

## **Program Evaluation (20:834:526) [3 credits]**

### **Course Description**

This course provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to evaluate public and nonprofit programs. It surveys the background and accountability demands for evaluation in the public and nonprofit sectors. Important topics and techniques of evaluation are explored, including needs assessment, program theory, assessing implementation (process evaluation), assessing impact (summative evaluation), analyzing cost effectiveness, and communicating evaluation findings. The role of evaluation in management and the policy process is also discussed. Students apply concepts from the course by reviewing current examples of evaluation studies and by designing their own evaluation of a program or initiative of interest.

### **Learning Objectives**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Appreciate the role of program evaluation in public and nonprofit organizations.
- Learn how to create logic models to diagnose program activities and outcomes.
- Apply basic measurement concepts and methods of data collection.
- Understand experimental and quasi-experimental designs for impact assessment.
- Interpret and present evaluation findings for policy and practice.

### **Requirements**

Requirements will vary by instructor and may include:

- Assigned weekly readings from the textbook or other sources.
- Case studies and discussions of real-world program evaluations.
- Professional memos that encourage students to practice evaluation skills.
- A final paper or project in which students critique or design a real-world evaluation.

### **Schedule / Outline of Topics**

- Week 1: Course overview and introduction
- Week 2: The history and purpose of program evaluation
- Week 3: Logic models (theories of change)
- Week 4: Qualitative approaches to program evaluation
- Week 5: Measuring activities and outcomes
- Week 6: Sampling for program evaluation
- Week 7: Sources of existing data (secondary and administrative data)
- Week 8: Surveys and other methods of original data collection
- Week 9: Randomized experiments (RCTs)
- Week 10: Quasi-experiments
- Week 11: Natural experiments
- Week 12: Analysis of evaluation data
- Week 13: Evaluation use for policy and practice
- Week 14: Final projects (presentations)

### **Texts / Materials / Resources**

The selection of textbooks and readings will vary by instructor. Listed below are some of the possible textbooks, materials, and resources an instructor may select for this course:

- Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P., & Wholey, J. S. (Eds.). (2015). *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. Jossey-Bass (Wiley).
- Posavac, E. J. (2015). *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies*. Routledge.
- Remler, D. H., & Van Ryzin, G. G. (2022). *Research Methods in Practice: Strategies for Description and Causation*. SAGE Publications.
- Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Henry, G. T. (2018). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*. SAGE Publications.