
Creating Results-Oriented Programs

Design, Evaluation & Reporting for Nonprofit & Arts Managers

Course Details	Identifier	Fall 2024 94-824-A1 (6 units)
	Date & Time	Tuesday & Thursday evenings, 5:00pm–6:20pm Mini 1 August 26 th – October 10 th
	Location	Hamburg Hall, Room 1006
	Instructor	Traci Johnson, MPM '21 Adjunct Instructor, Heinz College Director of Grantmaking, The Pittsburgh Foundation
	Prerequisites	None

Course Description & Learning Objectives

Successful programs require more than just great ideas. From a program's initial planning and design through its execution and evaluation, program managers must deftly deploy disparate skills and work closely with colleagues, board members, funders, and constituents to measure, understand, and discuss programmatic results.

In *Creating Results-Oriented Programs*, graduate students are introduced to tools and techniques to assist them in managing highly effective programs at small nonprofit and arts organizations. Students explore the connections between program theory, project budgets, requests for support, and reports on outcomes. Students develop skills needed to build measures for success into program activities and use quantitative and qualitative assessments to make strategic decisions before, during, and after implementation.

The learning objectives of this course are to enable students to:

1. Articulate programmatic goals through a compelling theory of change;
2. Apply the basic techniques of process and outcome evaluations;
3. Gather and interpret relevant and useful program data;
4. Provide tangible and specific information about program results to internal and external stakeholders; and,
5. Bring an analytic and pragmatic approach to each stage in the lifecycle of a typical program at a small nonprofit or arts organization.

Course Framework

Meeting Format

This graduate course will progress over a period of 7 weeks and will feature a mixture of lecture content, discussion of assigned reading materials, group exercises, and student presentations.

Slides to accompany each lecture will be made available on Canvas prior to the beginning of each class.

Readings

There are no required textbooks for this course. For each class session, students will be required to read a selection of chapters, articles, reports, or other materials as PDF files to download or web links to visit via Canvas.

Assigned readings during 6-session editions of the course average 85 pages of material per session (low: 60 pages, high: 116 pages) and will require, on average, 2.5 hours of preparation prior to class. Assigned readings during 7-week editions of the course average 68 pages of material per session (low: 60 pages, high: 102 pages) and will require, on average, 2 hours of preparation prior to class.

Course Requirements

In-class Group Exercises

Students will complete 3 in-class group exercises during the course. Students will be randomly assigned to groups and asked to work together through a set of questions or activities related to that class session's assigned readings or lecture content. Each student group will report out the key points of discussion to the entire class. Each group will also submit worksheets that record responses to questions and summarize the group's dialogue with the names of each participating student. The group exercises will be graded as pass/fail. Students with unexcused absences for a given class session will automatically receive a failing grade on that group exercise.

Take-home Individual Assignments

Students will complete 3 take-home assignments during the course. Students must complete each assignment on their own. The assignments are structured so as to contribute toward the development of the student's final class project (*see below*). The take-home assignments will be graded as pass/fail. Students failing

Course Framework (cont'd)

to turn in an assignment by its due date without gaining prior permission from the Instructor will automatically receive a failing grade on the assignment.

Final Project

Students will complete a summative final project as a key aspect of the course. Through the project, students will demonstrate their proficient use and understanding of concepts, ideas, and techniques developed during the course. The final project requires students to design, plan, and prepare for evaluation a new project or program of their own choosing based on areas in their own interests or professional expertise.

It includes 2 separately-evaluated outputs:

- Electronic deliverable, including executive summary, resubmissions of take-home assignments, and other components
- In-class presentation with supporting slides

Additional details regarding the final class project will be discussed during Week 2 of the course. The final project will be graded using numeric scores.

Assessment & Evaluation

The Instructor will evaluate each student's progress toward achieving the course's learning objectives through completion of the course requirements, according to the following weights:

33.3%	{	In-class Group Exercises (3)
	}	Take-home Individual Assignments (2)
66.7%	{	Final Project Deliverable (due prior to final class session)
	}	Final Project Presentation (given by students during final class session)

Aggregate performance will determine the overall final grade assigned at the conclusion of the course using the following grading scale:

A+	98.0% and up	B+	88.0–89.9%	C+	78.0–79.9%
A	94.0–97.9%	B	84.0–87.9%	C	74.0–77.9%
A-	90.0–93.9%	B-	80.0–83.9%	C-	70.0–73.9%

The grade of A+ is reserved for truly exceptional performance. The median grade in the course is typically a B+ or A-.

