PAFF 515: Program Evaluation

Binghamton University | State University of New York | Spring 2022

# Course Information

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| Meeting Place | Meeting Time | Zoom Link for the Class |
| UDC 221 | R: 5:50-8:50 pm | <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/6187732069>  **Please Note: This link is only if we migrate to online learning during the semester. This class is currently scheduled to be taught in person.** |

# Instructor Information

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Instructor | Email | Office Location & Hours |
| Matthew J. Uttermark, PhD | [mutterma@binghamton.edu](file:///C:\Users\muttermark%20laptop\Downloads\mutterma@binghamton.edu) | UDC 341  R: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm |

# General Information

## Description

This course is a seminar on implementation and evaluation in public administration/policy. In the first part of the class students will be introduced into the various problems surrounding implementation that effect policy/program effectiveness. In the second part of the class students will learn the various methodological strategies surrounding evaluation. In part three, students will read and discuss examples of evaluation in various substantive contexts.

This is a seminar—not a lecture. You are expected to critically read, analyze and discuss these readings each week. There can be no free-riders in this class. Your insights and analysis will be key to the success of the class. You will be expected to carefully read the required texts and come to class prepared to discuss the importance of the readings to public administration/policy praxis and your own interests. Since evaluation research deals with timely and dynamic topics, it is appropriate to think of how these academic debates relate to current events at the federal, state, local and international level.

**This course requires that students to have previously taken PAFF 510 (Research Design & Methods).** We will be applying and evaluating many of the research techniques covered in that course to material in this class.

## Grading\*

| A 93-100 | B 83-86.99 | C 73-76.99 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A- 90-92.99 | B- 80-82.99 | C- 70-72.99 |
| B+ 87-98.99 | C+ 77-79.99 | F < 70 |

\* A letter grade of ‘A’ is the highest grade that you can receive in this course.

**Advice to Accelerated Undergraduate Students** Please note that expectations and evaluation of performance in a graduate-level course are substantially different than evaluations in an undergraduate-level course. In a graduate-level course, you will work develop skills to think independently and problem solve on your own. These are valuable skills that employers are looking for in the public and private sector job markets. This means that assignments and course readings will, be design, have less handholding than assignments and readings that you interacted with in undergraduate level coursework. If you are having trouble engaging with material in this class, it is your responsibility to schedule an appointment and visit during office hours.

In addition, as stated in the department handbook, grades are another departure from undergraduate coursework. A work effort that earned you an ‘A’ in an undergraduate course, will only earn you a ‘B’ in a graduate-level course. Adjust your expectations accordingly. I recommend scheduling 8-10 hours per week for this class, 3 hours for lecture and the remainder for readings and assignments. It is better to schedule too much time to prep for this class than not enough. I also strongly recommend against taking course overloads while taking a graduate-level course.

**Grade Rounding** As a matter of policy, the instructor does not round grades in graduate-level coursework. Please do not email the instructor at the end of the semester asking that your final grade be rounded up.

## Evaluation

**Participation (15%):** Students are expected to attend all in a graduate program, barring an excused absence. Please come to class prepared (i.e. having read all of the assigned materials for that day). You are expected to actively participate in each class. Participation will be evaluated by students' actively engaging in lecture, providing thoughtful comments/questions in class discussion, and evidence of careful reading of assigned materials. I expect students, on average, to have at least five comments of quality each week in class to receive an ‘A’ grade on this benchmark. Students who do not participate will receive no higher than a ‘C-‘ (70%) on this benchmark.

**Discussion Leader / Guiding Questions (15%):** Students will be paired to serve as discussion leader for one class during the semester. I will pass around a sign-up sheet for you to indicate a day that you would like to lead discussion. Students should reflect on key questions that come up in the week's readings and possible applications of findings in public administration/policy. Prior to class, student leaders will submit a pair of guiding questions (6-10 *per reading*), which will guide class discussion. Student will send a preliminary draft no later than 9am Tuesday during the corresponding week. The instructor will make adjustments as they see fit and place the questions on a folder in Brightspace.

