P562: Public Program Evaluation

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- **Teaching Assistant:** Haider Attiq

- **TA Email:** hattiq@iu.edu

- **Response time:** allow 48 business hours

- **Student hours (via Zoom):**

  - TBD following completion of WhenIsGood poll in Week 1

Bulletin Description

Examination of how the programs of public agencies are proposed, established, operated, and evaluated. Discussion of the role and conduct of research in the program evaluation process. In addition, techniques of effective evaluation and analysis are discussed.

Additional Description

This master's level course provides students with a working knowledge of applied policy analysis methods for public program evaluation. This course prepares students to be fluent in the basic application of program evaluation tools, and to be informed consumers of program evaluation research.

Broadly, policy analysis can be grouped into two categories: *ex ante* analysis, used to analyze policy problems generally and provide recommendations prior to implementation, and *ex post* analysis, used to evaluate the effectiveness of policies after implementation. This course focuses on *ex post* analysis and complements topics covered in other courses on *ex ante* analysis, such as forecasting, return on investment/net present value analysis, cost-benefit analysis, decision analysis, risk assessment, impact assessment, and political feasibility analysis.

This course provides a basic background in approaches to program evaluation, and discusses both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods for program evaluation. The bulk of the course will focus on a variety of empirical approaches to program evaluation, and on causal inference methods in particular. Students will receive training in a variety of experimental and quasi-experimental research methods used by researchers and policy analysts to assess impacts of public and nonprofit programs. The

course will discuss how to address analytical issues that may arise, including sampling issues and selection bias. The course also will cover common topics that arise in program evaluation, including issues with the policy *process* (such as a lack of program implementation fidelity, or a misalignment between the policy process and the measured outcomes) and issues with the policy *outcomes* (such as the emergence of unintended consequences, or challenges accessing data on the measured outcomes).

In program evaluation, the presentation of the analysis can be as important as the analysis itself. For a policy analysis to have an impact, it must be articulated and presented clearly and reflect due regard for its intended audience. In many ways, the medium is the message in policy analysis, so this course is in some ways a "boot camp" in policy writing and presentation. We will discuss the appropriate structure, tone, style, and presentation of policy analyses and program evaluation proposals.

Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. That said, this course is most appropriate for either first-year MPA students in their second semester of study, or second-year MPA students. I designed this course with the assumption that students have a basic background in descriptive and inferential statistics (including reading and interpreting bivariate and multivariate regression output) and research methods more generally. I also assume that students are able to use data to produce descriptive and inferential statistics using a standard statistical analysis computer program (e.g., SPSS, Stata, SAS, R, TSP, Minitab, Matlab, R). In other words, I will assume students have mastered concepts covered in V506 and have a basic conceptual knowledge of topics covered in V507 (e.g., multiple regression and regression with limited dependent variables).

Learning Outcomes

I have a few important goals for you in this course. At the end of this course I expect you to be able to:

- Describe the process by which government agencies and other organizations solicit and purchase program evaluations

- Develop a proposal to conduct a program evaluation, including a comprehensive data collection plan

- Score a proposal to conduct a program evaluation

- Understand the application of experiments in program evaluation research

- Understand the mechanics of conducting an experiment

- Understand the appropriate application of quasi-experimental program evaluation methods across public programs and policy areas

O'Neill School Expectations of Civility and Professional Conduct

The O'Neill School takes matters of honesty and integrity seriously because O'Neill is the training ground for future leaders in government, civic organizations, health organizations, and other institutions charged with providing resources for the public, and for members of society who are vulnerable and who are lacking in power and status. Precisely because O'Neill graduates tend to rise to positions of power and responsibility, it is critical that the lessons of honesty and integrity are learned early.

O'Neill requires that all members of its community – students, faculty, and staff – treat others with an attitude of mutual respect both in the classroom and during all academic and nonacademic activities outside the classroom. A student is expected to show respect through behavior that promotes conditions in which all students can learn without interruption or distraction. These behaviors foster an appropriate atmosphere inside and outside the classroom:

- Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be prepared for class.

- Students must be punctual in their arrival to class and be present and attentive for the duration of the class. Eating, sleeping, reading the newspaper, doing work for another class, wandering in and out of the classroom, and packing up or leaving class early are not civil or professional behaviors.

- Students must abide by the course policy regarding use of electronic devices in the classroom.

- Students must responsibly participate in class activities and during team meetings.

- Students must address faculty members, other students, and others appropriately and with respect, whether in person, in writing, or in electronic communications.

- Students must show tolerance and respect for diverse nationalities, religions, races, sexual orientations, and physical abilities.

- Students must not destroy or deface classroom property nor leave litter in the classroom.

