The Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration
Fall 2020

Course Number: PPPA 6085

Course Title: Evidence Building in Government: Cultivating Learning
Cultures in the Public and Nonprofit Sectors

Course Description: This course is designed to give students knowledge and skills to
work effectively with the policies and requirements currently
shaping the demand and supply for "evidence-based
policymaking" in the public and non-profit sectors. The course
content and exercises will develop students' skills in leading
change and developing organizational learning cultures, and using
"Big Data" to build policy-relevant evidence.

Prerequisites: PPPA 6002 or equivalent basic courses on research design
and statistics

Professor: Dr. Kathryn Newcomer
Cell Telephone: 301-706-9296
E-mail: newcomer@gwu.edu
Office hours: I am available to chat everyday, so please feel free to
email me to tell me when you want to chat.

Required Readings:

Anthony S. Bryk, Louis M. Gomez, Alicia Grunow, and Paul G.
Le Mahieu. 2016. *Learning to Improve: How America's Schools
Can Get Better at Getting Better.* Harvard Education Press.

Chip and Dan Heath*. 2010. Switch: How to Change Things When
Change Is Hard.* Random House.

Ibram X. Kendi. 2019. *How to be An Antiracist*. New York: One
World.

Oliver James, Donald P. Moynihan, Asmus Leth Olsen, and Gregg G. Van Ryzin. 2020. *Behavioral Public Performance.* Cambridge University Press (**entire monograph on blackboard**)

Matthew J. Salganik.2018. *Bit by Bit*. Princeton University Press.

Colin Talbot. 2013. *Theories of Performance: Organizational and Service Improvement in the Public Domain*. Oxford University Press.

(See alibris.com for better buys on books or anywhere you can find good buys)

And many academic articles, reports and other readings by a diverse set of authors are also provided by the instructor on blackboard. Also see articles from the Center for Implementation at https://thecenterforimplementation.com/our-resources

Student Learning Objectives:

Through course discussions, readings, and assignments, students will develop knowledge and skills to enable them to:
1) develop initiatives, programs and policies using principles of human centered design;
2) develop theory of change and program logic models;
3) work with stakeholders to lead change efforts;
4) work with stakeholders to develop organizational learning cultures;
5) understand and address the ethical considerations involved with using "Big Data;"
6) use "Big Data" to develop-relevant evidence to inform public policy.

Method of Instruction:

The environment in which public servants, contractors, and grantees conducting work for government has become more confusing, and even intimidating, as policymakers and commissioners of evaluation expect different types of "evidence," and simultaneously employ different criteria in judging the quality of evidence. The theories of how to improve government performance through the use of "evidence," and the practice on the ground are sometimes greatly disconnected. Thus, the lack of coordination in practice contributes to an inability to satisfy key goals of supporting accountability and improving performance, and limits the ability for evidence to be used to promote learning. These challenges and opportunities are explored by class participation in both in-class and written exercises.

Classroom Expectations:

Higher education works best when it becomes a vigorous and lively marketplace of ideas in which all points of view are heard. Free expression in the classroom is an integral part of this process and works best when all of us approach the enterprise with empathy and respect for others, irrespective of their ideology, political views, or identity. We value civility because that is the kind of community we want, and we care for it because civility permits intellectual exploration and growth.

Respect for Diversity:

It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. I strive to create an inclusive classroom and present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, and political affiliation. **Your suggestions on how to help me succeed with this are encouraged and appreciated.**

Assigned Readings:

Assigned readings are selected to give students a representative sample of both the academic and professional literature, well as to expose them to the sorts of issues which arise in the context of government.

Assignments:

1. Class Participation: Attendance is required for successful completion of this course. Students are expected to have completed required readings prior to the class meeting for which they are listed. Class discussion on the required readings will affect course grades, especially in borderline cases. (15% of grade).

NOTE: Due dates are firm for all written assignments, and late papers will be penalized by lower grades.

2. **One System Critique:** Students will review critically a performance management system in a federal, state or local government agency. **Due December 15, 2020.** A template for the questions to address will be co-developed with the instructor. (35% of grade).

4. **Memoranda.** Three focused brief memoranda will be due and will be spaced out across the semester to address eh topics addressed in class. Guidance on writing clear memoranda can be found on Blackboard. (50 % of grade).Students will be given the topics and intended audiences for each memorandum at least one week before each is due. The memoranda will be due on **Sept 23, Oct. 28 and Dec. 2.**

Class Schedule and Assignments

Session 1 (Sept. 2)

Introduction to the Course and Anti-Racist Policymaking.