At the Instructor's discretion, a student's final overall score may be rounded up 0.5% because of a student's high level of engagement in the course as indicated by frequent in-class participation and demonstrated comprehension of assigned

reading materials. For example, an engaged student with a final course score of 93.5% (A-) may have their grade rounded up to an A.

Course Instructor

About Traci Johnson

Traci Johnson joined The Pittsburgh Foundation in February 2022 as the Director of Grantmaking. She is instrumental to the Program Department's efforts to ensure that grantmaking is relevant, responsive, and centers the Foundation's values. Traci brings valuable experience in advancing racial justice within philanthropy and the ability to use data to drive equity and accountability within systems. At the Foundation, she oversees several special initiatives that improve nonprofits' ability to address human service needs.

Traci brings nearly two decades of experience in nonprofit management, management consulting, project and change management, process improvement and development, program design and data analysis. She is passionate about working with small Black-led/serving nonprofits to establish their internal infrastructure, increase their effectiveness, and access resources. Prior to coming to the Foundation, Traci served as a program officer at POISE Foundation, a community foundation dedicated to empowering the Pittsburgh region's Black community.

During her tenure at POISE, Traci developed and implemented the Foundation's strategy for supporting Black-led/serving nonprofits and churches during the pandemic through the Critical Community Needs Fund. Her work led to POISE Foundation receiving the 2021 Grantmaker of the Year Award from the Grant Professionals Association. Traci currently serves as the Membership Chair for PEAK Grantmaking's Mideast Chapter. She was selected as a 2021-2022 Connecting Leaders Fellow by the Association of Black Foundation Executives (ABFE).

Contact Information

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Office Phone 412.394.2642 (Office number for The Pittsburgh Foundation. When leaving messages please identify yourself as a Heinz student.)

Cell Phone 412.377.7083 (text messages/email preferred over voicemail; no calls after 9pm, please)

Office Hours

Office hours are by appointment with a preference for meeting via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. There is flexibility for in-person meetings at a coffee shop either Downtown, the Hill District (CARES Café), the East End/Homewood (Everyday Café).

Course Schedule

Summary Course Calendar

Week 1	Tues Aug 27	Introductions / Course Overview / Program Designers and Managers
	Thur Aug 29	Program Designers and Managers cont'd / Thought Practice Exercise
Week 2	Tues Sep 3	Developing Program Theory & Logic Models <i>Final Project Specifications</i>
	Thur Sep 5	Developing Program Theory & Logic Models cont'd <i>In-Class Group Exercise #1</i>
Week 3	Tues Sep 10	Establishing Measures of Success
	Thur Sep 12	Establishing Measures of Success cont'd <i>Take-home Individual Assignment #1 due at start of class</i> <i>In-Class Group Exercise #2</i>
Week 4	Tues Sep 17	Designing Experiments & Understanding Threats to Validity
	Thur Sep 19	Designing Experiments & Understanding Threats to Validity cont'd <i>Take-home Individual Assignment #2 due at start of class</i> <i>In-Class Group Exercise #3</i>
Week 5	Tues Sep 24	Gathering Data & Communicating Program Results
	Thur Sep 26	Gathering Data & Communicating Program Results <i>Take-home Individual Assignment #3 due at start of class</i>
Week 6	Tues Oct 1	Guest Speaker(s)
	Thur Oct 3	Securing Resources to Lead Change
Week 7	Mon Oct 8	<i>Final Project Deliverable due at 11:59pm ET</i>
	Tues Oct 8	<i>Final Project Presentations</i>
	Thur Oct 10	<i>Final Project Presentations</i>

Week 1: Tuesday & Thursday, August 27 & 29, 2024

Introduction / Course Overview / Program Designers and Managers

Lecture Overview

As an introduction to the course, the first session details the course framework, requirements, expectations, and learning objectives. Students, viewed as future program designers and managers at small nonprofit and arts organizations, are introduced to program design, strategy, and evaluation as adaptable techniques in the service, delivery, and reporting of charitable activities in today's nonprofit environment.