** These expectations are excerpted from the O'Neill School Honor Code which can be found at: https://oneill.indiana.edu/doc/undergraduate/ugrd_student_honorcode.pdf Links to an external site.

Students are expected to abide by professional standards in all written and spoken communications, including email, web-based and other electronic communications. For a guide to respectful electronic communications, please see: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

 Academic Integrity

Online Course Materials

The faculty member teaching this course holds the exclusive right to distribute, modify, post, and reproduce course materials, including all written materials, study guides, lectures, assignments, exercises, and exams. While you are permitted to take notes on the online materials and lectures posted for this course for your personal use, you are not permitted to re-post in another forum, distribute, or reproduce content from this course without the express written permission of the faculty member. Any violation of this course rule will be reported to the appropriate university offices and officials, including to the Dean of Students as academic misconduct.

Note Selling

Several commercial services have approached students regarding selling class notes/study guides to their classmates. Selling the instructor's notes/study guides in this course is not permitted. Violations of this policy will be reported to the Dean of Students as academic misconduct (violation of course rules). Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment for which the notes/study guides are being sold, a reduction in your final course grade, or a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities. Additionally, you should know that selling a faculty member's notes/study guides individually or on behalf of one of these services using IU email, or via Canvas may also constitute a violation of IU information technology and IU intellectual property policies; additional consequences may result.

Academic Dishonesty

This class has a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism. In this era of information exchange, the effects of academic dishonesty can permanently damage your professional reputation; the wide availability of information on the internet also makes plagiarism extremely easy to detect. If caught, you will not only receive a zero on your assignment and an automatic "F" for your course grade, but you will face possible expulsion from the class and from Indiana University. Students are expected to adhere to IU's Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, available online at: http://www.iu.edu/~code/

Academic dishonesty also includes improper citation of resources, as well as citation omission. For a guide to proper citation, please refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, or see: [http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Style.htmlLinks to an external site.](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Style.html)

Use of AI (such as ChatGPT) in this class. Using AI (such as ChatGPT) to assist in completing assignments in this class is prohibited. If you do use AI, you will be committing plagiarism* and will be subject to penalties in this class and sanctions by Indiana University.

*Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else's work, including the work of other students, as one's own. *Any ideas or materials taken from another source* for either written or oral use *must be fully acknowledged,* unless the information is common knowledge. What is considered "common knowledge" may differ from course to course. [https://studentcode.iu.edu/responsibilities/academic-misconduct.htmlLinks to an external site.](https://studentcode.iu.edu/responsibilities/academic-misconduct.html). (emphasis added)

Course Requirements

Course Assignments

The assignments in this course will require a lot of time and effort. All students will take part in a semester-long project that involves the development of a written request for proposals (RFP) to conduct a rigorous evaluation of a current policy or program, a written response to the RFP in the form of an evaluation proposal, and the review/scoring of a proposal. The evaluation proposal also will include a data collection plan, which I will grade as a separate component of the proposal and which I will collect prior to the evaluation proposal. This semester-long project is a role-playing exercise designed to simulate the tasks and responsibilities frequently associated with program evaluation and policy research, while providing an opportunity to apply the concepts and research design strategies frequently found in program evaluation.

Grades

Final grades will be calculated as follows. Each course element will be weighted out of a total of 100 points. The course is not graded on a curve, though I may curve midterm grades if the mean grade is below 87.5%.

Class preparation and participation	10%
Midterm #1	15%

Midterm #2	15%
Term-long evaluation project	60%

- Request for proposal/statement of work (5%)

- Data collection plan (10%)

- Evaluation proposal (30%)

- Evaluation proposal review/scoring (15%)

Submitting Assignments

You will submit all assignments by uploading them to Canvas.

How Will I Know How I'm Doing in This Course?

Grades will be posted in Canvas. Because Canvas keeps track of all of your grades, you should always be able to calculate your current grade in the course. If you need assistance, please contact me.

Required Texts

- Murnane, R.J., & Willett, J.B. (2011). *Methods Matter: Improving Causal Inference in Educational and Social Science Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Silvia, P.J. (2007). *How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing.*Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

As a courtesy, assigned readings that are not included in the required texts will be made available via Canvas. If for some reason you are unable to access a particular journal article, please try to download it for free via IUCAT—through which nearly all assigned articles may be accessed electronically—before emailing the TA or instructor for assistance.

Course Policies

Work Load

Do not be fooled: this course will be a lot of work, and I have very high expectations that you will master the material covered. You should plan to spend about 10 hours per week on this course. Meeting the high expectations in this course will take substantial effort on both our parts. I am thrilled to have such a diverse student body represented in the class, all with different strengths and weaknesses, and I am sensitive to the variation in statistical preparation you have. If you have less preparation and challenges with high school level

algebra, you should expect to expend even more effort, at least in the first few weeks as you get up to speed.

