

PADM 9050 Program Evaluation

Fall 2009 Online

Department of Political Science, College of Arts & Sciences, Valdosta State University

Instructor: Gerald A. "Jerry" Merwin Jr., Ph.D. <gamerwin@valdosta.edu>

Contact Information: Office Hours: Because this course is online, it is difficult to manage traditional office hours. We will maintain contact through email or an online meeting can be arranged using Wimba Classroom in BlazeVIEW for conferencing.

Office: 106 West Hall Office Telephone: (229) 333-5776 Cellular: (229) 221-2891

Description: (3 hours credit) Prerequisite: PADM 9040. Also offered as PSYC 9050. Theories, research, and practice related to program evaluation in government and nonprofit organizations.

Texts:

1. Rossi, Peter H., Lipsey, Mark W., & Freeman, Howard E. (2003). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*, 7th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. (ISBN: 9780761908944)
2. Ingraham, Patricia W., Joyce, Philip G., & Donahue, Amy Kneedler (2003). *Government Performance: Why Management Matters*. Baltimore: Johns-Hopkins University Press. (ISBN: 978-0-8018-7228-0)
3. Herr, Kathryn G. & Anderson, Gary L. (2005). *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. (ISBN: 9780761929918)

Expected Outcomes: Participants will demonstrate skills associated with the program evaluation process by planning, implementing, and evaluating a project. Each person will develop both written and oral reports and deliver a summary presentation. Students completing this course will do the following tasks:

1. Explain program evaluation and provide information about the basic process.
2. Discuss the importance of program evaluation in relation to justification of programs and management decision making.
3. Describe the options in terms of possible methods of evaluating a program under different circumstances.
4. Present a proposal to a review group outlining the project and method of evaluation.
5. Conduct a project that involves planning and implementing a simple change activity and evaluate the outcome.
6. Summarize the project results and provide a written report and deliver an oral report to the class. This might be through video or other means of asynchronous delivery.

ADA: Valdosta State University complies fully with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (voice) and 219-1348 (tty). Learn more on the VSU web site at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>. You may also reach them via email at access@valdosta.edu. Also, please discuss this via email with your instructor(s) at the start of each class.

Assignments

Research Paper

The primary task or assignment for this course is a research paper that will report the outcome of the program evaluation project. The project can be a simple change activity and will include evaluation of the outcome. Project Proposal and Presentation A research proposal will be submitted outlining the project and the planned methods and activities. Each student will also do a presentation to the group outlining the methods and expected outcomes.

Case Study Project

The overall program evaluation or case study project will be graded based on the quality of the project from the standpoint of the basic process of planning and implementation and the evaluation methods.

Discussions

A key component of this course will be frequent discussions of the projects. Each student will provide a summary of the status of the project and open the floor for discussion and feedback. Based upon the course readings, students will discuss the research projects and share comments. It is very possible that the suggestions from others will help solve problems or come up with alternative approaches to a challenge.

Project Presentation

Presentation of the project results will give each person a chance to go over the justification for the project, review the process and methods, and give an overview of the outcome. At the end of your research you should describe what the next steps might be in relation to the policy issue. You might also suggest things you would do differently if you had to do this project again or if you did a similar project? Each student will do the project presentation to the class using a PowerPoint.

Project Submission

All project files and assignments will be submitted as attachments to E-mail and formatted as outlined below unless another format is negotiated with the instructor. These files will follow the formatting and **file naming conventions** listed and explained below:

- **Text documents** will be formatted as either Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat *(PDF) documents.
- **Data files** (if needed) will be Excel files (for spreadsheet data) or Access files (if database information is required).
- **Presentations** will be PowerPoint files unless specific arrangements are made with the instructor.
- **Project File Names:** for the proposal , use "proposal.doc" as the project name; for the research paper reporting on the case study, use "case.doc" for the file name.
- **Ownership of files:** to indicate your ownership of submissions, use your first and last names with either a dot *(.) or underscore *(_) between the parts. For example: gerald_merwin_proposal.doc and gerald_merwin_case.doc
- **Questions:** Please ask questions if any part of this information is unclear.

Class Policies

Plagiarism/Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism is prohibited, and may result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course, and in extreme cases suspension or dismissal from the program. All assignments must be the original work of the student. If any items are submitted that are not the original work of the student, a failing grade for the assignment and the course will be given. Please read the information on the PA web site regarding plagiarism. Please let the instructor know if you have any questions and we will discuss the topic further in class or an individual conference can be arranged.