Optional Readings

J. Gregory Dees, "Mastering the Art of Innovation" in *Enterprising Nonprofits: A Toolkit for Social Entrepreneurs*, edited by J. Gregory Dees, Jed Emerson, & Peter Economy (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2001), pp. 161–197. [37 pages]

Mike Hudson, "Managing Performance" in *Managing at the Leading Edge: New Challenges in Nonprofit Management*, 1st edition (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), pp. 41–80. [40 pages]

Course Schedule (cont'd)

Week 2: Tuesday & Thursday, September 3 & 5, 2024

Developing Program Theory & Logic Models

Lecture Overview

The second week sessions introduce theory of change and its attendant tool, the program logic model, as essential component of a program entrepreneur's toolkit for testing and developing new approaches to community challenges. With a clear articulation of program theory, preparing for implementation and planning for evaluation are made easier.

Assigned Readings

Carol H. Weiss, "Understanding the Program" in *Evaluation: Methods for Studying Programs and Policies*, 2nd edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), pp. 46–71. [26 pages]

W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Chapters 1–3 in *Logic Model Development Guide* (Battle Creek, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004), pp. 1–34. [34 pages]

Requirements

During the first half of class, the Instructor will introduce the Final Project. During the second class session, students will work together in small groups on Exercise #1 (Logic Model). At the end of class, the Instructor will discuss Take-home

Assignment #1 (Problem/Opportunity Definition), which students will complete individually for the next week.

Week 3: Tuesday & Thursday, September 10 & 12, 2024

Establishing Measures of Success

Lecture Overview

Measures of success and the importance of having defensible metrics in the current funding climate is the principal topic of the third week session.

Distinguishing between outputs, which are used to monitor a program's process and implementation, and outcomes, which are used to indicate a program's effect and impact, establishes realistic expectations for program participants and supporters.

Assigned Readings

Carol H. Weiss, “Developing Measures” in *Evaluation: Methods for Studying Programs and Policies*, 2nd edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), pp. 114–151. [38 pages]

Peter H. Rossi, Mark W. Lipsey, and Howard E. Freeman, “Assessing and Monitoring Program Process” in *Evaluation*, 7th edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004), pp. 169–202. [34 pages]

Peter H. Rossi, Mark W. Lipsey, and Howard E. Freeman, “Measuring and Monitoring Program Outcomes” in *Evaluation*, 7th edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004), pp. 203–232. [30 pages]

Requirements

Students will digitally submit Assignment #1 (Problem/Opportunity Definition) via Canvas prior to the start of class. During the second class session of the week, students will work together in small groups on Exercise #2 (Outputs vs. Outcomes). At the end of class, the Instructor will discuss Assignment #2 (Measures of Success), which students will complete individually for the next class.

Week 4: Tuesday & Thursday, September 17 & 19, 2024

Designing Experiments & Understanding Threats to Validity

Lecture Overview

Designing experiments to gauge program impact and test hypotheses requires an understanding of the core threats to validity, randomization techniques, and the strengths and weaknesses of various design approaches. After selecting an experimental design strategy, surveys, interview questions, and existing datasets are effective, low-threshold mechanisms for program managers and evaluators to gather relevant data on program implementation and outcomes.

Assigned Readings

William R. Shadish, Thomas D. Cook, Donald T. Campbell, “Experiments and Generalized Causal Inference” in *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), pp. 1-32. [32 pages]

William R. Shadish, Thomas D. Cook, Donald T. Campbell, “Randomized Experiments: Rationale, Designs, and Conditions Conducive to Doing Them” in *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), pp. 246-278. [33 pages]

Lecture Overview

Requirements

Students will digitally submit Assignment #2 Measures of Success via Canvas prior to the start of class. During the second class session of the week, students will work together in small groups on Exercise #3 (Experimental Design).

Week 5: Tuesday & Thursday, September 24 & 26, 2024

Gathering Program Data & Communicating Program Results

After selecting an experimental design strategy, surveys, interview questions, and existing datasets are effective, low-threshold mechanisms for program managers and evaluators to gather relevant data on program implementation and outcomes. To provide timely information to decisionmakers, program managers use data visualization tools such as dashboards, diagrams, and infographics to distill details into actionable steps to continue, change, or modify a program.

