Program Evaluation 915a  
Department of Political Science  

Methods and Issues in Program and Policy Evaluation  

Fall 2003  

Instructor:  
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Purpose: The purpose of the course is to familiarize students with the major issues in the fields of program and policy evaluation. Students will develop an understanding of the theoretical frameworks used for evaluative research, validity issues in evaluative research, and the multi-goal, theory-driven approach to evaluation. Students will also develop an understanding of the relative value of different designs that can be applied to evaluation research. Students will have the opportunity to develop their theoretical, methodological, statistical and interpretive skills through various examples and applications.  

Classes:  
Friday 3:00 - 7:00 pm  
Saturday 9:00 - 5:00 pm  
Room 8440 Social Science Centre  
September 5-6  
October 3-4  
November 28-29  

Textbooks:  

http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/pub96_e.asp  

3. 915a Selected Course Readings: available from book store  

Supplemental references:  
1. Other downloadable references (e.g. Literature Review - Study on the Function of Evaluation Focusing on Results: A Guide to Performance Measurement) at:  
http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/pub96_e.asp  


**Grades in this course will be based on the following:**

Term Paper: (20 p. proposal for an evaluation study) 60%
Midterm test 40%

Students are expected to attend the classes and to prepare for each class by reading the articles and chapters listed below, and to actively participate in the discussions. For each class, a number of critical themes, as outlined below, have been provided to guide students through the readings and activities, and to frame the lectures and discussion.

Teaching and learning is a shared responsibility, influenced by individual knowledge and experience, but achieved through expanding our awareness of the different issues and epistemologies. Commitment, preparation and active participation are important ingredients to realize this goal. Your preparation and participation is important to your learning and the learning of your colleagues.

**September 5  Introduction**

What is evaluation research and how do we apply it to programs and policies?

Readings: Weiss (1998) Chapters 1, 2
Treasury Board (1998) Chapter 1
examples of evaluation - skim through
Alberts et al., (1992) abstract ONLY
Barsan et al., (1994) abstract
Ho et al., (1988) abstract
White et al., (1985) abstract

**Key concepts in Evaluation Research, Part 1**

- Measurement and construct validity
- Internal validity and causality
- Methods of control

Readings: Lipsey (1988) "Practice and Malpractice in Evaluation Research"
Sims (2001)
Trochim (2000) Introduction to validity: go to Web at this URL:
http://trochim.human.cornell.edu/kb/INTROVAL.HTM

**September 6  Key Concepts in Evaluation Research, Part 2**

- Generalizability and external validity
Chance and statistical validity
          Carr et al., (1998)
          Ross et al., (1991)

Theory-driven evaluation: why "black box paradigms" don't work
Methods-oriented vs. theory-driven evaluations
          Mayne (2001)
          Brown and Goel (1996)
          Vingilis et al., (1998)

Research Designs
Pre-experimental, true experimental and quasi experimental research designs
Sources of invalidity for designs
          Grant et al., (1995)
          Stevens (1997)
          Social Research & Demonstration Corp. (1998)

October 3 Midterm test and Class Discussion of Projects

Research Approaches and Data Collection Methods
Qualitative and quantitative methods
Triangulation and multiple methods
Pre-existing data sets
Development of original data sets
Readings: Treasury Board (1998) Chapter 4
          Weiss (1998) Chapters 4, 5, 6, 11

October 4 Approaches to Model Development
Program Logic Model
Readings: Rush and Ogborne (1991)
          Porteus et al., (2002)

Components of Evaluation Research, Part 1
Program Rationale
Needs Assessment
Readings: Makrides et al., (1998)
          Examples of needs assessments (skim through)

November 28 Components of Evaluation Research, Part 2
Process Evaluation
Short-term Outcome Evaluation
Long-term Outcome/Impact Evaluation

Readings: Weiss (1998) Chapter 8
Dwyer & Komorowski (1999)
Rubin (1997)

November 29 Components of Evaluation Research, Part 3
Efficiency Evaluation
Effectiveness Evaluation

Clyne & Edwards (2002)

Evaluation in the Read World and Student Project Assistance
Issues, challenges and examples
The ideal:
Readings: Langevin (2001)

The real:
Readings: Seasons (2002)
Lord & Rush (2002)
Poland et al., (2002)

Student Presentations and Discussions of Logic Models and Proposals