Student Hours

I hold regular office hours. Please note that my office hours often fill up quickly – and so to avoid lengthy queues, I use an online office hour scheduler. To book a 10-minute office hour appointment during the allotted time, please go to the Google Sheet (link to follow following the first week of class) to sign up for a slot. If you believe your question(s) will take longer than 10 minutes to address, feel free to sign up for multiple consecutive slots. Note that this appointment time is intended to reduce the amount of wait-time for students during office hours. However, booking an appointment for a particular time does not guarantee that I will be available during your precise appointment time. Appointments often run over and I strive to address comprehensively student questions during each meeting. So please be patient with me and your fellow classmates. **Note that if you do not sign up for a slot, it is unlikely that I will have spare time during student hours to meet with you.**

Canvas

This course is administered online via Canvas. It is your responsibility as a graduate student to check your Canvas accounts several times during the week—just as you would check your email—for important announcements and course updates. I will use Canvas to post updates, clarifications, additional resources, some class notes, and the like. If you do not check Canvas regularly, you will certainly miss important updates. Failure to log in and check Canvas is not an excuse for being unaware of changes in course requirements.

Course Structure

This class will combine lecture, PowerPoint presentations, multimedia, and group activities. PowerPoint lectures for some classes will be made available online but generally may not be available until after the lecture is administered.

Assignment Policy

Assignments in this class consist of required readings, midterm exams, and written assignments. All writing and group assignments are due via Canvas at the specified time on the specified due date.

All written assignments must be submitted in Microsoft Word, using 12-point Times New Roman font and 1-inch margins. As is the norm in many policy briefs, documents should be single-spaced and left-justified with a hard-line return after each paragraph. All sources

must be cited using APA format. Guides to APA formatting and style can be found online at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/ (Links to an external site.)](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

Failure to adhere to these style and formatting guidelines for assignments will result in a five percentage-point deduction in the final assignment grade.

Late assignments will not be accepted, except in the case of a **documented** emergency. Technical difficulties and job interviews are not excuses for missed assignments, classes, or tests; please plan ahead and call UITS for support in advance of the deadline if technical difficulties arise.

You may request an extension for an assignment or exam only in cases of illness or family emergency. Such extension requests must be made via email *before* the assignment due date/test date.

Class Preparation and Participation

Your class preparation and participation grades depend on a few different factors. Because this course is asynchronous, and student Zoom meetings are optional, we will not assign class preparation and participation grades in the same way we would for a synchronous class. As a student, you are in charge of your level of engagement with the course. We will assess whether you participate in the discussion forum in the first week, and then assess the extent to which you engage with the instructor and T.A. throughout the course as needed. If you are performing very well on the assignments and feel that you do not need to engage much with us, you will not earn a lower participation grade. You also may earn a high class preparation and participation grade if you choose to engage with us on Zoom or via email to seek help understanding course concepts or with course assignments. You may earn a lower participation grade if your engagement with us reflects a lack of preparation, requests for the T.A. or instructor to give away the answers to homework items, or other behaviors (such as badgering the T.A. or instructor to review all assignments to ensure an "A" prior to submitting the assignment for a grade). You may earn a lower participation grade if you are earning lower than "A" grades on assignments and midterms and do not reach out proactively for assistance. Requests for assignment extensions do not constitute participation.

Email

Questions can be directed to me or the T.A. via email. Please begin the subject line with "P562." Please allow sufficient time for responses (48 business hours). I do not answer email on the weekends. As a general rule, urgent assignment questions sent within 24

hours of an assignment deadline do not allow sufficient time for a response. **Please, do not email me using the Canvas email system. That email system does not allow me to keep cohesive archive of student emails in one place.**

Withdrawals

NOTE: The auto-W deadline is NO LONGER THE LAST DAY OF CLASS (as it was during and post-Covid). After the auto-W deadline, withdrawal will be significantly limited and you will need permission to withdraw and must meet requirements established by O'Neill.

Incompletes

School policy states that incomplete grades are only considered if at least 80 percent of the coursework has been completed and a student is physically unable to complete the remainder.

Scheduling Conflicts

If you have any scheduling conflicts on course dates that correspond to major course deadlines, or potential constraints, you must notify me by September 3rd so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Arrangements can be made for accommodation of religious observances and other reasons.

Students with chronic conditions (e.g., illness, disability, extenuating personal or family circumstances) that may require special accommodations must notify me in writing by September 3rd. Excuses for chronic conditions will not be granted if documentation is not provided before the September 3rd deadline.

