

# PSYC\*6840, Course Outline: Winter 2019

## General Information

**Course Title:** Program Evaluation

**Course Description:**

This course introduces students to key components of program evaluation. The course comprises readings, lectures, discussions, presentations, and in-class exercises. However, emphasis is placed on application of knowledge and development of evaluation skills, including methods of social program evaluation and the process of consultation with program staff. Students will engage in a project that involves working with an organization to design a plausible program evaluation plan.

**Credit Weight:** 0.5

**Academic Department (or campus):** Psychology

**Semester Offering:** W20

**Class Schedule and Location:** Thursdays, 2:30pm-5:20pm, ROZH 107

## Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Andrew Taylor

Instructor Email: ataylo42@uoguelph.ca

Office location and office hours: by appointment

## GTA Information

TBD

## Course Content

### **Specific Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the term, students should be able to...

1. Identify key characteristics of the following approaches to program evaluation: needs assessment, evaluability assessment, process evaluation, and outcome evaluation.
2. Identify methodologies and data analysis approaches (e.g., participatory, quantitative, qualitative methods) relevant to program evaluation.
3. Engage community stakeholders in mutually beneficial and respectful partnership (for the purpose of designing a program evaluation plan).
4. Assess evaluation needs, process, and outcome-related issues in the context of designing a program evaluation plan.

5. Create a program logic model.
6. Apply program evaluation knowledge and skills to design a program evaluation plan.
7. Evaluate existing programs (from the literature) and the nature of their evaluation process and findings.

## **Course Resources**

### **Assigned Readings**

Most weeks, we will be reading mostly from the primary text. However, I've also included other useful resources that I have drawn upon for the content of the class. For each, I've included a short explanation of why I have included it in the list. Some weeks have more readings than others.

**Required Text:** Merton, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.

This text is newly updated this year, and it addresses some key topics that older texts don't cover very well. Many of the chapters are long and exhaustive, but the content is really comprehensive and current. For example, issues of equity, inclusion and the cultural context of evaluation are addressed in some depth throughout the text, and not just in a chapter at the end. Similarly, issues of power and voice are considered throughout. The text talks about new approaches to data visualization and communication of findings. It gets into emergent approaches to evaluation as well as the old standards.

I have not assigned the chapters in Part 2, because they are more theoretical. Otherwise, we are using most of the text in the course.

### **Lecture Content**

**Week 1, Jan 9: Course Overview. What is Program Evaluation, and Why Does it Matter?**

**Week 2, Jan 16: Introducing Program Evaluation**

#### Required Reading:

Merton, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Part 1: The Landscape of Evaluation. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: the Guilford Press. (pp. 1-48).

#### Other Useful Resources:

McKegg, K., Oakden, J., Wehipeihana, N., King, J. (2018). Evaluation Building Blocks: A Guide. The Kinnect Group: [www.kinnect.co.nz](http://www.kinnect.co.nz)

Patton, Michael Quinn (2014). Evaluation Flash Cards: Embedding Evaluative Thinking in Organizational Culture. St. Paul, MN: Otto Bremer Foundation, [ottobremer.org](http://ottobremer.org).

*These are both very readable and practical overviews of the evaluation process. Review either or both if they are useful.*

Patton, M. Q. (2013). Utilization-focused evaluation checklist. Retrieved from <https://wmich.edu/evaluation/checklists>.

IDRC Evaluation (2012). Identifying the Intended User(s) and Use(s) of an Evaluation.

*These are both short reference sheets that give a good basic overview of Utilization Focused Evaluation*

### **Week 3, Jan 23: Engaging with Stakeholders**

#### Required Reading:

John M. Bryson, Michael Quinn Patton (2015). Analyzing and Engaging Stakeholders (Ch. 2). Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Kathryn E. Newcomer, Harry P. Hatry, Joseph S. Wholey, Eds.

*This is an engaging and readable chapter on a key issue, with a lot of hands on practical tips for engaging stakeholders that will be useful to you in your projects.*

### **Week 4, Jan 30: Theories of Change; logic models**

#### Required Reading:

Merton, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Ch. 7: Working with Stakeholders. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: the Guilford Press. (pp. 209-243).