Evaluation: Participants will be evaluated based on their performance of the following requirements with values listed:

Research Paper	20%
Project Proposal	10%
Case Study Project	30%
Discussions	30%
Final Project Presentation	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

Incomplete Policy: See the "Request for a Grade of Incomplete" page <<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/RequestforIncomplete.shtml>> on the VSU Academic Affairs site for the policy and procedure to apply for the grade. It is the responsibility of the student to request the Incomplete. The professor is not able to assign the grade otherwise. An incomplete grade (grade I) will only be assigned in cases in which the student had a lengthy illness or an unexpected obligation such as extended military service or jury duty. The grade of I will not be assigned because the student is not satisfied with a low grade. It will only be assigned in cases where the student could not complete a substantial part of the course work due to factors beyond the student's control.

Style Guidelines: Participants should use the ASPA styles. For information on APSA style, see the handout from Dr. Argyle: <http://www.valdosta.edu/pa/argyle/>

Communication:

- Our preferred method of communication is through the BlazeVIEW email. This self-contained system solves lots of problems in that it does not rely on the vagaries of the Internet and general email.
- I will generally respond to any e-mail within one to two working days. Likewise, I ask that you check your email regularly and respond in a timely manner if a response is requested or warranted.
- If the email communication fails or some emergency comes up it is OK to contact the teacher by telephone. The best number is my cell number: (229) 221-2891 and voice mail is available in case I cannot answer. I will return calls if needed.

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Attendance: Although we will not have regular class meetings, we will consider communication through email and the online discussions as our attendance parallel for this class. Participants are expected to stay in touch with the teacher through email and to take part in the online discussions.

Schedule

August 17 – December 7, 2009

Units/Topics/Dates Readings/Assignments

Unit 1 Course Introduction and Introduction to Program Evaluation

- Rossi text, Chapter 1. An Overview of Program Evaluation
- Ingraham text, Chapter 1 Management, Capacity, and Performance
- Herr text, Chapter 1. Introduction: What is an Action Research Dissertation?

DPA Weekend August 21-22, 2009

Unit 2: Which Evaluation Method is Right for Your Program?

- Rossi Chapter 2. Tailoring Evaluations
- Ingraham Chapter 2 Dissecting Management
- Herr Chapter 2. Action Research Traditions and Knowledge Interests

Unit 3: Getting Started with Program Evaluation

- Rossi Chapter 3. Identifying Issues and Formulating Questions
- Ingraham Chapter 3 Assessing Management
- Herr Chapter 3. The Continuum of Positionality in Action Research

August 31 - September 11, 2009 Informal Discussions of Possible Project Topics

Unit 4: Does the Organization Need a Program?

- Rossi Chapter 4. Assessing the Need for a Program
- Ingraham Chapter 4 Research Methodology
- Herr Chapter 4. Quality Criteria for Action Research

Unit 5: Putting Program Evaluation to Work

- Rossi Chapter 5. Expressing and Assessing Program Theory
- Ingraham Chapter 5 State and Local Findings
- Herr Chapter 5. Designing the Plane While Flying it: Proposing and Doing the Dissertation

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Unit 6: Evaluation During Program Implementation

- Rossi Chapter 6. Assessing and Monitoring Program Process
- Ingraham Chapter 6 Federal Results
- Herr Chapter 6. What Does an Action Research Dissertation Look Like?

Unit 7: Data Collection for Program Evaluation

- Rossi Chapter 7. Measuring and Monitoring Program Outcomes
- Ingraham Chapter 7 The Big Lessons
- Herr Chapter 7. Action Research, Ethics, and the Institutional Review Board

Unit 8: Evaluation of the Program after Completion

- Rossi Chapter 8. Assessing Program Impact: Randomized Field Experiments
- Ingraham Chapter 8 Next Steps

September 21 - October 2, 2009 Research Proposal Presentations

Unit 9: Other Program Evaluation Methods

- Rossi Chapter 9. Assessing Program Impact: Alternative Designs

Fall Break October 19-20, 2009

Unit 10: Dealing with Results

- Rossi Chapter 10. Detecting, Interpreting, and Analyzing Program Effects

October 23, 2009 Written Research Proposals Due

Unit 11: Efficiency as a Variable

- Rossi Chapter 11. Measuring Efficiency

Unit 12: External Factors in Program Evaluation

- Rossi Chapter 12. The Social Context of Evaluation

Thanksgiving Holidays November 23-27, 2009 University Closed/No Class Meetings

Units 13-14: Presentations & Review/Evaluation of Projects

Final Presentations & Course Wrap-Up (November 10 - December 4, 2009)

December 1, 2009 **Research Papers Due**