not just post questions or off topic comments. You should plan to check class posts often and get involved in the discussion.

To accomplish this task, each week of this course you are expected to post on Canvas 3 thoughtful and insightful comments concerning the assigned reading. These postings should clearly *imply* knowledge of the assigned reading without being simply a rehashing of the material. Imagine you're sharing three aspects of the reading with colleagues and how these concepts could be applied in the real world of nonprofit organizational management. So, get to the point in your postings and make your words and comments count!

You are also expected to respond to at least 2 postings from other students. As indicated above, this is more than just about getting credit by posting inane comments. Affirm, challenge (respectfully), or thoughtfully consider what others have posted.

This portion of the course is worth 30 points and will be determined by the instructor and the quality of the postings will be considered.

2. *Emailing* – Weekly Version of Your Program Evaluation Plan

The key deliverable for this course is a program evaluation plan.

Why do program evaluations? According to historical trends released by the White House (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2014/assets/hist.pdf>), in the beginning of the Twentieth Century annual federal outlays averaged approximately \$500 million. Just over 100 years later, outlays approached \$2 trillion. By 2018, federal outlays are expected to exceed \$4.4 trillion. In the nonprofit sector, there are an estimated 1.5 million nonprofit organizations (including faith-based) with annual revenues of over \$1.7 trillion with more than \$3 trillion in assets (<http://nccs.urban.org/statistics/quickfacts.cfm>). Nearly 10% of all wages paid in the U.S. (2010 numbers) were paid by nonprofit entities. So, again, why do program evaluations? We need to perform program evaluations for a number of critical reasons, but two overarching reasons include (1) the incredible outlay of national resources for

programs with frequently no clear idea as to whether or not they're working; and, (2) the fact that program recipients deserve programs that are effective and efficient – that is, they deserve programs that truly have the intended impact.

Because this course is part of the Non-Profit Management Certificate, professional collaboration as an essential managerial skill is an integral component of this educational experience. As a professional manager, it is essential that you develop or hone the skills of effective feedback. To help you accomplish this task, you will work on the development of an evaluation plan, section by section as we move through the class. You will be assigned a colleague (classmate) by the instructor with whom you will regularly communicate via email. Each week you will share your program evaluation as it is being developed in order to receive input. Your mutual goal is to help each other produce an “A” quality document because that’s the way it ideally works in the nonprofit world. ***Be sure to copy the instructor on the incremental versions of your program evaluation (so you can receive credit for the assignment!).***

You will begin by sharing an outline of your proposed evaluation plan during the first week and will submit additional versions of your plan in subsequent weeks. Although there is no specific length of posting each week or particular format, use this opportunity for feedback wisely as this is a chance to ensure that you’re on the right track for the final product. Keep in mind that the final product will be a 3-5 page single-spaced proposal (12 point Times New Roman) that clearly outlines the necessary steps required to produce a program evaluation. This proposal should be formatted as though you were submitting a plan to conduct a program evaluation for a nonprofit organization. Although you can create a generic program evaluation proposal that could be applied to any program or any nonprofit, it may be helpful to target a particular program or nonprofit as you write the proposal – your choice. Be creative!

The objective is for you to use your experience and abilities to produce a good evaluation plan and to mentor those with less experience to refine their plans. Failure to submit these assignments and take part in these coaching opportunities will significantly affect your final grade.

This portion of the course is worth 10 points and will be determined by the instructor and will consider the quality of the shared emails.

3. *Emailing* – Feedback to a Classmate on Her/His Program Evaluation Plans

In addition to receiving feedback from your colleague (classmate), you are expected to provide concrete and helpful (because it’s always easier to simply criticize) suggestions to her/him on their evaluation assignment. Please note

that the length of your feedback in terms of word counts does not equate with depth of insight. Your mutual goal is to help each other produce an “A” quality document because that’s the way it ideally works in the nonprofit world. This feedback is to be provided by email in a timely manner. ***Be sure to copy the instructor in your feedback emails (so you can receive credit for the assignment!).***

This portion of the course is worth 10 points and will be determined by the instructor and will consider the quality of the feedback you provide to your colleague (classmate).

4. *Written Document* – Your Program Evaluation Plan

In the end, this course is like every nonprofit organization in that it requires a final product to be produced.

To accomplish this task, the final product is a proposed evaluation plan. As stated above, the final product should be a 3-5 page single-spaced proposal (12 point Times New Roman) that clearly outlines the necessary steps required to produce a program evaluation.

This portion of the course is worth 50 points and will be determined by the instructor and will consider the quality of the final program evaluation.

For Undergraduate students only – Undergraduate students will be expected to contribute to the online class discussions, be involved in the evaluation plan development, and the writing of the final plan. However, they will be required to produce only 2 evaluation plan assignments (not 3). Undergraduate students **MUST** complete the first posting that includes an outline of their evaluation plan and can choose any other week to submit a plan proposal for review by classmates. Objective #4 above (see the top of Page 2) is not required as part of the evaluation plan assignment.

Students are responsible for contacting the course instructor if there is any difficulty in understanding the course materials or completing the course assignments.

GRADE CALCULATION:

<i>Posting</i> – Class Discussion/Participation	30 points
<i>Emailing</i> – Weekly Version of Your Program Evaluation Plan	10 points
<i>Emailing</i> – Feedback to Classmates on Their Program Evaluation Plans	10 points
<i>Written Document</i> – Your Program Evaluation Plan	<u>50 points</u>
	100 points

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS:

<u>Date and Topic</u>	<u>Chapter Readings</u>	<u>What's Due & When</u>
Week 1: 3/14/16 - Evaluation Planning and Design (NOTE: You have 2 weeks for this section of the course)	Chapters 1-10	1. Post 3 comments from this week's readings 2. Post 2 responses to other students' comments 3. Email outline of evaluation proposal – REQUIRED OF ALL STUDENTS 4. Provide feedback to assigned classmate on their proposal Due by 11:59 p.m. on 3/27/2016
Week 2: 3/28/16 – Practical Data Collection Procedures	Chapters 11-18	1. Post 3 comments from this week's readings 2. Post 2 responses to other students' comments 3. Email version of evaluation proposal (whatever you have done and want feedback on) 4. Provide feedback to assigned classmate on their proposal Due by 11:59 p.m. on 4/3/2016
Week 3: 4/4/16 – Data Analysis	Chapters 19-22	1. Post 3 comments from this week's readings 2. Post 2 responses to other students' comments 3. Email version of evaluation proposal (whatever you have done and want feedback on) 4. Provide feedback to assigned classmate on their proposal Due by 11:59 p.m. on 4/10/2016
Week 4: 4/18/2016 – Use of Evaluation	Chapters 23-28	1. Post 3 comments from this week's readings 2. Post 2 responses to other students' comments Due by 11:59 p.m. on 4/24/2016
Week 5: 4/25/2015 – Final Product – Program Evaluation Plan		Final proposal due no later than 11:59 p.m. on 4/29/2016

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

Students are bound by the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy (found on the UNCG Website and in the student handbook) and must follow its provisions. Violation of the policy will result in penalties which may include a failing grade in the course and reporting to UNCG Student Affairs for disciplinary action.