

**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:**

(1) Posavac, E. and R. Carey (1997) *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies* 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice Hall.

(2) Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat. (1998) *Program Evaluation Methods: Measurement and Attribution of Program Results, Third Edition* downloadable file:  
[http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/pub96\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/pub96_e.asp)

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

(2) Carol Weiss (1998) *Evaluation (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) Methods for Studying Programs and Policies* Prentice Hall, New Jersey, ISBN 0-13-309725-0

(3) Isaac, S. and W. Michael (1990) *Handbook in Research and Evaluation* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, San Diego, Ca: EDITS Publ.

(4) Frechtling, J. and L. Sharp (1997) *User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations*  
<http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pubs/NSF97-153/START.HTM>

**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

Readings: Treasury Board (1998) Chapter 2  
Carr et al., (1998)  
Ross et al., (1991)

### **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

Readings: Treasury Board (1998) Chapter 3  
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  
Grossman et al., (1997)

## **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"  
Thiessen (2002) "Evaluation framework for municipal...  
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 Real World and Student Project Assistance**

Issues, challenges and examples

Readings: Seasons (2002)

Lord & Rush (2002)

Poland et al., (2002)

**March 29**

**Student Presentations of Logic Models and Proposals**