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

PA 9915 Program Evaluation

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 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:

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 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:

Module	Participants	Date	Readings	
Introduction Course Outline What is evaluation research and how do we apply it to programs and policies?		September 18	Mc David et al (2013), Chapters 1 – 2 Pal (2010), Chapters 1 – 2	
Key Concepts and Issues in Program Evaluation Key Concepts Program Evaluation Process Policy Cycles	Causation Discussion	September 19	Shriven (2004), *Causation* Grasso (2003), *What makes an evaluation useful*	
Program Logic Model Introduction to Logic models		September 19	Mc David et al (2013), Chapter 3 W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide	
Program Logic Model (Cont'd) Design and Use Limitations	Case study presentation	October 16	The Canadian Firearms Program: a case study	
Research Designs for Program Evaluation What is Research Design? Validity Performance Measure Key issues in Evaluation	Project Logic Model due	October 17	Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 4 – 6 Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat (1998) *Program Evaluation Methods*	
Performance Measures Introduction Growth of Performance Measure Comparison with performance evaluation		October 17	Howlett et al., (2009), Chapter 4	
Performance Measures – continued Design and implementation Intended vs. actual uses Problems and issues in implementation and sustaining		November 6	Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 7 – 8	
Joining Theory and Practice	Evaluation Review due	November 7	Howlett et al., (2009) Chapters 7 – 9	

Cultures that Support Evaluation Ethics and evaluation practice			Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 9 – 12	
Joining Theory and Practice (Cont'd) Professional judgment The political factor	Evaluation proposal presentations (peer feedback)	November 7	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)	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.htmPla