Program Evaluation 915b  
Department of Political Science

Methods and Issues in Program and Policy Evaluation

Winter 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  January 17-18  
Saturday 9:00 - 5:00 pm  February 14-15  
Room 8440 Social Science Centre  March 28-29

Textbooks:  


(3) 915b 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) 40%
Midterm test 35%
Class presentation 15%
Class participation 10%

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.

**January 17  Introduction**
What is evaluation research and how do we apply it to programs and policies?
Readings:  Posavac (1997) 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)

**January 18  Key Concepts in Evaluation Research, Part 2**
Generalizability and external validity
Chance and statistical validity
Theory-driven evaluation: why "black box paradigms" don't work
Methods-oriented vs. theory-driven evaluations
Readings: Posavac (1997) Chapter 3
          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)

February 14 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
          Cordray (1989) skim through
          Vanderplaat et al., (2001) skim through

February 15 Approaches to Model Development
Program Logic Model
Readings: Rush and Ogborne (1991)
          PHERO (1996) "Applying program logic model in program planning and evaluation"
          Three Rs of performance based management (just skim through)

Components of Evaluation Research, Part 1
Program Rationale
Needs Assessment
Readings: Posavac (1997) Chapter 6
          Makrides et al., (1998)
Examples of municipal and psychology needs assessments (skim through)

**Components of Evaluation Research, Part 2**
- Process Evaluation
- Impact Evaluation
- Outcome Evaluation

Readings:
- Posavac (1997)  Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10
- Dwyer & Komorowski (1999)
- Langevin (2001)
- Re-review Social Research & Demonstration Corp. (1998)

**March 28** **Components of Evaluation Research, Part 3**
- Efficiency Evaluation
- Effectiveness Evaluation

Readings:  
- Posavac (1997)  Chapter 11

**Evaluation in the Read World and Student Project Assistance**
- Issues, challenges and examples

Readings:  
- Seasons (2002)
- Poland et al., (2002)

**March 29**  
**Student Presentations of Logic Models and Proposals**