Nonprofit Program Strategy, Design and Assessment
Soon to be: Measuring Social Impact: Advanced Program Design and Evaluation

Public Affairs 551A
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This course covers advanced topics in strategy, program design and evaluation for social sector organizations. The assumption is that students will have completed previous work in organizational management and program evaluation. While the focus of the class will be on nonprofits and NGOs, the theory, tools and techniques we will explore are applicable to any mission-based organization, regardless of tax status.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Use strategic frameworks to help guide organizational strategy, program design and expansion.
- Assess the needs for a program, and employ theory of change and other tools intended to support program design.
- Understand and employ a variety of approaches to evaluating organizational performance, including impact assessment, collective impact measurement, advocacy evaluation and social impact evaluation.

The class will rely on a mix of in-class case discussion, group exercise and lecture/discussion. Each week we will have 1-2 readings that focus on theory or concepts and several readings that focus on applications.

Course materials

There are three sources we will use throughout the course:

1. The Nonprofit Strategy Revolution, by David La Piana. Available at the UW Bookstore.
2. The Goldilocks Challenge, by Mary Kay Gugerty and Dean Karlan, forthcoming from Oxford University press. Chapters will be posted online.

Most of the course readings will be available on the Canvas site. In addition a coursepack will be available through the Harvard Business School; the link will be posted on the classroom Canvas website.
Assignments

All students will complete the following:

1. Classroom participation – 20%
   Participation includes contributing usefully in large class discussions, contributing in small breakout groups, contributing ideas or articles via the Canvas website, sharing of resources with the group. We will construct together norms for participation on the class. At the end of the quarter, students will also complete a self- and peer-evaluation form in which they will have an opportunity to reflect on their own and others’ participation.

2. Two short response papers – 30% (15% each)
   Each student will write a required response paper for April 19th. You can then choose one other week on which to write a response paper. Specific guidance/questions for the response papers will be given in the study guide for each week, although using these guidelines is optional.

   Response papers are no more than 2 pages single-spaced. They should analyze the readings and the case for the week (if applicable). The main criteria for grading will be synthetic thinking and analysis. By this I mean you demonstrate that you have you digested the readings for the week and can analyze across them. Good writing will of course facilitate strong analysis, but this is not a typical “memo” assignment. Additional guidelines for these papers are posted on Canvas.

3. Program Design, Needs Assessment and/or Evaluation Design Project – 50%

   There are two ways to complete this assignment:

   i. Client-based needs assessment, evaluation or program design project
      Students may work in small groups of up to four students on a project for an organization. The ideal size is probably 2-3 people. This project could be the start of a strategic plan or market analysis, needs assessment, program design, or evaluation design. The specific details of the project will be worked out between the students and the instructor. I have two projects that students can work on, which I will describe in class.

   ii. Program Design or Evaluation Design based on a case.

      Option 1: Bridge over Troubled Waters – Implementation case
      Many of you might be familiar with the case “Bridge over Troubled Waters” which deals with a community-based environment and family-planning project in the Philippines. This case is accompanied by a “C” case that provides detailed implementation data on the project. Students may work in groups of up to 3 students to develop an evaluation design based on this information.

      Option 2: Team Read
      The Team Read case asks you to critique an existing evaluation and developing a new evaluation design for a nonprofit afterschool tutoring program.

      The length of the applied project will be somewhere in the vicinity of 15-20 pages, depending on the number of students in the group and the amount of analysis that needs to take place.

Tentative “Check In” Schedule:
Note that these are guidelines so that you can assess your progress. Since each group will be working on a different project and the timelines may differ, I may work out a different set of deliverables with each group.

April 5 – Email me by the start of class about how you would like to complete the project. I can help facilitate groups if needed.

April 12 – Brief description of project and/or outline of project. (1 page or so)

May 3 – Detailed outline or overview

May 17 – Rough draft due with as much detail as you have to date.

June 8 – Final project due

Missed Class Policy
If you need to miss class for a professional or personal reason, please let me know in advance. For the day you miss, you should submit a 2-3 page reflection paper on the week’s readings/cases. This does not need to be a highly structured memo, but can be a basic reflection on the week’s readings. What did you find useful about the readings? What new ideas did the readings stimulate? Do you agree with the authors take on a particular issue? If you miss a class and don’t let me know and complete this paper, the missed class will affect your participation grade.

If you are missing class and also planning to do a memo for that week, you should still submit the reflection paper for that week as it substitutes for your presence in class. Ideally your reflection paper will focus on readings or cases you did not get to address in your memo.

Academic Integrity
The Evans School and the University of Washington seek to uphold high standards of honesty, respect for others viewpoints and integrity in interactions and academic effort. The topics we cover in this course typically benefit greatly from collaboration and discussion, but for paper assignments the work you turn should be your own. Students working on applied projects will turn in only one paper, but will evaluate each other through the peer evaluation process and are expected to contribute equally to the project. If you are participating in a group project, you may be using existing frameworks to undertake analysis in this class- use of frameworks should be acknowledged but all analysis should be original.