#### Other Useful Resources:

Hoggarth, Liz, Comfort, Hilary (2010). Identifying Outcomes (Ch. 3). A Practical Guide to Outcome Evaluation. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

*Another good solid overview that you may find useful. Covers much the same ground as the text.*

MacDonald, G. (2018). Checklist of key considerations for development of program logic models. Retrieved from <https://wmich.edu/evaluation/checklists>.

*This site has a number of short readable checklists that include great content. This one gets into aspects of logic models that most other resources don't cover, like how to format them in a readable way and how to write up a narrative summary of a logic model.*

Treasury Board of Canada (2012). Theory-Based Approaches to Evaluation: Concepts and Practices <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/centre-excellence-evaluation/theory-based-approaches-evaluation-concepts-practices.html>

*Kind of interesting summary of what the federal government considers to be best practices in the use of theories of change and logic models*

**Week 5, Feb 6: Evaluation questions and indicators. Could we get into eval frameworks here?**

Required Reading:

Merton, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Ch. 8: Evaluation Purposes, Types and Questions. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: the Guilford Press. (pp. 245-286).

Other Useful Resources:

Hoggarth, Liz, Comfort, Hilary (2010). What Do I need to Know to Answer the Key Evaluation Questions? (Ch. 6). A Practical Guide to Outcome Evaluation. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

*This is a good practical overview of the idea of indicators and how they inform outcome evaluation.*

Goldie MacDonald (2002). Criteria for Selection of High-Performing Indicators: A Checklist to Inform Monitoring and Evaluation. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia. Retrieved from <https://wmich.edu/evaluation/checklists>.

*Nice, short, very practical review of what makes for a good indicator. Some duplication with the Hoggarth paper but worth a read.*

Peel Regional Evaluation Platform (n.d.). Evaluation Readiness Quiz. Retrieved from [https://peeevaluates.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PREP\\_Download\\_Eval-Readiness-Quiz.pdf](https://peeevaluates.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PREP_Download_Eval-Readiness-Quiz.pdf)

*This is a quick and easy tool for starting a discussion about evaluability.*

**Week 6, Feb 13: Performance Measurement & Formative Evaluation**

**Part 1 Due**

Required Reading:

Graham (2018). Formative Evaluation Toolkit: A Step-by-Step Guide and Resources for Evaluating Program Implementation and Early Outcomes. Administration for Children and Families. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

*This short guidebook gives lots of really practical advice about how to do formative evaluation*

Other Useful Resources

Poister, T.H., (2015). Performance Measurement: Monitoring Program Outcomes (Ch. 5). Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Kathryn E. Newcomer, Harry P. Hatry, Joseph S. Wholey, Eds.

*This chapter starts with a great overview, and I especially like the criteria for good performance measures section. I find the examples in the later section a bit plodding and complex, although they do get into some helpful issues around things like benchmarking. I'd skim everything after about p. 120.*

## **Feb 20: Reading Week - No Class**

### **Week 7, Feb 27: Outcome evaluation and evaluation designs**

#### Required Reading:

Merton, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Ch. 9: Evaluation Designs. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: the Guilford Press. (pp. 287-334).

#### Other Useful Resources

[Rida Abboud & Caroline Claussen](#) (2016). The use of Outcome Harvesting in learning-oriented and collaborative inquiry approaches to evaluation: An example from Calgary, Alberta. Evaluation and Program Planning, Volume, 59, p.47-54

*This is a great case study of a practical, participatory approach to outcome evaluation called outcome harvesting.*

### **Week 8: Mar 5: Culture and context (I am away)**

#### Required Reading

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. (2016). USAI (Utility, Self-Voicing, Access, Inter-Relationality) Research Framework. Toronto: Author.

*This is a great practical framework designed to equip Indigenous communities to make decisions about whether and how to engage with research projects.*

#### Other Useful Resources

Stafford Hood, Rodney K. Hopson, Karen E. Kirkhart (2015). Culturally Responsive Evaluation (Ch. 12). In Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Kathryn E. Newcomer, Harry P. Hatry, Joseph S. Wholey, Eds.