After a program is complete, new techniques in documentation and reporting, such as multimedia storytelling, are among the most resonant ways to demonstrate impact to supporters and the public.

Assigned Readings

Marc Bolan, Kimberly Francis, and Jane Reisman, "Data Management Planning and Preparation" in *How to Manage and Analyze Data for Outcome-Based Evaluation* (Seattle, WA: The Evaluation Forum, 2000), pp. 7-32. [26 pages]

Art Feinglass, "Setting Goals, Clarifying the Message, and Creating the PR Plan" in *The Public Relations Handbook for Nonprofits* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), pp. 21-45. [25 pages]

Requirements

Students will digitally submit Assignment 3 Evaluation Approach prior to the start of class. During week 6, the Instructor will review key concepts from Sessions 2-4 of the course and students may work together in teams on an additional group exercise.

Course
Schedule
(cont'd)

Week 6: *Lecture Overview* Tuesday & Thursday, October 1 & 3, 2024
Guest Speaker(s) and Securing Resources to Lead Change

Guest Speaker(s) TBA

During the first class session of the week, guest(s) from Pittsburgh's nonprofit and arts community will discuss their successes in creating results-oriented programs.

Topics and ideas previously discussed in the course will be revisited within the specific context of securing organizational support to advance innovative ideas, seeking resources to design and implement new projects and activities, and managing relationships with major funders and early backers.

Optional Readings

Harold S. Williams, Arthur Y. Webb, and William J. Phillips, Part III, Chapters 12–15 “Targets and Accomplishments” in *Outcome Funding: A New Approach to Targeted Grantmaking*, 4th edition (Rensselaerville, NY: Rensselaerville Institute, 1996), pp. 113–178. [65 pages]

Requirements

At the end of class, the Instructor will check-in with students and answer questions regarding the Final Project Deliverable and Final Project Presentation.

Students must submit their Final Project Deliverable digitally via Canvas no later than Monday, October 8, 2024 @ 11:59pm ET.

Week 7: Tuesday & Thursday, October 8 & 10, 2024

Student Presentations

Students must submit their Final Project Deliverable by the deadline listed on the course Canvas webpage. The document(s) must be submitted as Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF files.

During class, students will provide oral summaries of their Final Project Deliverable for the Instructor and their classmates. Students must submit the slides for their Final Project Presentations digitally via Canvas by 5pm ET on October 8th.

Assigned Readings

There are no assigned readings for the final class session.

Course Policies & Procedures

Students should expect that the Instructor will

- Plan each class session with care so that it is worthwhile to attend;
- Encourage all students to participate in class discussions;
- Start and end class session on time;
- Make lecture outlines available on Canvas no later than 1 hour before the beginning of a class session;
- Answer student questions directly or make reference to resources where answers may be found (and be forthright about lack of knowledge for those questions that the Instructor cannot answer);
- Reply to emails or other messages within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends;
- Assign readings that adequately cover the materials and meet the learning objectives of the course while adhering to the time expectations for a 6-unit graduate-level course; and,
- Fairly assess individual and group work products against standards common to the professional fields of nonprofit and arts management.

The Instructor expects that Students will

- Arrive on-time for class and remain for the entire session;
- Be attentive and engaged while in class;
- Spend an adequate amount of time on the readings each week to be prepared for lectures and to meaningfully contribute to class discussion;
- Seek help from the Instructor, classmates, or university resources when appropriate;
- Act with decorum and civility even when in serious disagreement with another student or the Instructor;
- Prioritize this course's requirements appropriately in consideration of other academic, professional, and personal obligations;
- Provide honest responses to Heinz College course evaluation questions and thoughtful feedback on the course materials and the Instructor through the course evaluation process; and,
- Maintain or exceed Carnegie Mellon University's high standards for academic integrity (*see next*).

Course Policies & Procedures (cont'd)

Academic Integrity

This course abides by the Ethics and Discipline policies and procedures as outlined in section 7 of the Heinz College's College Handbook as well as Carnegie Mellon University's Policy on Academic Integrity

(<http://www.cmu.edu/academic-integrity/>).