**Response Papers (10% each):** In addition to serving as discussion leader, students will also sign-up for two class periods to write response papers. Response papers should be 1,000-1,200 words (about two full pages), typed in Times New Roman size 12 font, single-spaced.

Students should briefly highlight main themes or questions of the readings. The response papers can (and should) discuss theories and methodological techniques of the readings; discuss strength and weaknesses of theories, hypotheses, and research methods; discuss what implications exist for public administrators; and potential questions that you have after engaging with the research.

Students must email their response papers to the instructor no later than 12:00 pm on Thursday. Additionally, a hardcopy of the response paper is due on my desk at the start of class. Response papers are graded on a check plus (100%), check (90%), check minus (80%) system. Response papers that are late are not eligible for grade higher than check minus. It is expected that students writing response papers will be the most engaged students during class discussion, during their respective weeks.

**Final Project (40%):** Students must select one of the two options below for a final project.

Option A – Practice Program Evaluation: Students will write a practice evaluation for a final project in this class. Students can select a policy/program at any level of government. Students will 1): Describe the policy being evaluated; 2) identify potential limitations in implementation; 3): focus the evaluation design; 4) gather credible evidence (if possible); 5) justify conclusions; and 6) share lessons learned. A CDC authored guide to evaluation is available on Brightspace for students to use as a reference.

With respect to research design / methods, students must make an effort to produce the most complete set of evaluation possible. If a student decided to conduct a case study, they need to take a stab at writing a competent case study. If a student wishes to collect observational data, they should attempt to collect that data and visualize the data in the report. If a student decides on a design that cannot be feasibly run (e.g., a survey of administrators), they should present a draft of the proposed study (e.g., draft survey questions) and then must walk through expected implications given various findings.

Evaluations should be at least 6,000 words – including references, 1.5 spacing, Times New Roman fount, size 12. Please use APA author—date citations. At least 50% of references must come from academic sources (e.g., university press books or peer-reviewed academic journals). Students must have at least 10 references.

*Please note:* If you turn in final project that is 1,000 words below the required word count, you are ineligible to receive a final grade higher than the percentage missing – for example, a student who turns in a 3,000-word qualitative analysis will receive no higher than a 50% on the final project grade.

Option B – Research Paper: With instructor permission, students may instead choose to write a research paper that most effectively evaluates a key policy/program question related to your research. The latter part of this course covers methods and topics relevant to evaluating policy interventions. The paper should provide: 1) a carefully developed research design and; 2) at least a base-line, first-cut, evaluation of your research question. Either via a qualitative or quantitative analysis.

Papers must be of article length (between 7,000 – 10,000 words including references), 1.5 spacing, Times New Roman fount, size 12. Please use APA author—date citations. Please note, that I will evaluate your paper at least in part based on your ability to carry out the project in the real world. You cannot simply write that you are going to randomize an intervention that would be impossible, for all intents and purposes, for you to carry out.

**Final Project Presentation (10%):** Students will prepare a 10 min (~5 slide) presentation of their evaluation project and findings and share them with the class on the last meeting of the semester. Please note, class may run a little long on this day due to presentations.

# Course Materials

## Text

**Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation.** Third Edition. 2010. Wholey, Joseph, S. Harry P. Hatry, and Kathryn E. Newcomer (eds.). John Wiley & Sons.

This book is abbreviated HPPE in the course schedule.

**Other readings (book chapters, journal articles) will be made available on the course site.**

COVID-19 Related Class Policies

Binghamton University has adopted requirements to protect the health of students, faculty, staff, and the community at large. Safeguarding public health depends on each of us strictly following these requirements. As a condition of enrollment, each student has acknowledged a statement of Rights and Responsibilities for the semester; including an acknowledgment that all campus requirements for spacing and wearing face coverings must be followed at all times. Health and safety standards will be enforced for this course.

