

PADM 213 POLICY ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

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Course Description:

PADM 213 Policy Analysis and Evaluation: a course focusing on the prospect and problems of designing, conducting and utilizing program planning and evaluation. The course is concerned with program design, implementation and evaluation of the goals achievement. Included are the basic concepts and tools of research, including issues related to design, measurement and utilization of research findings, and the ethical problems associated with social science research in a real world setting.

Instructional Procedures and Course Format The course will be a combination of lectures group exercises and student reports on the outcome of those exercises. The class uses a hands-on case study approach to hone students' skills in linear thinking, program assessment, critical thinking and organizational sophistication.

- Each class session will begin with a lecture from the teacher on the subject of the day. I will email you my overhead presentation for each class. This should be a time saver for you, but it should be treated as a professional courtesy rather than a substitute for class attendance.
- Students will then be divided into groups in which they will apply the concepts contained in the lecture.
- Student groups will present their findings to the class as a whole, which will be responsible for positive critiques. Group members must divide the presentation responsibilities so that each group member has the opportunity to address the class as a whole. Presenters must utilize the overhead projector.
- Each group will develop a project calendar.
- Discussion is encouraged and questions are welcome at any point.

Methods for Evaluating Student Performance (Grading):

Grade Have Three Components:

Examinations	50%
Research Design	40%
Participation	10%
Total	100

Examination: Exams will be take home and essay. The mid-term will contain an essay question on threats to validity in outcome designs, and the relative merits of outcome and process evaluations as they relate to the information needed, resource availability and the audience of the evaluation. At the end of the course, students will be asked to asses the values of systems design and the merits of cost benefit analysis as a decision tool. They will also be asked to apply the course concepts to an evaluation design problem selected by the instructor. Students are encouraged to demonstrate an integrated conceptualization of course content rather than listing facts and theories. To facilitate the development of sophisticated written analysis exams will be distributed a week in advance.

Original research designs: Each student will develop an original research design on a program of his or her choice. The design should contain:

- 1.) A review of the literature.
- 2.) A brief description of the program.
3. The reasons for the evaluation
- 4.) Method of analysis
- 5.) The anticipated uses of the data.

The design should also apply the techniques learned in the class to the subject program. The original design will be presented in the class for its collective critique. Designs are assessed on the accuracy of their application of course concepts to the subject program, level of sophistication demonstrated in the essay and the overall presentation of the document. Design papers should be 8 to 12 pages in length.

Participation: This grade component will be based on the quality of your input to class discussions and particularly your work in the small groups which will be observed by the professor and evaluated by your peers. Each student will make a presentation to the entire class based on the outcomes of the group problem solving process.

Books: Only two books will be necessary for this intense learning experience.

Ronald D. Sylvia, Kathleen M. Sylvia, Program Planning and Evaluation for the Public Manager, 3rd ed. (Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press Inc., 2004)

Carole Weiss, Evaluation, 2nd edition, NY Prentice HALL, 1998)

Course Goals and Objectives:

- *Understanding:* Upon completion of this class, students should understand:
 - a. The nature of the research design process.
 - b. The advantages and implications of various evaluation approaches.
 - c. The methods used in organization analysis, outcome and process assessment.
 - d. Awareness of the threats to research validity and the steps to prevent invalids findings.
 - e. Increased sophistication regarding the political aspects of the public policy analysis and programmatic decisions.

- **Competencies:** Students should leave the course with:
 - a. An increased understanding the consultation process.
 - b. A fundamental competence in data consumption and applications.
 - c. An increased sophistication in group problem solving.
 - d. Increased ability to think linearly
 - e. Enhanced ability to critically evaluate alternatives in programmatic and organizational terms

Skills: Students will leave the course with:

- a. Ability to directly apply the concepts of program planning.
- b. Hands-on ability to utilize software applications of Micro-Soft Project and PERT application
- c. Ability to make power point presentations
- d. Enhanced communication skills through the group problem solving and learning techniques.
- e. Enhanced public speaking abilities through presenting group findings to a large audience.
- f. The ability to link program elements to organization goals and outcomes and the ability to develop appropriate measures of program achievement.

Reading Assignments and Course Schedule

Unit one: Context of Evaluation

Weiss 1-46: Chapter 1 Program Evaluation and Overview. Types of evaluations, the role of the evaluation.

Sylvia: Chapter I Systems

Concepts: Discussion: Program analysts attempt to identify patterns in organizations, the sequencing of work, lines of communications and so forth. Often organization structures and patterns are tied directly to critical organizational functions. Sometimes, however, special projects are organized that must overlay the normal operating systems of the organization. Sometimes, analysts identify systems, which are not thought out or planned in advanced. We call these phenomena management by peculiarity.

Sylvia Chapters 2 and 3

What is the role of planning in the evaluation process? Can meaningful planning be undertaken without including an evaluation component? Students will learn to use PERT and Project calendars that combine planning and systems theory into useful project management tools: These techniques are equally valuable for designing social and environmental programs as they are for business planning and construction projects. Students will utilize the computer lab to complete this assignment.

Unit 2: Process Evaluations

Sylvia: Chapter 4 and 5 Art and Method of Process Evaluation
Weiss: pp. 252-271

Discussion: What is the relevance of determining how things are done to the attainment of outcomes? Is process evaluation a thinly disguised method for masking management's efforts to micro-manage organizations? Can one meaningfully examine how things are done (timeliness, quality, and quantity) without a look at intended outcomes? The techniques of process evaluation developed in the 1970s and 1980s are part and parcel of the current quality movement. The application of project calendars for achieving program change will be emphasized in the lecture and applied by students in the computer lab. Students will also learn to apply responsibility matrices to real problems.

Unit 3 Outcome Evaluations

Sylvia Chapter 6, conducting an outcome evaluation
Chapter 7, Designs and threats to validity

Weiss: 215-235 and 114-152

Discussion: Research oriented social scientists are obsessive about ruling out the threats to validity. How important should these threats be to program managers seeking decision oriented information? Why is it important for managers to actively participate in the definition of goals and indicators in designing an evaluation? Which of the design strategies do you believe to be most relevant for line managers asking questions about on-going programs? Students will engage in group research design activities that will be presented to the class as a whole.

Unit 4: Evaluation Utilization

Sylvia: Chapter 9

Unit 4: Cost Benefit Analysis

Sylvia: Chapter 8 Cost benefit analysis

Discussion: What are the ethical considerations of jamming costs and benefits into a common unit of measure? If cost benefit analysis is to be used to compare programs with different goals, how useful is the data? If some things have no monetary value, how can cost benefit analysis be applied to them? Students will gain experience in the application of cost benefit analysis by an examination of two competing analyses of the same program.

Course Policies:

- This is an intensive class. Persons who cannot attend regularly should not take it. Furthermore, 10% of the grade is based on participation. One simply cannot participate if one is not in class.

- Exams are open book open notes. There is is therefore little incentive to cheat. Exams are to reflect your individual efforts, working alone and unaided.
- Academic honesty and integrity: I will do my best to make it difficult for you to cheat. If you choose to do so, you will fail the class and I will pursue the matter to its maximum limits under university policy. Not even you tearful parents can save you.
- You should visit the following website for suggested methods of citation that will insulate you from suspicion:

http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm