CSUS 429: Program Evaluation for Community Sustainability
Fall 2020

Tuesday and Thursday, 10:20-11:40 AM

Instructor: **Abou Traore, Ph.D.**
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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 12:00 – 1:00. Feel free to contact and schedule an
                         appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide an overview of concepts, theories, and procedures in program evaluation. This course will particularly emphasize on practical methods and skills to plan and implement evaluations of programs related to community sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to CSUS 429 and please let me know if you need anything to make you feel comfortable in this class. Whether government, business or non-profit, our world is filled with organizations that develop and operate programs that aim to address some type of challenges. Billions of dollars and hours of effort are invested in these programs, but how do we know if the resources put into these programs are having the intended impact? How do we know whether changes should be made to the programs? How do we know whether investing program resources in other ways would better address the problems? The best answer to these questions is to evaluate the programs in some way. A properly conducted program evaluation can provide valuable information to those who manage programs, and can make programs more accountable to taxpayers, investors, donors, and the beneficiaries of the programs themselves.

Program evaluation is rapidly becoming a necessary part of most organizations; however, it is neither simple nor something any untrained person can do. Rather, evaluation is a rigorous research method that requires, among other things, logic, effective communication skills, critical thinking and the ability to analyze data. This course is meant to introduce students to the discipline of program evaluation and allow them to begin to develop their skills in this area. Whether they eventually help to evaluate programs or are "consumers" of them, students in this course will better understand the characteristics of effective and ineffective program evaluations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. develop a basic understanding of the relationship between the program development and evaluation processes;

2. understand the major concepts and methods of program evaluation for community sustainability;
3. read evaluation research critically;
4. understand how to use evaluation findings to improve program performance;
5. differentiate between formative, process, impact and outcome evaluation;
6. choose relevant theories and operationalize relevant constructs;
7. assess the "evaluability" of a program;
8. outline the steps of planning, conducting, and reporting of a program evaluation;
9. understand the basic elements, strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluation;
10. discuss, critique, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various evaluation models;
11. identify appropriate data sources for program assessment;
12. identify stakeholders and their role in evaluation;
13. understand implications of social and cultural factors for program evaluation;
14. develop and propose an appropriate evaluation plan to assess programs;
15. have a critical grasp of ethical issues at each stage of the evaluation process.

The above course objectives support the Department of Community Sustainability undergraduate program competencies of critical thinking, systems thinking, civic engagement, initiative and practical skills, ethics, and community. Successful completion of this course provides students with the background needed to frame complex problems and address them systemically in order to successfully complete additional courses in the major. Students can learn more about the Department of Community Sustainability undergraduate program competencies at http://www.csus.msu.edu/undergraduate/sustainability_core. In addition, this course supports Michigan State University's Undergraduate Learning Goals of analytical thinking, cultural understanding, and integrated reasoning. More information about MSU's Undergraduate Learning Goals is available at http://undergrad.msu.edu/msu-goals.

READINGS

There is no required textbook for this course. Instead, readings will be assigned throughout the course of the semester and will either be found online, posted on D2L. Students enrolled in this class are expected to complete all assigned readings by the assigned dates. Although class time will occasionally be spent covering subject matter from the readings, much of class time will be used to introduce new concepts and engage in activities not directly relevant to the assigned readings. This does not mean that the readings are unimportant. This class is meant to be much more than just the readings, but the assigned readings are an important part of the course.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- To learn, challenge, be challenged, have fun, and build relationships
- To strike a balance of actively listening and verbally contributing

- To attend class and remain for its entirety, which includes refraining from loading backpacks until the class time is complete (see Attendance section in Course Policies).
- To complete all readings as assigned.
- To be on time. Students who are late show disrespect to their peers and instructor.
- To attend class mentally as well as physically. Students who use their cell phones, text, listen to iPods, work on assignments for other classes or in any other way engage in activities not part of the class, may be asked to leave and will not be given credit for being present for class that day.
- To complete assignments with honesty and integrity (see the *Academic Integrity* section in Course Policies)

COURSE POLICIES

Requirements:

Have a reliable internet connection to access to D2L. Use your MSU NetID (http://d2l.msu.edu) to access to course materials and other resources for communication.

Class attendance- This course uses synchronous recurrent zoom meetings and students are expected to attend class, participate in class activities, and to be on time. If you are sick, contact the instructor in advance, please stay at home and get better. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to request a meeting with the instructor, obtain lecture notes and assignments from a fellow student. You must post your reading outlines and discussion questions for at least 10 weeks by mid-night on Monday in D2L under attendance.