Readings:

       Kendi book
       Urban Institute Paper On BB

Sessions 2-3 (Sept. 9 and 16)

Theories of Performance in the Public Domain

Readings:

       Talbot book
       Parsons on Complexity Theory
       Chapter from Ray Pawson book, *The Science of Evaluation.*

Session 4-5 (Sept 23)

Developing Learning Agendas and Strategic Knowledge Brokering in Government

Readings:

       Nightingale White Paper
       Munteau and Newcomer article
       Olejniczak et al. article

Sessions 6-7 (Sept. 30 and Oct. 7)

Leading Change in Public and Nonprofit Agencies

Readings:

Heath and Heath book
Kee and Newcomer Book Chapters
Applying Design Thinking To Public Service Delivery. The IBM Center for the Business of Government on BB and at **http://www.businessofgovernment.org/report/applying-design-thinking-public-service-delivery**

Session 8-9 (Oct. 14 and 21)

Developing and Sustaining Learning Networks

Readings:

   Bryk et al. text

Session 10 (Oct. 28)

Performance Measurement Improvement

Readings:

   James et al. Monograph (*Behavioral Public Performance)*
   Chapters from *The Four Disciplines*

Sections 11 and 12 (Nov. 4 and 11)

"Big Data" – What do we do with it?

Readings:

   Salganik book

Session 13 (Nov. 18 and Dec. 2)

Performance Management Systems in Practice – Student Presentations

No Readings

Session 14 (Dec. 9)

Enhancing Learning from Evidence in Government: Course Overview
Readings:

   TBA

Policies in The Trachtenberg School Courses:

1. Incompletes: A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of I (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student and instructor will both sign the CCAS contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the School Director. Please consult the TSPPPA Student Handbook or visit our website for the complete CCAS policy on incompletes.

2. Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom: It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment. Students can submit written work electronically only with the express permission of the instructor.

3. Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work: All work must be turned in by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit for that assignment, unless an exception is expressly made by the instructor.

4. Academic Honesty: Please consult the "policies" section of the GW student handbook for the university code of academic integrity. Note especially the definition of plagiarism: "intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information." All examinations, papers, and other graded work products and assignments are to be completed in conformance with the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity. See the GW Academic Integrity Code (http://www.gwu.edu/~integrity).

5. Changing Grades After Completion of Course: No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester, other than in cases of clerical error.

6. The Syllabus: This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her/his discretion, change content and requirements during the semester. Excused absences will be given for absences due to religious holidays as per the university schedule, but please advise the instructor ahead of time

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University policies

University policy on observance of religious holidays
In accordance with University policy, students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious

observance. For details and policy, see "Religious Holidays" at provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-and-guidelines

Academic Integrity Code

Academic Integrity is an integral part of the educational process, and GW takes these matters very seriously. Violations of academic integrity occur when students fail to cite research sources properly, engage in unauthorized collaboration, falsify data, and in other ways outlined in the Code of Academic Integrity. Students accused of academic integrity violations should contact the Office of Academic Integrity to learn more about their rights and options in the process. Outcomes can range from failure of assignment to expulsion from the University, including a transcript notation. The Office of Academic Integrity maintains a permanent record of the violation.

More information is available from the Office of Academic Integrity at studentconduct.gwu.edu/academic-integrity. The University's "Guide of Academic Integrity in Online Learning Environments" is available at studentconduct.gwu.edu/guide-academic-integrity-online-learning-environments. Contact information: rights@gwu.edu or 202-994-6757.

Support for students outside the classroom

Virtual academic support

A full range of academic support is offered virtually in fall 2020. See coronavirus.gwu.edu/top-faqs for updates.

Tutoring and course review sessions are offered through Academic Commons in an online format. See academiccommons.gwu.edu/tutoring

Writing and research consultations are available online. See academiccommons.gwu.edu/writing-research-help

Coaching, offered through the Office of Student Success, is available in a virtual format. See studentsuccess.gwu.edu/academic-program-support

Academic Commons offers several short videos addressing different virtual learning strategies for the unique circumstances of the fall 2020 semester. See academiccommons.gwu.edu/study-skills. They also offer a variety of live virtual workshops to equip students with the tools they need to succeed in a virtual environment. See tinyurl.com/gw-virtual-learning

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Writing Center

GW's Writing Center cultivates confident writers in the University community by facilitating collaborative, critical, and inclusive conversations at all stages of the writing process. Working alongside peer mentors, writers develop strategies to write independently in academic and public settings. Appointments can be booked online. See gwu.mywconline.

Academic Commons

Academic Commons provides tutoring and other academic support resources to students in many courses. Students can schedule virtual one-on-one appointments or attend virtual drop-in sessions. Students may schedule an appointment, review the tutoring schedule, access other academic support resources, or obtain assistance at academiccommons.gwu.edu.

Disability Support Services (DSS) 202-994-8250

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. disabilitysupport.gwu.edu

Counseling and Psychological Services 202-994-5300

GW's Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success. healthcenter.gwu.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services

Safety and Security

- In an emergency: call GWPD 202-994-6111 or 911
- For situation-specific actions: review the Emergency Response Handbook at safety.gwu.edu/emergency-response-handbook
- In an active violence situation: Get Out, Hide Out, or Take Out. See go.gwu.edu/shooterpret
- Stay informed: safety.gwu.edu/stay-informed

Out of Class Learning

Average minimum amount of independent, out-of- class, learning expected per week: In a

15 week semester, including exam week, students are expected to spend a minimum of 5.5 hours of out-of- class work in addition to each class meeting, for a total of 112.5 hours total (counting the 2 hour class meetings).