Religious Observation

In accordance with the Office of the Dean of Faculties, any student who wishes to receive an excused absence from class must submit a request form available from the Dean of Faculties for each day to be absent. This form must be presented to the course instructor by the end of the second week of this semester. A separate form must be submitted for each day. The instructor will fill in the bottom section of the form and then return the original to the student. Information about the policy on religious observation can be found at the following website: https://policies.iu.edu/policies/aca-59-accommodation-religious-observances/index.htmlLinks to an external site.

Disability Services for Students

Securing accommodations for a student with disabilities is a responsibility shared by the student, the instructor and the DSS Office. For information about support services or accommodations available to students with disabilities, and for the procedures to be

followed by students and instructors: https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/student-support/disability-services/index.htmlLinks to an external site.

Technical Support

For additional help with technical issues, consult:

- [University Information Technology Services (UITS)](#)Links to an external site. (human support)

- [IU Knowledge Base (IUKB)](#)Links to an external site. (guides)

- [IUware](#)Links to an external site. (download free software)

Additional Information

University Resources

- Academic Support: For general academic support, contact the Student Academic Center at: http://www.indiana.edu/~sac (Links to an external site.)

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): http://healthcenter.indiana.edu/counseling/index.shtml (Links to an external site.)

- Course website: https://canvas.iu.edu/lms-prd/app (Links to an external site.)

- Indiana University Library Website: http://www.libraries.iub.edu/ (Links to an external site.)

- Writing Tutorial Services: http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/ (Links to an external site.)

- Technical Support: Contact SPEA Bloomington Information Technology Services via email at speabits@iu.edu or by phone at (812) 855-6544. UITS also offers a number of tutorials for computer programs, including Excel and SPSS: http://ittraining.iu.edu/training/browse.aspx (Links to an external site.)

For a complete list of UITS services, see: http://uits.iu.edu/page/amgy (Links to an external site.)

Counseling and Psychological Services

For information about services offered to students by CAPS: http://healthcenter.indiana.edu/counseling/index.shtmlLinks to an external site.

TimelyCare

Indiana students have free, 24/7 access to virtual mental health care services with TimelyCare. Students do not need insurance to access TimelyCare services. [https://www.iu.edu/mental-health/find-resources/timely-care.html#0Links to an external site.](https://www.iu.edu/mental-health/find-resources/timely-care.html#0)

Sexual Harassment

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. Title IX and our own Sexual Misconduct policy prohibit sexual misconduct. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help.

If you are seeking help and would like to talk to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with:

1. The Sexual Assault Crisis Service (SACS) at 812-855-8900

2. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 812-855-5711

3. Confidential Victim Advocates (CVA) at 812-856-2469

4. IU Health Center at 812-855-4011

For more information about available resources: [http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/help/index.htmlLinks to an external site.](http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/help/index.html). It is also important to know that federal regulations and University policy require me to promptly convey any information about potential sexual misconduct known to me to our campus' Deputy Title IX Coordinator or IU's Title IX Coordinator. In that event, they will work with a small number of others on campus to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available to the student who may have been harmed. Protecting a student's privacy is of utmost concern, and all involved will only share information with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. I encourage you to visit [http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/help/index.htmlLinks to an external site.](http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/help/index.html) to learn more.

Commitment to Diversity: Find your home and community at IU

Asian Culture Center

Address: 807 East Tenth Street, Bloomington, IN 47408

Phone: 812-856-5361

Email: acc@indiana.edu

Website: https://asianresource.indiana.edu/index.htmlLinks to an external site.

First Nations Educational & Cultural Center

Address: 712 E 8th St., Bloomington, IN 47408

Phone: 812-855-4814

Email: fnecc@indiana.edu

Website: https://firstnations.indiana.edu/contact/index.htmlLinks to an external site.

Jewish Culture Center

Address: 730 E 3rd St., Bloomington, Indiana 47401

Phone: 812-336-3824

Website: https://iuhillel.org/iu-jewish-culture-centerLinks to an external site.

LGBTQ+ Culture Center

Address: 705 E 7th St., Bloomington, Indiana 47408

Phone: 812-855-4252

Email: glbtserv@indiana.edu

Website: https://lgbtq.indiana.edu/contact/index.htmlLinks to an external site.

La Casa Latino Culture Center

Address: 715 E 7th St., Bloomington IN, 47408

Phone: 812-855-0174

Email: lacasa@indiana.edu

Website: https://lacasa.indiana.edu/Links to an external site.

Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center

Address: 275 N Jordan Ave Bloomington, Indiana 47405

Phone: 812-855-9271

Email: nmgrad@indiana.edu

Website: https://blackculture.indiana.edu/index.htmlLinks to an external site.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change and may be amended throughout the course to reflect any changes deemed necessary by the instructor.