Participation – Attendance and participation are firmly linked, and student participation includes quality of verbal responses, group interactions, comments and questions, as well as attentiveness in class and in all activities. This is an interactive class and students must take notes from readings, class discussions and/or lectures. Lectures presentations are not shared.

Mobile phones – keep your cellular devices in a silent mode during the entire class period, this allows you to receive emergency SMS text, phone, or email messages distributed by the university. Texting or emailing during class can hinder our class learning efforts.

Professionalism – Even in the online setting one must be professional. One aim of this class is to develop the skills students need to be successful in a professional setting. Students are expected to show respect to the professor and to one another. This is demonstrated in numerous ways including being on time, giving full attention in class, engaging in discussion and problem-solving, working collaboratively in groups, and taking responsibility for learning the material. Assignments must be neat with no grammatical and spelling errors, and they must indicate a serious effort to do a good job. All students are encouraged to express their points of view and opinions in this class. Disagreement, whether it is with the professor, another student or guest speaker, is a natural part of the learning process and all present can benefit from an informed debate. However, all

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participants in this class are expected to be respectful of others' opinions and professional in such discussions. Being respectful, interested, attentive, and participatory will reflect well on your grade.

Mandatory Reporting – Michigan State University is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free of relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and to ensuring that all affected individuals have access to services. For information on reporting options, confidential advocacy and support resources, university policies and procedures, or how to make a difference on campus, visit the Title IX website at www.titleix.msu.edu.

Email – Electronic communication has become a critical tool in our society. For this reason, you will be required to check your **MSU-assigned email** on a daily basis. Throughout the semester, I will be corresponding with students via email and the information in these emails are considered official course communication for which students are responsible. If you regularly check a different email account than your "msu.edu" account, be sure to forward your MSU account to your other account. However, if you email me using such an account, beware that I may not receive it. MSU's SPAM identification software often tags emails from public accounts as SPAM and I never receive them. For this reason, it is recommended that students check their MSU accounts daily and use this account for all communication with me.

Assignments – Poor presentation can reduce the credibility of otherwise good content; thus, all assignments <u>must</u> be typed / word-processed (unless otherwise specified) and presented in a professional manner. Standardized grammar and spelling are expected on all submitted assignments. Proof-read your work! If you feel you need assistance in this area, see the instructor or any of several university resources so that help can be provided, and your grade will not be diminished. Unless approved in advance, I will only accept hard copies of all assignments.

Communication with Instructor – You are encouraged to ask questions in and/or outside of class via email. Your suggestions and comments about the class structure, content, and rigor are welcome. You can discuss issues related to class during office hours, you can schedule a meeting or email Dr. Traore 24 hours. Dr. Traore will make every effort to reply to your email within 24 hours (business days), unless otherwise specified in class.

COURSE POLICIES (CONT.)

Accommodations

If you need accommodations in this class related to a disability or religious holidays, please make an appointment with me to discuss as soon as possible. For more information go to: https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/services

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance can be resolved through these links:

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- Visit the [Distance Learning Services Support Site](#)
- Visit the [Desire2Learn Help Site (http://help.d2l.msu.edu/)](#)
- Or call Distance Learning Services: (800) 500-1554 or (517) 355-2345

Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)

- To make an appointment with a specialist, contact: (517) 353-9642 Or TTY: (517) 355-1293
- Web site for RCPD: http://MYProfile.rcpd.msu.edu

Academic Integrity

Article 2.III.B.2 of the Academic Freedom Report states: "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Department of Sustainability adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, *Protection of Scholarship and Grades*; the all-University Policy on *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades*; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade in the course or on the assignment.

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course. This course is overseen by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

Consistent with MSU's efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student's work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student's work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a 'similarity score'. The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student's work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool.

If requested by the instructor, students should submit papers to Turnitin Dropboxes without identifying information included in the paper (e.g. name or student number). The system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin.

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HRPP/IRB Certification

For this assignment, you will complete the online required training program about the protection of human research subjects. This online training program can be found on the website of MSU's Human Research Protection Program (https://hrpp.msu.edu/). When you get to this site, follow the links for "required training" (Under Training and Education). After the completion of the training you will receive a certificate or a text indicating that you have completed HRPP, please submit that document to the assignment box on D2L to receive the credit.

Program Description (Minimum 4 pages)

This semester every student will choose a program related to COVID-19 and sustainability (keep in mind of a systems approach) in a **FOCUSED STATE** (US or abroad) for which you will create an evaluation plan. For this assignment, you will describe your chosen program/State including descriptions of the problem to be addressed by the intervention; the intended target/beneficiaries of the program; the intended benefits of program; the gaps and needs, the logic/causal model; and (appropriate) program theory.

