Department of Political Science (MPA) 9915 Methods and Issues in Program and Policy Evaluation

Office Hours and Contact Information

Faculty of Information and Media Studies

North Campus Building Office Location: Room 287

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Or by appointment

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Class: Fridays: September 23, 3pm – 7pm Saturdays: September 24, 9am – 5pm

SSC 4255 November 04 November 05

December 02 November 03

Course Description:

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-methods, theory-driven approach to evaluation.

The course begins with an overview of the process through which policies and programs are considered, developed, approved, implemented and evaluated. Evaluation research can be expensive, difficult, rarely conclusive, and politically unpopular. Still evaluation research is of increasing relevance in an era where economy, efficiency and effectiveness are integral to the delivery of public sector services. The new emphasis on results, coupled with a shift to contracting out, partnerships, and special operating agencies has increased the need for evaluation.

The major types of evaluations will be considered, including: formative, process and summative evaluation, economic evaluation, and performance measurement. A major focus in the course will be evaluation design and delivery in a climate of evolving citizen and political expectations regarding public services.

The evaluation process does not, however, take place in a vacuum. Issues and externalities such as professional judgment, ethics and objectivity, public expectation, and political sensitivities can (and do) have profound impact on the process. Understanding of and strategies to cope with these issues will be a key part of this course.

Course Objectives:

- 1. To develop an understanding of the relative value and limitations of the different designs that can be applied to evaluation research.
- 2. To critically evaluate the range of evaluative practices and techniques to better understand their situational applicability.
- 3. To share practical resources that may be useful in future application of the principals of program evaluation.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy Section 10 in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Academic Calendar at http://www.uwo.ca/grad/calendar.htm

Plagiarism checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Resource Materials:

Texts

Mc David, J. and Hawthorn, L. (2006) *Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement: an introduction to the practice*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage

Pal, L. (2010) Beyond Policy Analysis: public issue management in turbulent times (4th ed.). Toronto: Nelson

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/meth/pem-map_e.pdf (Broken link)

Try "new" Treasury Board evaluation policy http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12309§ion=text

And Treasury Board evaluation standards

http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/pubs-to-1995/stand-normes-e.asp

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf

Case Studies

Report of the Auditor General of Canada (2002) *Costs of Implementing the Canadian Firearms Program.* Chapter Ten which can be accessed at: http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/20021210ce.html (broken link)

Try "new" Costs of implementing the Canadian Firearms program http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/osh 20030224 e 23380.html

Resource Network

http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/resources/What/OM_What.cfm

Best Practices - Treatment and Rehabilitation for Driving While Impaired Offenders (Broken link) 2004, 109 pages, Cat. H46-2/04-321E, ISBN 0-662-37448-7

Try "new" Best practices treatment of drunk drivers http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/adp-apd/bp_treatment-mp_traitement/index-eng.php

Supplemental references

Other downloadable references

Literature Review - Study on the Function of Evaluation Focusing on Results: A Guide to Performance Measurement)
http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/stud_etud/func-fonc-02_e.asp

Evaluation Standards for the Government of Canada – Appendix B http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs pol/dcgpubs/tbm 161/ep-pe1 e.asp

User-Friendly Handbook for Mixes Method Evaluation http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pubs/NSF97-153/start.htm (broken link)

Try "new" handbook for mixed used evaluations http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/start.htm

Basic Guide to Program Evaluation by Carter McNamara http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm

Evaluation – A Beginners Guide

http://web.amnesty.org/802568F7005C4453/0/2173DDD1E48C37BA802569A50054557 2?Open&Highlight=2,evaluation

Evaluation Journal of Australasia – Brian English, Lisette Kaleveld The politics of program logic

Evaluation:

Topic	Mark (%)
Program Logic Model – case study application	20
Review of an evaluation	30
Program evaluation proposal	30
Program evaluation proposal presentation (poster session)	10
Class participation	10
TOTAL	100

- **1. Program Logic Model case study application**. Each student will be provided with a program case study at end of class on Saturday September 12th. Your assignment will be to evaluate the overall design and effectiveness of the evaluation using the techniques inherent in the Program Logic Model.
- **2. Review of an evaluation**. Each student will be provided with a published evaluation at the conclusion of class on Saturday, October 17th. Your assignment is to critique the evaluation on the basis of design, validity threats, conclusions and recommendations.

