

Program Evaluation for Nonprofit Practitioners

MMGT 6550, #6632

Fall 2010

August 31, 2010 – December 14, 2010

Tuesdays, 6-7:50pm

Location: 6 East 16th Street, Room 902

Professor Aida Rodriguez

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72 Fifth Ave., Room 506

212-229-5400, ext. 1216

[Do not leave messages on my office phone. Either send me an email or use my home number. I will distribute my home and cell numbers in class.]

Course Description

The course will familiarize students with the fundamentals of program evaluation research. All types of evaluations will be reviewed and compared – including needs assessments, monitoring, formative, and process/implementation, outcome and impact evaluations. The course will also cover related topics such as how to formulate a research question, selecting a research design, choosing data collection methodologies, writing survey and interview questions, and negotiating with stakeholders. The latter third of the class will be dedicated to working with “real” nonprofit organizations. Students will be assigned to small teams of 4 students and asked to collaborate on a small-scale program evaluation for a nonprofit organization.

The course will be useful to nonprofit leaders, managers and staff, board members and program researchers, in the U.S. and other countries.

Course Requirements

All students will be expected to complete four assignments. All students are also expected to attend each seminar and actively participate in the seminar discussions.

Written Assignment 1:	Written response to five assigned questions	25%
Written Assignment 2:	Essay	25%
Written and Oral Assignment 3:	Nonprofit Program Evaluation Team Project	50%
	Project report	30%
	PowerPoint Presentation	20%

Schedule of Class Sessions

Session 1 August 31

What is Evaluation Research?
What are the different types of evaluation research?
Review of Course Syllabus
Introductions

Session 2 September 7

Different “Frameworks” for Approaching Evaluations
When do you pay to have an outsider do the evaluation? When do you do it internally?
Stakeholders/Evaluators/Cost

Session 3 September 14

Procedures for Identifying and Defining the Problem:
What needs to be evaluated and why?

Session 4 September 21

Theory Based Evaluations
Needs Assessments and Case Studies

Session 5 September 28

Program Monitoring for Evaluation and Management

Session 6 October 5

Process or Implementation Evaluation

Assignment 1 Due: Response to 5 questions. Questions will be distributed on September 14.

Session 7 October 12

Distinguishing Outcomes and Program Impacts
Philanthropy and Evaluation

Session 8 October 19

Guest: Nonprofit Executive Director

Session 9 October 26

Strategies of Impact Assessments
True Experimental (Randomized) Designs for Assessing Program Impact

Session 10 November 2

Quasi-Experimental and Other Non-Randomized Evaluation Designs
Assignment 2 Due: Brief Essay – topic to be discussed in class

Session 11 November 9 Panel Two Sides of Evaluation Work

Guest: MDRC – How does a large research institution carry out program evaluations? What are the various roles within the institution? Who funds the evaluations? What evaluations do you choose not to do?

Guest: Small Evaluation Firm

Session 12 November 16

Class and small team discussion of team project – i.e. program evaluation project

*Class will not meet on Tuesday, November 23 because the New School is following on a Thursday schedule on that date.

Session 13 November 30

Team 1: Presentation and Discussion

Team 2: Presentation and Discussion

PowerPoint Presentation to be given and copy to be submitted

Session 14 December 7

Team 3: Presentation and Discussion

Team 4: Presentation and Discussion

PowerPoint Presentation to be given and copy to be submitted.

Session 15 December 14

Brief summary report of team project due.

Course Summary by Professor

Week-by-Week Course Readings

Session 1 August 31

No Readings

Session 2 September 7

Berk, Richard A. and Peter H. Rossi, Chapters 1 and 2, “What is Evaluation Research? and “Key Concepts in Evaluation Research”, Thinking About Program Evaluation, Sage Publications, 1999, pages 1-34. [On E-reserves] [Total book page numbers =128]

Session 3 September 14

Case Study: Susan H. Evans and Peter Clarke, “Training Volunteers to Run Information Technologies: A Case Study of Effectiveness at Community Food Pantries”, Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Vol.39, March 2009, pages 524-535.

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Session 4 September 21

Johanna D. Birckmayer and Carol Hirschon Weiss, “Theory-Based Evaluation in Practice: What Do We Learn? *Evaluation Review*, Volume 24, No.4, August 2000, p.407-431

Book Review: “Needs Assessment: Theory and Methods”, by James D. Wright, Tulane University, Social Forces, Vo.68, No.4, June 1990.

Needs Assessment: To be Added – will be available on BB – on an international needs assessment.

Session 5 September 28

Peter H. Rossi, Mark W. Lipsey, and Howard E. Freeman, Chapter 6, “Measuring and Monitoring Program Outcomes”, Evaluation: A Systematic Approach, Seventh Edition, Sage Publications, 2004, pages 203-232. [On E-reserves] [Total book page numbers = 470]

Session 6 October 5

No Readings: Assignment 1 Due

Session 7 October 12

W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Evaluation Handbook, Go to “Resources” in BB, for this document and for an additional reading [Possibly: Michele Fine, “Changing Minds” case study.]

Session 8 October 19

Phil Giudice and Kevin Bolduc, “Assessing Performance at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundations: A Case Study”, The Center for Effective Philanthropy,

Session 9 October 26

Sample of evaluations by guest lecturer [Head of small research firm in NYC]

Session 10 November 2

No Readings: Assignment 2 Due: Brief Essay – topic to be discussed in class

Session 11 November 9

Read MDRC publications posted in BB.

Session 12 November 16

Small team project documents posted on BB.

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Session 13 November 30

No Readings: Team Presentations

Session 14 December 7

No Readings: Team Presentations

Session 15 December 14

Summary team reports due

Course Summary by Professor

No Readings

Description of Course Assignments

Will be distributed the first day of class. Aida