Potential outline
Title: An appropriate name of your program that communicate the focus of the program (10pts).
Type of program: Indicate the nature of your program (public/private, non-profit, national or international) (10 pts).
Background: A brief history of your program (Stakeholders, clients and program participants) (20pts).
Program's goals and objectives: Issues to be addressed**,** needs, intended outcomes, impacts, and expected change (20pts).
Performance measurement tools: Describe data collection techniques, primary data or secondary data (20pts).
The logic/causal model: Activities, resources, delivery systems, outputs, outcomes, and impacts (think about what would clients gain, what would the organization gain, what would the broader community gain. etc…) (30 pts).

Evaluation Plan/Group

Students will be assigned in groups of 3 to perform a program evaluation on an existing program. For this assignment, each group will describe an evaluation plan (15-20 pages double spaced) including: an evaluation goal statement; research questions; sampling design; methods and description of indicators; a logic model, findings/results, and a description of how you would disseminate results; and pros and cons of this plan (all evaluations have pros and cons). Watch local news, state and federal guidelines, check the CDC website, and other sources for information.

For this assignment, students will work in groups where they will read about and critique a program evaluation that has been conducted, gather data, and perform an analysis. Every group member must participate in the project, and every group has the voting power to evict a member from a group if the member Is not contributing to the project. If you are evicted from your group, you form a new group with other evicted members. Evicted members' groups will experience a loss of 25% from the initial assignment point.

Evaluation Plan/Group project
Title page: Carefully choose the program you would like to design. Add the names of your participants
Introduction: Describe your program objectives, methodology, and different components, (extensively describe each step).
Background: Provide the nature, historical contexts of the program, and indicate all participants & stakeholders and their respective roles and responsibilities
Methods & sampling: Techniques used to collect and analyze evaluation information
Logic model: Make tables/diagrams to include different steps of your process
Conclusion: Establish relationships between different steps, program elements and potential program outcomes **(**Impacts of the program).
References

Evaluation Plan/Group Presentation

Every group member should contribute to the project and participate in the presentation to receive the overall credit.

For inspiration about frameworks and models, check on the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles For Evaluators. Available at:
http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=51

Attendance and participation

Students should post one-page reading outline/summaries and 2 discussion questions for at least 10 weeks by mid-night on Monday in D2L under attendance. Student will receive 50% from weekly reading outline and 50% will come from class participation.

COURSE EVALUATION

Assignments & Grading	Points		Points	Grade
Exam 1	200		920 –1000=	4.0
Final Exam	200		870 – 919 =	3.5

Program Description	100	830 – 869 =	3.0
Evaluation Plan	200	770 – 829 =	2.5
HRPP/IRB Certification	50	730 – 769 =	2.0
Evaluation Plan Group Presentation	150	670 – 729 =	1.5
Class activities/ Reports/Presentations	100	630 – 669 =	1.0
Total Possible Points	**1000**	< 630 =	0.0

DEFINITION OF GRADES:

Because much of grading is subjective and every professor is different, I offer the following definitions of grades that will guide my grading decisions:

4.0: Outstanding achievement that significantly exceeds standards.
3.0: Commendable achievement that exceeds standards.
2.0: Acceptable achievement that meets standards in all aspects.
1.0: Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.

0.0: Failing: and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an incomplete.

CLASS SCHEDULE

*** Please note that the schedule is likely to change ***

Readings should be completed before the date in which they appear on the schedule.

Day/Week	*Topic*	*Reading Due*	*Assignment/ Due*

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Thr 9/3	Intro to course, programs and evaluation	Class introduction	Introduction
Tu 9/8 WeeK1	Intro to program evaluation	**Reading #1** (Pages 1-10): The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation (second. ed.). *Administration for Children and Families. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.* **Reading #2** (p.1-14)**:** Robert MocCormick Foundation (2013). Program Evaluation Guide.	
Thr 9/10 WeeK1	Intro to program evaluation	CDC Framework (p.1-8): https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr4811.pdf	Class Activity
Tu 9/15 Week2	Why program evaluation?	**Reading #3**: Allison J.R. Metz (2007). Why Conduct A Program Evaluation? Part 1 Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlVbX7ZYuyk	Class Activity
Thr 9/17 Week2	Needs assessment and program development	**Reading #4:** Angima and Etuk (2015). Needs Assessment Primer, Oregon State University, Extension	Define needs assessment and provide a case study that include needs assessment
Tu 9/22 Week3	Logic models	**Reading #5** (p.1-26): W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2014). Logic Model Development Guide, Battle Creek, Michigan 49017-4012	Describe logical models and explain their importance in PE.
Thr 9/24 Week3	Role of theory in program evaluation	**Reading #5** (27-48): W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2014). Logic Model Development Guide, Battle Creek, Michigan 49017-4012 **Reading #6:** INTRAC (2015). Theory of Change	**HRPP/IRB Certification Due (11:59 PM)** Class Activity

