Masters in Public Administration (MPA)
Local Government Program, Western University

PA 9915 Program Evaluation

Office Hours and Contact Information

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Fridays (5:00pm to 7:00 pm) Saturdays (10:00 am to 2:00pm)
September 18 September 19
October 16 October 17
November 6 November 7
November 27 November 28

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**


**Other**


Case Studies

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


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

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 simulation. 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:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Mark (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Logic Model – case study application</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of an evaluation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program evaluation proposal</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program evaluation proposal presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation/ case studies</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
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**Program Logic Model – case study application.** Each student will select/identify a program case study at end of class on Sept. 19th. Your assignment will be to evaluate the overall design and effectiveness of the evaluation using the techniques inherent in the Program Logic Model, due Oct. 16.

**Review of an evaluation.** Each student will be provided with a published evaluation, at the conclusion of class on Oct. 17th. Your assignment is to critique the evaluation on the basis of design, validity threats, conclusions and recommendations.

**Program evaluation proposal.** Each student will develop a proposal to evaluate a program of the student’s choice. The proposal will include any/all elements from the class, and be of a quality that could be implemented in the student's respective workplace. More details will follow in class. This assignment is due the last day of class, but that timeline may move.

**Program evaluation proposal presentation.** Each student will be allotted time during the November classes for a presentation of a summary of their program evaluation proposal. 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:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>Mc David et al (2013), Chapters 1 – 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Outline</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Pal (2010), Chapters 1 – 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is evaluation research and how do we apply it to programs and policies?</td>
<td>Causation Discussion</td>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>Shriven (2004), <em>Causation</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Concepts and Issues in Program Evaluation</strong></td>
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<td>Grasso (2003), <em>What makes an evaluation useful</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>Mc David et al (2013), Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Program Evaluation Process</td>
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<td>W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide</td>
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<td>Policy Cycles</td>
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<td><strong>Program Logic Model</strong></td>
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<td>September 19</td>
<td>Mc David et al (2013), Chapters 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Logic models</td>
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<td>W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide</td>
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<td><strong>Program Logic Model (Cont'd)</strong></td>
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<td>October 16</td>
<td>The Canadian Firearms Program: a case study</td>
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<td>Design and Use</td>
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<td>Limitations</td>
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<td><strong>Research Designs for Program Evaluation</strong></td>
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<td>October 17</td>
<td>Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 4 – 6</td>
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<td>Validity</td>
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<td>Performance Measure</td>
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<td>Key issues in Evaluation</td>
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<td><strong>Performance Measures</strong></td>
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<td>October 17</td>
<td>Howlett et al., (2009), Chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>Growth of Performance Measure</td>
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<td>Comparison with performance evaluation</td>
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<td><strong>Performance Measures – continued</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 7 – 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design and implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intended vs. actual uses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problems and issues in implementation and sustaining</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Joining Theory and Practice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>November 7</td>
<td>Howlett et al., (2009), Chapters 7 – 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation Review due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultures that Support Evaluation Ethics and evaluation practice</td>
<td>Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 9 – 12</td>
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</table>
| **Joining Theory and Practice (Cont’d)**  
Professional judgment  
The political factor | Evaluation proposal presentations (peer feedback)  
November 7  
| **Criteria, Standards and Measures**  
Approaches to qualitative evaluation  
Connecting qualitative evaluation to performance method  
Benchmarking  
Needs assessments | Evaluation proposal presentations (peer feedback)  
November 27  
Howlett et al., (2009), Chapter 6 |
| **Economic Evaluation**  
Types  
In Performance Measure  
Cost - Effectiveness, Utility, Benefit - Analysis | Case Study presentation  
November 28  
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  
November 28  
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.htm](http://www.uwo.ca/grad/calendar.htmPla)