Needs for Specific Accommodations
The university will provide reasonable accommodation for academically qualified students with disabilities so those students can participate fully in the university’s educational programs. Any student requesting academic accommodation based on disability is required to register with Disability Resources for Students (DRS). Please inform me of your accommodation needs.
PBAF 551 Class Outline and Readings

**PLEASE NOTE:  **The ultimate guide to what to read for each week is the weekly study guide posted in the folder for the week. I will likely make changes to the readings over the quarter as we identify areas of particular interest.

**Part I – Thinking about Program Strategy: Design, Development & Expansion**

**March 29:** Establishing Strategic Frameworks for Program Design and Assessment

- **Case:** Casa Esperanza, Electronic Hallway
- **David LaPiana, The Strategy Revolution, Chapters 1-4**
- Dana O’Donovan & Noah Rimland Flower, The Strategic Plan is Dead: Long Live the Strategic Plan [http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/the_strategic_plan_is_dead._long_live_strategy](http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/the_strategic_plan_is_dead._long_live_strategy)

**April 5:** Strategy, Competition, and Organizational Structure

- **Case:** Casa Esperanza, Part B (and review Part A)
- Scaling Mini-Cases from the readings: KIPP, KaBoom, STRIVE, DARE, City Year
- **Robert LaPiana, The Strategy Revolution, Chapters 5 and 6**

**April 12:** Needs Assessment and Problem Definition, continued

- **Theory of Change**
- **Case:** Educate! Youth Empowerment in Uganda
- Mary Kay Gugerty and Dean Karlan, “The Goldilocks Challenge, Chapters 1-3  (skim 3 if you are very familiar with Theory of Change.

- Goldilocks Toolkit: Guiding Your Program to Build a Theory of Change.
**Review Materials on Theory of Change**

Aspen Institute, Community Builder’s Guide to Theory of Change

Read through material on program theory on BetterEvaluation.org:
http://betterevaluation.org/plan/define/develop_logic_model

Carol Weiss, “Nothing So Practical as a Good Theory.” – A classic ‘must read.’ Hopefully Evans School students saw it in Program Evaluation.

**April 19**

**Guest Speaker: Joelle Cook, FSG Impact**

**Required Analytic Paper #1 Due: Guidance in Week 4 Files**


The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design
https://www.ideo.com/work/human-centered-design-toolkit/#sthash.Y6ZYL1Lw.dpuf

Read the introduction and “Mindsets” sections, then look over the Methods section and select three tools you think you might use in your current work or in your class projects and read them in more details. Read the entire Ideation section but pay particular attention to the first four steps, plus Create Frameworks, Design Principles, and Story Board.


Goldilocks Toolkit, Introduction to Rapid Fire Operational Testing for Social Programs

**April 26**

**Monitoring and Performance Management- Finding the Right Data**

*When to Monitor and When to Evaluate*

**Cases:**

BRAC

Acumen (Goldilocks Toolkit)

**Readings**

Goldilocks, “The Goldilocks Challenge; Right-Sized Monitoring and Evaluation for NGOs” Chapter 4 – Monitoring


**Review Materials on Impact Evaluation:**

Mary Kay Gugerty and Dean Karlan, “The Goldilocks Challenge; Right-Sized Monitoring and Evaluation for NGOs” Chapter 5.

“Which Study Designs are Capable of Producing Valid Evidence about a Program’s Effectiveness?” Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy.

*Impact Evaluation in Practice.* Paul Gertler et al, Chapter 1, Why Evaluate?
May 3  Making Decisions about Evaluation Design

Case: New York City Center for Economic Opportunity: An Evidence-Based Approach to Alleviate Poverty (casepack)

Readings:

Mary Kay Gugerty and Dean Karlan, “The Goldilocks Challenge; Right-Sized Monitoring and Evaluation for NGOs” Chapter 5.


Cases: Robin Hood Foundation, Harvard Business School Case – Casepack
Root Capital (Goldilocks Toolkit)


http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/unpacking_the_impact_in_impact_investing

May 17  Evaluating Advocacy
(Also Washington State Nonprofit Conference!)

Case TBD
Pathways for Change, 10 Theories to Inform Advocacy and Policy Change Efforts, Organizational Research Services (ORS).


Julia Coffman and Ehren Reed, “Unique Methods in Advocacy Evaluation.”

May 24  Evaluating Collective Impact & Shared Measurement

Guest Speaker on Collective Impact and Network Measurement

Using Network Analysis for Evaluation, Kimberly Fredericks and Joanne Carman.

FSG, Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact, Parts 1-3

May 31  Panel of Evans Alums working in Evaluation