

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

Textbooks:

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

(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

(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

(2) Posavac, E. and R. Carey (1997) *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies* 5th edition, Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice Hall.

(3) Isaac, S. and W. Michael (1990) *Handbook in Research and Evaluation* 2nd 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)	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

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: Weiss (1998) 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: Weiss (1998) Chapters 9
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)
Thiessen (2002) "Evaluation framework for municipal...."

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
Readings: Treasury Board (1998) chapter 5 p 107-112
Clyne & Edwards (2002)

Evaluation in the Real 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