*This chapter, written by one of the first evaluators to talk in depth about the need for culturally responsive evaluation, starts out with a somewhat academic review of the history of this work, but it gets into really important and useful discussions of how we need to think about validity in more depth.*

Cram, F. (2018). Conclusion: Lessons about Indigenous evaluation. In F. Cram, K. A. Tibbetts, & J. LaFrance (Eds.), Indigenous Evaluation. New Directions for Evaluation, 159, 121–133.

*This is a nice synthesis of the issues that evaluation needs to address as a discipline around “acknowledging Indigenous sovereignty and building genuine relationships with Indigenous peoples.”*

### **Week 9, Mar 12: Data Collection Strategies (assignment # 2 due)**

Merton, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Chapter 10: Data Collection Strategies and Indicators. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: the Guilford Press. (pp. 335-394).

#### Other Useful Resources

Harry P. Hatry, Kathryn E. Newcomer (2015) Pitfalls in Evaluations (Ch. 26). Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Kathryn E. Newcomer, Harry P. Hatry, Joseph S. Wholey, Eds.

*This is a really good overview of all of the things that can go wrong in evaluation project. I should know.*

Lasby, D. (2018). The State Of Evaluation: Measurement And Evaluation Practices In Ontario’s Nonprofit Sector. Toronto: Ontario Nonprofit Network and Imagine Canada.

*This report gives a real-world picture of what evaluation practice like looks like in Ontario’s nonprofit sector in 2018.*

### **Week 10, Mar 19: Data analysis**

#### Required Reading:

Merton, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Chapter 12: Data Analysis and Interpretation. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: the Guilford Press. (pp. 425-458).

### **Week 11, Mar. 26: Communication of Findings**

*Part 2 Due*

#### Required Reading:

Merton, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Chapter 13: Communication and Utilization of Findings. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: the Guilford Press. (pp. 461-495).

#### Other Useful Resources

Grob, George (2015). Writing for Impact (Ch. 28). Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Kathryn E. Newcomer, Harry P. Hatry, Joseph S. Wholey, Eds.

*This is a very readable overview of good writing in the context of evaluation. I really like the idea of “the mom test.”*

**Week 12, April 2: Course summary**

**April 9: No class; Part 3 due**

### **Course Assignments:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Contribution to Final Mark (%)</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes Assessed</b>
PE Project Part 1	Feb 13	25%	1-4, 6
PE Project Part 2	Mar 12	25%	1-6
PE Project Part 3	Apr 9	50%	1-4, 6, 7

*See more information about these assignments at the end of this document.*

### **Course Policies**

#### **Course Updates and Announcements**

Course updates and announcements will be posted on Courselink; please check this regularly.

#### **Submission & Grading Policies**

Please submit all assignments by email by 11:59pm on the due date. Please see the [Graduate Grade Interpretation](#) for the University grading policy.

#### **Late Assignments & Extensions**

Assignments submitted late will receive a deduction of 10% per calendar day. If you know you will be unable to complete an assignment by its due date, please let me know in advance. Extensions may be granted depending on circumstances. Proper documentation (e.g., medical note) may be required in the event of late assignments or extension requests.

#### **Course Policy regarding use of electronic devices and recording of lectures:**

Electronic recording of classes is expressly forbidden without consent of the instructor. When recordings are permitted they are solely for the use of the authorized student and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without the express written consent of the instructor.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Consideration**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for

Academic Consideration: [Grounds for Academic Consideration](#).

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community, faculty, staff, and students to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring.

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the [Graduate Calendar](#).

### **Accessibility**

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the [Student Accessibility Services](#) as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 54335 or email [accessibility@uoguelph.ca](mailto:accessibility@uoguelph.ca) or the [Student Accessibility Services Website](#)

### **Course Evaluation Information**

Please refer to the [Course and Instructor Evaluation Website](#) .



## Drop date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is Friday, April 03, 2020. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#).

