# Western University, Department of Political Science
## Masters in Public Administration PA 9915
## Methods and Issues in Program and Policy Evaluation

Office Hours and Contact Information
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Class:

| Fridays: | Saturdays: |
|---|---|
| September 20, 3pm-7pm | September 21, 9am-4pm |
| October 25 | October 26 |
| November 22 | November 23 |

## Course Description:

The purpose of the course is to familiarize students with the major issues in the fields of program 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:

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Think critically and solve problems about the challenges of program implementation, improvements and accountability that you may face, in the public or non-profit sectors
- Frame performance / accountability issues in analytical and policy terms
- Understand performance monitoring and program evaluation in their different purposes, methods, and relationships
- Explore and understand the key differences between alternative empirical methods commonly used in program evaluation
- Discuss the uses and limitations of ongoing performance information and periodic evaluations in policy decision-making
- Plan, develop, present and negotiate the terms of a simple program evaluation as group work to a non-technical authority
- Carry out a simple evaluation

## Source Materials:

A combination of articles, book chapters and handouts will be used. The assigned readings will be made available in web-accessible electronic journals, or directly through the Internet (indicated below in url's provided). The course outline below is in draft and the final full list of readings will be provided at the start of the course.

## Resource Materials:

### Required Texts

Howlett, M., Ramesh, M. & Perl, A. (2009) Studying public policy: Policy cycles & policy subcycles (3rd ed.) Don Mills ON.: Oxford

Mc David, J., Huse, I. and Hawthorn, L. (2013) *Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement: an introduction to the practice (2nd Ed.).* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage

### Other

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/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**

**Additional readings and case studies will also be posted on the class website.**

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/internet/English/osh_20030224_e_23380.html

**Supplemental references**

Pal, L. (2010) Beyond Policy Analysis: public issue management in turbulent times (4th ed.). Chapters 1 – 4, Toronto: Nelson

*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.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/start.htm

Evaluation – A Beginners Guide
http://web.amnesty.org/802568F7005C4453/0/2173DDD1E48C37BA802569A500545572?Open&Highlight=2,evaluation

## Course format:

This course involves a combination of lecture/seminar, case analysis, and project work. The course consists of readings from the literature as well as individual and team assignments designed to do three things: reinforce learning of key concepts and methods; utilize that learning in the critique of actual case studies; and simulate the monitoring and evaluation work. These will be presented and discussed at the class sessions.

## Evaluation:

| Topic | Mark (%) |
|---|---|
| Program Logic Model – case study application | **20** |
| Review of an evaluation | **20** |
| Program evaluation proposal | **30** |
| Program evaluation proposal presentation | **10** |
| Class participation/ case studies | **20** |
| **TOTAL** | **100** |

**Program Logic Model – case study application**. Each student will select/identify a program case study at end of class on Saturday September 21. Your assignment will be to evaluate the overall design and effectiveness of the evaluation using the techniques inherent in the Program Logic Model, due October 25.

**Review of an evaluation**. Each student will be provided with a published evaluation, at the conclusion of class on Saturday, October 26. Your assignment is to critique the evaluation on the basis of design, validity threats, conclusions and recommendations.

**Program evaluation proposal**. Each student team will develop a proposal to evaluate a program of a municipal partner. Due date will be in mid-December, to be determined at the first September class. This course has been structured in a problem-based learning format with a Community Service Learning (CEL) element. This means that students will work in project teams throughout the course to create a program evaluation plan for a local government organization/body. Depending on the requirements of the organization and the project, each team will work at their own pace through the course material and rely on the resources provided by the instructor as well as external resources to meet their learning goals and the deliverables contracted to the community partner. The course requires active learning and that students come to each class prepared to engage in class and group discussion and work on tasks at hand. A final written Evaluation Plan is a major deliverable in the course, but the intention and focus throughout will be on learning the material and practicing the techniques; therefore, our attention will be on the process through which this takes place rather than the product per se.

**Program evaluation proposal presentation.** Each student Team will be allotted time during the November 23 class for a presentation of a summary of their program evaluation proposal in the form of a poster session. It is intended that the presentations provide an opportunity for feedback of their work in progress, including constructive criticism and peer input

**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 %.

**Deadlines:**
As deadlines are of the essence to performance monitoring and evaluation – observing the "expiry date" of requested information should be part of your training and discipline. This is true of individual and group assignments. Unless the assignment indicates otherwise (e.g. seminar memos one day prior to class), written responses to homework assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date, and must be on paper with the pages neatly stapled together, and identified with the student's name and student number. Unless there is a valid (e.g. medical) excuse, assignments will not be accepted more than one class late, and late assignments will be given a 20% penalty. Students are encouraged to work together on individual assignments, but the work handed in must be the student's own. For group assignments, in addition to the overall group presentation, students are to submit a write-up of their understanding of the project and their personal contributions to its development.

# Class Schedule:

| Module | Participants | Date | Readings |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Introduction**<br>Course Outline<br>What is evaluation research and how do we apply it to programs and policies? | | Sept 20 & 21 | Mc David et al (2013), Chapters 1 – 2<br><br>Pal (2010), Chapters 1 – 2 |
| **Key Concepts and Issues in Program Evaluation**<br>Key Concepts<br>Program Evaluation Process<br>Policy Cycles | Causation Discussion | | Shriven (2004), *Causation*<br><br>Grasso (2003), *What makes an evaluation useful* |
| **Program Logic Model**<br>Introduction to Logic models | | | Mc David et al (2013), Chapter 3<br><br>W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide |
| **Program Logic Model (Cont'd)**<br>Design and Use<br>Limitations | Case study presentation | | The Canadian Firearms Program: a case study |
| **Research Designs for Program Evaluation**<br>What is Research Design?<br>Validity<br>Performance Measure<br>Key issues in Evaluation | Project Logic Model due | Oct 25 & 26 | Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 4 – 6<br><br>Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat (1998) *Program Evaluation Methods* |

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| **Performance Measures** Introduction Growth of Performance Measure Comparison with performance evaluation | | | Howlett et al., (2009), Chapter 4 | |
| **Performance Measures – continued** Design and implementation Intended vs. actual uses Problems and issues in implementation and sustaining | Evaluation Review due | | Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 7 – 8 | |
| **Joining Theory and Practice** Cultures that Support Evaluation Ethics and evaluation practice | | | Howlett et al., (2009) Chapters 7 – 9 Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 9 – 12 | |
| **Joining Theory and Practice (Cont'd)** Professional judgment The political factor | Evaluation proposal presentations (peer feedback) | Nov 22 & 23 | Pal (2010) Chapters 8 & 9 | |
| **Criteria, Standards and Measures** Approaches to qualitative evaluation Connecting qualitative evaluation to performance method Benchmarking Needs assessments | Evaluation proposal presentations (peer feedback) | | Howlett et al., (2009), Chapter 6 | |
| **Economic Evaluation** Types In Performance Measure Cost - Effectiveness, Utility, Benefit - Analysis | Case Study presentation | | Gul & Dogutus (2009), *Providing efficient police services: a CBA*, Case Study | |
| **Measurements in Program Evaluation** Measurement: procedures, terminology, and validity Units of analysis & sources of data Survey & Research Design | Case study presentation Evaluation Proposal due | | Hafstad, Aaro & Langmark (1996), *Evaluation of an anti-smoking mass media campaign*, Case Study | |

**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.htmPla.

**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