PSYC*6840, Course Outline: Winter 2021

General Information

<mark>DUE to the COVID-19 pandemic, this course is offered in an alternative format: Alternative Delivery Synchronous – AD-S Virtual:</mark>

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: W21

Class Schedule and Location: Thursdays, 2:30pm-5:20pm, beginning January 14th and ending April 8th (no class Feb 18th). Lectures will be held using Zoom (accessed through Courselink).

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Andrew Taylor
Instructor Email: ataylo42@uoguelph.ca
Communication: I can be reached through email and will respond within 24 hours under normal circumstances. Given that all assignments in the course are group projects that require communicating with a nonprofit organization in the community, class time will be devoted to providing updates on these projects. Student teams are encouraged to meet with me outside of class time to discuss their project as needed.

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. It is important to stay up to date on these readings as they will be discussed each week in class.

Required Text: Mertens, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2nd Ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.

This text 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 14: Course Overview. What is Program Evaluation, and Why Does it Matter?

Review of course format and outline, discussion of online learning strategy

Week 2, Jan 21: Introducing Program Evaluation

Required Reading:

Mertens, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Part 1: The Landscape of Evaluation. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2nd 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

Patton, Michael Quinn (2014). Evaluation Flash Cards: Embedding Evaluative Thinking in Organizational Culture. St. Paul, MN: Otto Bremer Foundation, 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 28: Engaging with Stakeholders

Required Reading:

Mertens, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Ch. 7: Working with Stakeholders. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2nd Ed.). New York: the Guilford Press. (First half of chapter, pp. 209-229).

The first part of this chapter does a good job of explaining why engaging with stakeholders is so important, and I like that it includes consideration of power and privilege.

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

This is an engaging and readable chapter.   As compared to the Mertens chapter, it has a lot more hands on practical tips for engaging stakeholders that will be useful to you in your projects.

Week 4, Feb 4: Theories of Change; logic models

Required Reading:

Mertens, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Ch. 7: Working with Stakeholders. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2nd Ed.). New York: the Guilford Press. (second half of chapter, pp. 229-243).

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 11: Evaluation questions, indicators and evaluation frameworks

Required Reading:

Mertens, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Ch. 8: Evaluation Purposes, Types and Questions. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2nd 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://peelevaluates.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.

NOTE: That last portion of this week's introduces evaluation frameworks. This is key, because an evaluation framework is what you will be creating through the three assignments in this course.

Reading Week: Feb 18 – No Class

Week 6, Feb 25: 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, 4th 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.

Week 7, Mar 4: Outcome evaluation and evaluation designs

Required Reading:

Mertens, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Ch. 9: Evaluation Designs. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2nd 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 11: Culture and context

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.

Dean-Coffey, Jara (2018). What's Race Got to Do With It? Equity and Philanthropic Evaluation Practice. American Journal of Evaluation, 39 (4), 527-542.

Although Dean-Coffey is writing specifically about the practice of evaluation within American charitable foundations, she does a great job of explaining how evaluation has been a mechanism for reinforcing privilege, and her analysis applies beyond that specific context.

<u>Other Useful Resources</u>

Stafford Hood, Rodney K. Hopson, Karen E. Kirkhart (2015). Culturally Responsive Evaluation (Ch. 12). In Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, 4th 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 18: Getting Practical: Data Collection Strategies (assignment # 2 due)

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

<u>Other Useful Resources</u>

Harry P. Hatry, Kathryn E. Newcomer (2015) Pitfalls in Evaluations (Ch. 26). Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, 4th 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 looked like in Ontario's nonprofit sector in 2018.

Week 10, Mar 25: Data analysis

Required Reading:

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

Week 11, Apr 1: Communication of Findings   *Part 2 Due*

Required Reading:

Mertens, D. & Williams, A. (2019). Chapter 13: Communication and Utilization of Findings. In Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2nd 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, 4th 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 8*:* Course summary

April 9: No class; Part 3 due

Course Assignments:

Assignment	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
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:

I will record my zoom lectures and make them available to you. Electronic recording of classes by students 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. As a student, you have the right to protect your privacy online and may choose to turn off your video and/or audio when in session. In the event that your video and/or audio remain on, please note that you are consenting to your presence in lecture recordings. Under no circumstances are you permitted to transmit copies of the recordings to others, without the express written consent of the instructor. Since much of the class will involve discussion, I will check with the group at the first class to see whether people are comfortable with their contributions being recorded.

University Policies

Disclaimer
Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website and circulated by email.

Illness
The University will not normally require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for fall 2020 or winter 2021 semester courses. However, requests for Academic Consideration may still require medical documentation as appropriate.

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 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 12, 2021. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#).

Instructors must provide [meaningful and constructive feedback, at minimum 20% of the final course grade, prior to the 40th class day](). For courses which are of shorter duration, 20% of the final grade must be provided two-thirds of the way through the course.

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 programs 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

- <u>program</u> goals are agreed upon (by relevant stakeholders) and realistic;
- <u>program</u> design is clear, capable of achieving intended outcomes, and consistent with research literature
- <u>evaluation</u> 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 evaluation *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 <u>do not</u> 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