## Description of Course Assignments

### OVERVIEW OF 3-PART PROGRAM EVALUATION PROJECT

Over the course of the term, you will be working in teams to develop a program evaluation *plan* in partnership with a community organization. You will apply knowledge from your readings and class discussions/exercises to develop an evaluation plan that can be used by your community partner. You will work with a community program/organization. In order to complete your project, you will need to arrange meetings with your organization/program (likely ~ 2-3 meetings over the term). You will want to organize your first meeting as soon as possible (this process always takes longer than anticipated).

Each of the assignments involves creating sections of what would ultimately be one large product: a comprehensive evaluation plan. As you learn more about the program you are working with over the course of the term, your understanding of the evaluation purpose and the intended outcomes of the program may change. Consequently, there is some overlap in the questions asked from one assignment to the next.

### Overview of Project Components & Due Dates

PE Project Part 1	25%	Due Feb 13, 2019
PE Project Part 2	25%	Due March 12, 2019
PE Project Part 3	50%	Due Apr 9, 2019

*All parts of the project should be submitted via email by 11:59pm by the due date.*

### PART 1: PROGRAM OVERVIEW 25%

Write a brief overview of your partner organization and the specific program for which you are designing a program evaluation plan. The overview should describe the items outlined below. This assignment should be no more than 10 pages double-spaced. Please include all of the following when submitting Part 1:

1. Description of Organization: Provide a brief description the organization itself, including , mission, structure, other program delivered, and any other information that helps to

explain the content within which the program functions.

2. Description of Program. Summarize the goals of the specific program to be evaluated. Include an overview of program content/curriculum, any theoretical/empirical/practical basis for the program, and a brief explanation of how the program works (e.g., how it recruits participants, where it takes place).
3. Evidence of Need for Program. Identify the key needs in the community that the program is designed to address. What issues in the lives of the people served is this program designed to address?
4. Stakeholders: Describe the program stakeholders. This includes those who are involved in the delivery of the program, who can make use of any evaluation results, AND who is directly served by the program (i.e., who benefits from it).
5. Evaluation Purpose and considerations: Based on the program purpose, please indicate why the organization is interested in evaluation and what questions should be addressed in the evaluation. How is the program hoping to use the evaluation findings? Based on the information presented in this assignment, offer some reflections on how you plan to approach evaluation design, and what questions or issues you will be keeping in mind as you move on to assignment #2.

### **Assessment of Part 1**

Program description = 5 pts

Program purpose & theory = 5 pts

Evidence of need for program = 3 pts

Stakeholders = 3 pts

Evaluation questions and considerations = 6 pts

Grammar/Style = 3 pts

TOTAL = 25

### **PART 2: EXPLORATORY ASSESSMENT & PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL: 25%**

Building on Part 1, Part 2 involves an overview of the needs of the program, an overview of the readiness of the program to be evaluated, and a detailed program logic model.

Please include all of the following when submitting Part 2:

1. **Program Logic Model diagram and written description:** Create a logic model for your program that includes key activities, short term outcomes, long term outcomes, and ultimate goal. At your discretion, the model may also include information about outputs, principles guiding the program, or target populations if you think this information is important to explaining the theory of the program clearly. When submitting your PLM,

submit both a diagram (generated in PowerPoint or some other program) and a text description (of about 2 pages). The text description should include a brief description of each component or 'box' on the logic model. The text description should also include the validity assumptions (i.e., the causal assumptions for each 'arrow' in the model).

**2. Evaluability Assessment** (max 2 pages double-spaced): Outline the extent to which the program is ready for evaluation. In your assessment, you can include (but are not limited to) information about the extent to which

- program goals are agreed upon (by relevant stakeholders) and realistic;
- program design is clear, capable of achieving intended outcomes, and consistent with research literature
- evaluation needs and goals are agreed upon (by relevant stakeholders) and realistic;
- evaluation data are obtainable (can provide specific examples of data that could be collected);
- intended users are willing and able to use evaluation information (can provide specific examples of how results may be used).