**Face-to-face Mask Policy**. Currently Binghamton University (and the SUNY system at large) are following CDC guidelines with respect to wearing masks in enclosed spaces. This class will follow any university directives on wearing masks in the classroom. Please review Binghamton University’s mask policy from the 2020-21 school year below on university expectations if masks are required by administration.

**2020-21 Directive.** Face masks that cover the nose and mouth tightly are required at all times in the classroom. We know that they are one of the most effective means at stopping the spread of the corona-virus. Please note that the university has indicated that face-shields are not an appropriate substitute for face masks in the classroom.

If a student comes to class without an adequate face mask, the instructor will dismiss the student from the class. Any work that the student misses will receive a zero. If a student is not wearing a mask properly, the student will readjust the mask or leave the classroom after the instructor's first warning.

If a student does not comply with the requirements and refuses to wear their face mask properly so that it covers the nose and mouth tightly, to leave the classroom when directed by the instructor, the instructor will immediately cancel the remainder of the class session and inform the dean's once – per university policy. The Dean's office will work with the Student Records office to issue a failing grade (F) for the course, regardless of when in the semester the incident occurs. The Dean's once will also inform the Office of Student Conduct.

I encourage all of you to be good global citizens and be courteous of the fact that peers in the class may have family or friends with compromised immune systems who need this accommodation.

Students may eat and drink during class break, but should follow CDC and university mask directives during class time.

**If we migrate back to Zoom** you will be able to join the class using the link below:

<https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/6187732069>

Normal Class Policies

**Makeup Work** Make-up work will be accepted in this course if a student has a university approved absence. University approved absences include:

* A documented illness (or serious illness of a dependent child).
* A death in the family.
* Call to active military duty.
* Jury duty.
* A religious or work-restricted holy days.
* Official university activities (i.e., a student athlete competing in a meet).

It is your responsibility to inform me and get documentation before the absence occurs. For example, if you are ill the day of an assignment, I require a signed note from a medical doctor dated the day of the exam. I will then work to determine how to make-up the assignment. With the exception of the final project – which must be completed on time – late work submitted up to 48 hours after a deadline may receive up to half credit, unless otherwise documented.

**Makeup Assignments** Students who miss class due to illness or other reasons will be assigned the following assignments in-order to keep up with material covered in-class discussion. 1st absence, cover readings and material on your own-time. 2nd absence, assignment of additional response paper covering week missed. 3rd absence, one-on-one meeting with instructor. Per university policy, students must attend 75% of class instruction time in order to be eligible to receive credit for a class.

**Incomplete Grades** I do not expect to hand out a grade of “Incomplete” to any student in this course. However, a grade of “Incomplete” will only be given if there is an agreement between the instructor and the student prior to the end of the semester. The instructor reserves the right to determine a legitimate reason for assigning an incomplete grade.

**Email Policy** Please avoid emailing the instructor with questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus. The instructor will not reply to such emails. This document contains information on how your grade is calculated and what is covered each day in class. Additionally, if you wish to set up an appointment with the instructor outside of office hours, please provide a list of times to meet in the first email sent to the instructor.

**Maintaining a Respectful Classroom Environment** Binghamton University is committed to providing and maintaining a respectful environment that is conductive to safe working, learning, and living for all members of the institutional community. It is expected that all students will respect each other in their personal interactions, inside and outside of the classroom. Acts of violence, threats of violence, derogatory comments, and behavior meant to intimidate others is prohibited.

I reserve the right to have a student escorted from the classroom for persistent violations of this policy and the students final grade will reflect their lack of decorum.

**Plagiarism** Any form of cheating will NOT be tolerated. If you are caught plagiarizing any written work you will receive an automatic zero on the assignment and will be reported to the university in accordance with Binghamton policy. Plagiarism is defined as: handing in a paper you did not write, attempting to pass off someone else's work as your own, or using your own ideas, information, or phraseology of other writers without giving proper credit in your text. Self-plagiarism – handing the same written assignment for multiple courses – is also prohibited. See the university honor code details below for more information.

**Binghamton's Academic Honor Code** The academic honor system of Binghamton University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility: (1) To uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work. (2) To refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community, and (3) To foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the University community."

