

POGO 646-DL1: Policy & Program Evaluation CRN 16820

Fall 2025 – Draft Syllabus

Class Time and Location: Online/Synchronous, Thursdays 7:20-10:00 pm

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

Evaluation is the systematic assessment of policies and programs designed to improve social conditions. Evaluators apply social science research methods to answer key questions about the performance of such programs. Evaluation is a major tool for policy analysis, assessment and decision making. This course examines many facets of the evaluation process, including the purposes and types of evaluations, strategies, methodology, and applications. The course will also consider how evaluations are shaped by social and political contexts. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain fundamental theory and techniques of policy and program evaluation
- Collect, analyze, and interpret data
- Apply appropriate evaluation methods and interpret results
- Synthesize and critique qualitative and quantitative evidence
- Describe cultural, political, economic, and social justice implications of evaluation
- Produce and report policy and program evaluation research and results to public policy decision makers and the public

Course Prerequisites

One of the following: GOVT/POGO/PUAD 511, HAP 602 or HAP 719.

Required Text

Rossi, Peter H., Lipsey, Mark W., and Henry, Gary T. 2019. *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing). 8th edition. ISBN: 978-1-5063-0788-6 (hereinafter referred to as Rossi).

[We will use the textbook companion website located here.](#) The open-access Student Resources are accessed through the left navigation bar, with curated journal articles illustrating the concepts presented in each chapter. Additional materials will be posted on Canvas.

Course Website and Technology Requirements

Important Notice: This course will be hosted on Canvas. Please ensure you are familiar with accessing and navigating this platform.

[Resources and support are available here](#) to help you get started. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out to me or contact the [ITS Support Center](#) for assistance.

Canvas will be used for this course. [You can access Canvas here](#). Log in and click on the “Canvas” tab. You will see the POGO 646-DL1 course. Username and passwords are the same as your Mason email account. This is an online course with both synchronous and asynchronous elements. Consistent access to an internet connection is necessary to attend online classes, participate in class discussions and to complete assignments in Canvas.

All course materials, project instructions and other communications will be posted on Canvas. Online classes will utilize the web-conferencing software Zoom. Students are required to have a device with a functional camera and microphone for all class sessions.

If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications, and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Course Approach

Our meetings will take place online weekly as scheduled. **This course is not self-paced.** Students are expected to meet specific due dates listed in the Class Schedule section of this syllabus. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

Participation: Students are encouraged to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which include viewing all materials, completing activities and assignments, and participating in class discussions and group interactions. Students will be fully prepared for each class session, demonstrate knowledge of assigned readings and provide thoughtful responses to discussion questions and exercises. A portion of each class will be devoted to practical application of the course concepts utilizing evaluation methods and tools, with students alternating as group leaders for hands-on work.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Schedule conflicts must be discussed with the instructor in advance. Students must be connected to the internet with the computer's camera on for the entire session: students not visible to the instructor will not be considered in attendance.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments must be submitted via Canvas on the scheduled due date to receive full credit. Due dates for assignments are listed in the course outline. Late assignments will only be accepted or graded with prior written approval from the instructor.

Graded Course Assignments

Class Participation, Group Work, Weekly Review Questions	30%
1 st Draft Evaluation Synthesis: Program Summary, Article Matrix	10%
2 nd Draft Evaluation Synthesis: Intro, Literature Review, Logic Model, Matrix	15%
Final Evaluation Synthesis Paper	25%
Evaluation Synthesis Presentation or Infographic	20%
Total	100%

Grading

Letter grades will be determined as follows.

A	94-100	B-	80-82
A-	90-93	C+	77-79
B+	87-89	C	73-76
B	83-86	C-	70-72

Student Services at GMU

- [University Libraries](#)
- [Writing Center](#)
- [Patriot Pantry](#)
- [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#)
- [Learning Resource Center](#)

- [Emergency Preparedness Guides](#)

Other student support resources are available through [Student Support Resources](#).

University Policies

Academic Standards

Academic Standards exist to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution's goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourage continued ethical behavior of faculty and students to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment forward into professional practice.

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, coauthored pieces, and project reports.
- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. [The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is outlined in the university's procedures here.](#) Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By

adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for understanding how these general expectations regarding academic standards apply to each course, assignment, or exam they participate in; students should ask their instructor for clarification on any aspect that is not clear to them.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit the [Disability Services website](#) for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu. Phone: (703) 993-2474.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for registering with Disability Services and communicating about their approved accommodations with their instructor in advance of any relevant class meeting, assignment, or exam.

FERPA and Use of GMU Email Addresses for Course Communication

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the disclosure of education records for eligible students and is an essential aspect of any course. **Students must use their GMU email account** to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. Instructors will not respond to messages sent from or send messages regarding course content to a non-GMU email address.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for checking their GMU email regularly for course-related information, and/or ensuring that GMU email messages are forwarded to an account they do check.

Title IX Resources and Required Reporting

As a part of George Mason University's commitment to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. Accordingly, **all non-confidential employees, including your faculty member, have a legal requirement to report to the Title IX Coordinator, all relevant details obtained directly or indirectly about any incident of**

Prohibited Conduct (such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based stalking, dating/domestic violence). Upon notifying the Title IX Coordinator of possible Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator will assess the report and determine if outreach is required. If outreach is required, the individual the report is about (the “Complainant”) will receive a communication, likely in the form of an email, offering that person the option to meet with a representative of the Title IX office.

For more information about non-confidential employees, resources, and Prohibited Conduct, please see University Policy 1202: [Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#). Questions regarding Title IX can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator via email to TitleIX@gmu.edu, by phone at 703-993-8730, or in person on the Fairfax campus in Aquia 373.

Student opportunity: If you prefer to speak to someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential employees in [Student Support & Advocacy \(SSAC\)](#), Counseling and [Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#), [Student Health Services \(SHS\)](#), and/or the [Office of the University Ombudsperson](#).

Campus Closure

If the campus closes or class is canceled due to weather or other concerns, students should check Canvas for updates on how to continue learning and information about any changes to events or assignments.

Privacy and Course Materials

All course materials posted to Canvas or other course site are private to this class; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.

- All synchronous meetings in this class will be recorded to provide necessary information for students in this class. Recordings will be stored on Canvas and will only be accessible to students taking this course during this semester.
- Video recordings — whether made by instructors or students — of class meetings that include audio, visual, or textual information from other students are private and must not be shared outside the class.
- Live video conference meetings (e.g., Zoom) that include audio, textual, or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household or recorded and shared outside the class.

Religious Holidays and Observations

It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments. [Religious Holiday Calendar - University Life \(gmu.edu\)](#)

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