**3. Evaluation Questions:** Identify the specific evaluation questions that will be addressed through your evaluation, drawing clearly on your program logic model, evaluability assessment, and intended uses. Your questions are likely to explore both process and outcome issues. To keep the assignment manageable, and depending on the size and complexity of your program you do not need to plan to evaluate *every* outcome identified in your logic model, but please address a minimum of 3 outcomes (ST or LT) in your evaluation questions. When describing your prioritized outcomes, remember to operationalize the concepts embedded in the outcomes. Explain how and why these evaluation questions will generate answers that are not simply academically interesting, but useful to the program in a practical way.

Assessment of Part 2

Program Logic Model = 12 pts

Evaluability Assessment = 5 pts

Evaluation Questions = 5

Grammar/Style = 3 pts

TOTAL = 25 pts

### **PART 3: EVALUATION PLAN: 50%**

You will develop and describe a plan for conducting an outcome evaluation, with consideration of key process-related issues. The evaluation plan includes delineating the outcome objectives, design, measures, data collection, and analysis that will be used in the outcome evaluation of your program. Your outcome evaluation plan should articulate how you will determine that

desired change(s) are attributable to the program (and its components) and/or how you will interpret/account for a lack of change (no desired changes) or unanticipated changes.

Please include all of the following when submitting Part 3:

1. Evaluation Framework Table, with columns for:

- a) *Outcome Objective* (i.e., the short/intermediate/long term outcomes from your PLM).
- b) *Evaluation Questions*. You will have developed these questions as part of assignment 2. However, you may have revised these questions (or decided that some are more important than others) as you have started to think about methods.
- c) *Indicators* (i.e., the data required to answer your outcome evaluation questions).
- d) *Measures and Tools* (i.e., the measures used to collect indicator data).
- e) *Data Sources* (i.e., where will you get the information, when, and who will collect it?). These will be brief statements about your PE design, which will be elaborated on in other sections.

2. Evaluation Design, which includes:

- a) A more detailed description of the measures and tools of assessment (qualitative or quantitative) identified in your evaluation framework table. Describe the measure or tool and how it purports to measure or assess the indicators corresponding to your prioritized outcomes. Please include relevant information, such as:
  - I. Is it an existing measure/tool or one customized/developed for your evaluation?
  - II. Outline how you would go about developing a new measure/tool if one does not exist for your indicator \*\*you do not need to actually develop a new tool for this project
  - III. If appropriate, how will the measure be scored? Psychometrics? (reliability/validity)?If possible, please provide any existing measures that are included in your design as an appendix.
- b) A description of the details of your design as they apply to each measure (e.g., who administers and completes the measure/tool, is there a control/comparison group, the timing of administration in relation to the program, plans for ensuring the quality/accuracy of the measure/tool and data)
- c) A brief description of data management procedures (e.g, storage)

3. Analysis and Interpretation

Explain how you will answer your outcome evaluation questions (i.e, how will you evaluate your prioritized outcomes?). This section should include:

- a) A description of the analyses that will be conducted (as best as you can predict)

- b) A description of how you will interpret your data and what constitutes success
- c) The major threats to validity and how your PE design and/or plan for analysis addresses them.
- d) A short description of how you expect your findings could be presented and used by the program to communicate with the key intended users

4. Ethical Considerations: Briefly (in 1 to 2 paragraphs) outline the ethical issues that pertain to conducting an evaluation of your program and explain how consideration of these issues has informed your evaluation design.

5. Executive Summary: Create a half-page summary of your evaluation plan designed to be read by a senior manager at the organization running the program. This summary should highlight how the evaluation will be helpful to the organization and what will be required to carry the evaluation out. NOTE: You are not expected to develop a detailed evaluation workplan or budget as part of your evaluation plan. The executive summary should simply provide a high level summary of the kinds of tasks required to implement the evaluation plan.

#### Assessment of Part 3

Evaluation Framework Table = 12 pts

Evaluation Design = 10 pts

Analysis and Interpretation = 10 pts

Ethical Considerations = 5 pts

Executive Summary = 5 pts

Overall Coherence of Plan (i.e., degree to which different sections align logically; degree of focus) = 5 pts

Grammar/Style = 3 pts

TOTAL = 50 pts