I expect students to bring possible violations of the honor code to my attention as soon as possible, so that the violation may be resolved. Violations included, but are not limited to, plagiarism of work, assisting a student in obtaining unauthorized information for an assignment, project or test. A complete list of violations can be found in Binghamton's University Bulletin.

Violation of the Academic honor code can lead, but is not limited to, a lower/failing grade on the assignment or a lower/failing grade in the course. The university may take additional measures including, formal reprimand, academic probation, suspension, or expulsion from the university.

For more information on Binghamton's Academic Honesty policy, visit:

<https://www.binghamton.edu:8443/exist/rest/bulletin/2020-2021/index.html>

**Americans with Disabilities Act** If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please notify the instructor by the second week of class. You are also encouraged to contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). The SSD office makes formal recommendations regarding necessary and appropriate accommodations based on specifically diagnosed disabilities. Information regarding disabilities is treated in a confidential manner. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to Binghamton students with disabilities, contact:

**Services for Students with Disabilities**

Room 119

University Union

Binghamton University

Phone: 607-777-2686 (Voice, TTY)

Fax: 607-777-6893

Email: [ssd@binghamton.edu](file:///C:\Users\muttermark%20laptop\Downloads\ssd@binghamton.edu)

<https://www.binghamton.edu/ssd/index.html>

# Course Schedule

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary over the course of the semester. Regularly check Brightspace and your e-mail for updates on any changes.

| Week | Date | Topic | Reading | Assignments |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week 1 | **Jan. 27th** | What is Implementation & Evaluation? | Wildavsky 1972 PAR  O’ Toole 2000 JPART  HPPE Chapter 1 |  |
| Week 2 | **Feb. 3rd** | Bureaucracies, Stakeholders, and Logic Models | Wilson 1989 Chapters 1 & 2  HPPE Chapters 2, 3, 4 |  |
| Week 3 | **Feb. 10th** | The Implementation Problem | Pressman, Jeffrey L., and Aaron Wildavsky. 1984. *Implementation: How great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland* |  |
| Week 4 | **Feb. 17th** | Bureaucratic Motivation & Behavior | Wise 2004 PAR  Rosenbloom 1983 PAR  Blais and Dion 1990 Polity  Weissert 1994 JPART  Bell et al. 2021 PAR | Idea Due |
| Week 5 | **Feb 24th** | Delegation & Control | Krause 2010 Book Chapter  Scholz and Wood 1998 AJPS  Potter 2017 JOP  Keiser, Mueser, and Choi 2004 AJPS  James et al. 2015 PAR |  |
| Week 6 | **Mar 3rd** | Interest Groups / Bureaucratic Influence | Lindbloom 1979 PAR  Golden. 1998. JPART  Yackee and Yackee. 2006. JOP  Meier and O’Toole. 2006. PAR  Nicholson-Crotty and Miller. 2012. JPART |  |
| Week 7 | **Mar 10th** | Federalism (Hierarchical Systems) | Agranoff and McGuire. 2004. JPART  Derthick, Martha. 1990. *Agency Under Stress: The Social Security Administration In American Government* |  |
| Week 8 | **Mar 17th** | **No Class** | **Spring Break** |  |
| Week 9 | **Mar 24th** | Program Theories & Designs | HPPE 5, 6, 8, 9, 19 | Front-end Draft Due |
| Week 10 | **Mar 31st** | Backend of Evaluation | HPPE Chapter 23, 24, 25  Oliver et al. 2019. BCM PH |  |
| Week 11 | **Apr 7th** | **Peer Review Day** |  |  |
| Week 12 | **Apr 14th** | Evaluation in Practice |  |  |
| Week 13 | **Apr 21st** | Evaluation in Practice | *Note: I am attending SPPC on this date (format TBD) and we may reschedule when the class meets on this week* |  |
| Week 14 | **Apr 28th** | Evaluation in Practice | **Presentations** |  |  |
| Week 15 | **May 5th** | **Presentations** |  | Final Projects Due |