The Instructor views plagiarism and other forms of academic misrepresentation are viewed as extremely serious matters. Misrepresentation of another's work as one's own is widely recognized as among the most serious violations. The violation is clearly flagrant when it occurs as plagiarism on a course requirement, including take-home assignments and the final project. The punishment for such offenses may result in a failing grade in the course and disciplinary action by Heinz College.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the failure to indicate the source of work—either with quotation marks or footnotes. The source can be a phrase, a graphic element, a proof, specific language, or an idea derived from the work of another person. (Note that material on the web is another person's work and is therefore equally subject to the rules on plagiarism and cheating as any other source material.)

Cheating

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Plagiarism (*explained above*);
- Submission of work that is not the student's own;
- Submission or use of falsified data;
- Unauthorized access to an exam or assignment;
- Use of a stand-in for an exam;
- Use of unauthorized material in the preparation of an assignment or during an examination;
- Supplying or communicating unauthorized information to another student for use in an assignment or exam;
- Unauthorized collaboration on a course requirement (collaboration must be explicitly permitted by the Instructor to be considered authorized); and
- Submission of the same work for credit in more than one course.

Course Policies & Procedures (cont'd)

Other Policies

Late Work

Unless otherwise specified by the advanced express consent of the Instructor:

- In-class group exercises must be turned in at the end of class.
- Take-home assignments will be accepted up to 24 hours after the assignment was due, with a 1% penalty of assessed against the final course score.
- The Final Project Deliverable will be accepted until 11:59pm ET on Tuesday, February 28, 2023 (24 hours after it was due), with a 2% penalty assessed against the student's final course score.
- The Final Project Presentation must be made during the class session on Thursday, March 2, 2023, unless other arrangements are made.

Extra Credit

No extra credit will be given to individual students. Students should plan to do well on all course requirements throughout the mini.

Incomplete Coursework

If, for any reason, a student is unable to complete Final Project by the deadlines specified herein, the student may request that an incomplete grade be assigned. The Instructor reserves the right to issue an incomplete grade in an instance where a student's submitted Final Project so evidently fails to meet course expectations that, if scored, it would result in the student receiving a failing grade in the course.

In either circumstance, the student and the Instructor, in consultation with the student's Program Director, will establish a contract detailing the work to be performed and the timeframe in which the work must occur to achieve a passing grade.

Licensing



Unless otherwise noted, all classroom materials created by the Instructor, Traci Johnson, are provided for student use with a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Learn more at creativecommons.org.

Recording of Classroom Activities

Students may make audio of classroom activities for their personal use only. No copies may be distributed without the express consent of the Instructor. The Instructor may record audio for future instructional use. No video recordings are permitted.

Electronic Devices

Please disable and/or mute the noise-making function of all cell phones and computers before the start of class. Please use laptop computers and other electronic devices for course-appropriate purposes, for example taking notes and referencing reading materials. When this is not the case, please sit in the back row so that other students are not distracted by non-class screen content.

Preferred Name & Gender Pronoun

If a student prefers to be called a different name than what is on the class roster or has a preferred gender pronoun, please let the instructor know at the start of the course. If the instructor incorrectly pronounces a student name or uses an incorrect preferred gender pronoun, please do not hesitate to correct him during class.

Personal Health & Safety

Take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this mini by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of your Heinz experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, seek support from Counseling and Psychological Services (call 412-268-2922; web www.cmu.edu/counseling/) or consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call Counseling and Psychological Services immediately, day or night at 412-268-2922 or the Re:solve Crisis Network at 888-796-8226.

Course
Policies &
Procedures
(cont'd)

If the situation is life threatening, call campus police (412-268-2323) or 911.

Americans with Disabilities Act

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all qualified students enrolled in this course are entitled to “reasonable accommodations.” If a student has a documented disability, please contact the [Office of Disability Resources](#) to request an appropriate academic accommodation. Students must inform the Instructor of any special needs prior to the start of the second class session.

Grievances

Students are encouraged to discuss concerns regarding the course or the Instructor with their Program Director or the Heinz College Associate Dean. Students who wish to file a formal grievance should submit their concerns in writing to the Heinz College Dean.

Course Changes

The Instructor may change or alter the course syllabus, requirements, grading, readings, or any other matter whenever appropriate, provided that students receive at least one week’s notice of the change going into effect.