This is a take home assignment which is due on Friday, November 20^{th} . Please submit your assignment by e-mail to birwin6@uwo.ca in either Word format. Your answer should be clear and concise. Answers should not be more than 1500 words of text.

- **3. Program evaluation proposal**. Each student will develop a proposal to evaluate a program of the student's choice. Students are encouraged to use this as an opportunity to link their efforts in this course with the development and completion of the MPA Research Paper.
- **4. Program evaluation proposal presentation**. Each student will be allotted time during the November classes for a presentation on their program evaluation proposal in the form of a poster session. It is intended that the presentations provide an opportunity for feedback, constructive criticism and peer input.
- **5.** Class participation. At the graduate level the basic expectations in any course include attendance, completion in advance of all assigned readings, and participation in classroom discussions.

As a guide to grading the instructor uses the following measurement: Consistent Top Quality Contributions - 85 % or above; Good Level of Participation - 75 to 84 %; Spoke But Contributed Little - 65 to 74 %; Spoke Sporadically - 50 to 64 %;

Rarely Participated - 0 to 49 %.

Class Schedule:

September 17 – 18

Readings:

- Mc David and Hawthorn (2006), Chapters 1-3
- Pal (2010), Chapters 1 4
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide

Topics to be covered:

Introduction

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

Key Concepts and Issues in Program Evaluation

- Key Concepts
- Program Evaluation Process
- Policy Cycles

Program Logic Model

- Introduction to Logic models
- Design and Use
- Limitations

Research Designs for Program Evaluation

- What is Research Design?
- Validity
- Performance Measure
- Key issues in Evaluation

Other:

- The Canadian Firearms Program: a case study
- United Way of America, Outcome Measurement: a case study
- Guest Presenter: Jim Madden, MSc, Middlesex- London Health Unit program Evaluator, Topic: Program Evaluation at the Local Level

October 29 - 30

Readings:

- Mc David and Hawthorn (2006), Chapters 4 8
- Pal (2010), Chapters 5 7
- Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat (1998) Program Evaluation Methods
- Evaluation Standards for the Government of Canada Appendix B

Topics to be covered:

Measurements in Program Evaluation

- Measurement: procedures, terminology, and validity
- Units of analysis & sources of data
- Survey & Research Design

Criteria, Standards and Measures

- Approaches to qualitative evaluation
- Connecting qualitative evaluation to performance method
- Benchmarking
- Needs assessments

Economic Evaluation

- Types
- In Performance Measure
- Cost Effectiveness, Utility, Benefit Analysis

Performance Measures

- Introduction
- Growth of Performance Measure
- Comparison with performance evaluation

Other:

- Best Practices Treatment and Rehabilitation for Driving While Impaired Case Study
- Class discussion of assignment: *Review of an evaluation*. Each student should prepare a one-page synopsis and a five minute presentation on their selected evaluation subject.
- Guest Presenter, T.B.A., Topic: Cost-Benefit Analysis a keystone to program and policy evaluation

November 19 - 20

Readings:

- Mc David and Hawthorn (2006), Chapters 9 12
- Pal (2010) Chapters 8 & 9
- Evaluation Journal of Australasia *The Politics of Program Logic*

Topics to be discussed:

Performance Measures – continued

- Design and implementation
- Intended vs. actual uses
- Problems and issues in implementation and sustaining

Joining Theory and Practice

Cultures that Support Evaluation Ethics and evaluation practice

- Professional judgment
- The political factor

Other:

• Program evaluation proposal presentations. The presentations will provide an opportunity for feedback, constructive criticism and peer input.