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Tu 9/29 Week 4	Identifying and formulating evaluation questions	**Reading #1** (p.29-62): The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation (second. ed.). *Administration for Children and Families. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation*	Class Activity
Thr 10/1 Week 4	Catch up and review for Exam1		
Tu 10/6 Week 5	**Exam 1**	**Study for Exam**	Self-Assessment survey, Due **(11:59 PM)**
Thr 10/8 Week 5	Designing the program evaluation	**Reading #1** (p.63-72): The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation (second. ed.). *Administration for Children and Families. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation* **Reading #2** (p.16-20): Robert MocCormick Foundation (2013). Program Evaluation Guide	State/COVID Report
Tu 10/13 Week 6	Process evaluation	**Reading #7:** Saunders, Evans and Joshi (2006). Process Evaluation. Developing a Process-Evaluation **Reading #8:** INTRAC (2015). Outputs, Outcomes & Impact	State/COVID Report
Thr 10/15 Week 6	Outcome evaluation	**Reading #9:** McNamara, P. (…). Basic Guide to Outcomes-Based Evaluation for Nonprofit Organizations with Very Limited Resources **Reading #10:** Easterling, D. (2000). Using Outcome Evaluation to Guide Grant Making: Theory, Reality, and Possibilities. Sage Publication, Inc 482-486	State/COVID Report

Tu 10/20 Week 7	Impact assessment	**Reading #11:** O'Flynn. M (2010). Impact Assessment: Understanding and assessing our contributions to change.	State/COVID Report
Thr 10/22 Week 7	Performance measurement	McDavid and Howthorn (2006): Performance measurement	Program Description Due (11:59 PM)
Tu 10/27 Week 8	Research Concepts	Develop Your Research Concepts and Questions	Class activities Guest lecture
Thru 10/29 Week8	Randomized control trials	**Reading #12:** Culbertson, M., McCole, D., and McNamara, P. (2014). Practical challenges and strategies for randomized control trials in agricultural extension and other development programs. Journal of Development Effectiveness.	Find a case study on RCTs to share
Tu 11/3 Week 9	Non-experimental methods	**Reading #13:** Types of Evaluation Designs. Nonexperimental Design	State/COVID Report
Thr 11/5 Week 9	Sampling	**Reading #14:** An Introduction to Sampling**.**	State/COVID Report
Tu11/10 Week 10	Survey design and implementation	**Reading #15:** Colosi, L. (2006). Survey Questions. Designing an Effective Questionnaire. Cornell Cooperative Extension. **Reading #16:** Diem, K (2002). Tips Writing Survey Questions. A Step-By-Step Guide to Developing Effective Questionnaires and Survey Procedures for Program Evaluation & Research	State/COVID Report
Thr 11/12 Week10	Survey design and	**Reading #17:** Kiernan, M., Kiernan, N. E., & Goldberg, J. (2003). Using standard phrases in qualitative interviews.	State/COVID Report

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	implement ation		
Tu 11/17 Week 11	Qualitative program evaluation	**Reading #18:** Vaterlaus, M. (2011). Qualitative program evaluation method	Class Activity
Thr11/19 Week 11	Data analysis	**Reading #19:** Rand Corporation. Analyze your program's evaluation data	Class Activity
Tu 11/24 Week 12	Data analysis/ Work on your projects	(AEA)https://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=1 Group work	**Evaluation Plan Due with Presentation**
Thr11/26 Week 12		**THANKSGIVING DAY**	
Tu 12/1 Week 13	Group Presentati ons	Group work	
Thr 12/3 Week 13	Group Presentati ons	Group work	
Tu 12/8 Week 14	Group Presentati ons	Group work	
Thr12/10 Week 14	Group Presentati ons	Group work	Self-Assessment survey Due **(11:59 PM)**
Tu 12/15 Week 15	**Final**	**Study for final**	

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Additional Readings:

Boulmetis, J., & Dutwin, P. (2014). *The ABCs of evaluation: Timeless techniques for program and project managers* (Vol. 56). John Wiley & Sons.

Suvedi, Murari. Evaluating Extension Programs: A Training Manual.

> http://meas.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/MEAS-Training-Manual-on-Extension-Evaluation-Suvedi-MSU-Oct-2011.pdf

Taylor-Powell, Ellen and Ellen Henert. (nd). Developing a Logic Model. University of Wisconsin-Extension. http://fyi.uwex.edu/programdevelopment/logic-models/

American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles For Evaluators. Available at: http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=51