



**Masters in Research in Policy and Evaluation (MRPE),  
Western University**

**MRPE 9600, Evidence-Based Policy Making and Program Evaluation**

**Office Hours and Contact Information**

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**Class:** Thursdays 1:30pm to 4:30pm, SSC 6210

**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* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Don Mills ON.: Oxford

Mc David, J., Huse, I. and Hawthorn, L. (2018) *Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement: an introduction to the practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> 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](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](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](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/dcgpubs/tbm_161/ep-pe1_e.asp)

User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed 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 (Team)	30

Program evaluation proposal presentation (Team)	<b>10</b>
Class participation/ case studies	<b>20</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

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

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

**Program evaluation proposal (Team).** Each student team will develop a proposal to evaluate a program of a community partner. 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 an organization in the local London community. 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 (Team).** Each student team will be allotted time 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 %.

### **Class Schedule:**

<b>Module</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings</b>
<b>Introduction</b> Course Outline What is evaluation research and how do we		January 6	Mc David et al (2013), Chapters 1 – 2

apply it to programs and policies?			Pal (2010), Chapters 1 – 2
<b>Key Concepts and Issues in Program Evaluation</b> Key Concepts Program Evaluation Process Policy Cycles	Causation Discussion	January 13	Shriven (2004), <i>Causation</i>  Grasso (2003), <i>What makes an evaluation useful</i>
<b>Program Logic Model</b> Introduction to Logic models		January 20	Mc David et al (2013), Chapter 3  W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide
<b>Program Logic Model (Cont'd)</b> Design and Use Limitations	Case study presentation	January 27	The Canadian Firearms Program: a case study
<b>Research Designs for Program Evaluation</b> What is Research Design? Validity Performance Measure Key issues in Evaluation	Project Logic Model due	February 3	Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 4 – 6  Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat (1998) <i>Program Evaluation Methods</i>
<b>Performance Measures</b> Introduction Growth of Performance Measure Comparison with performance evaluation		February 10	Howlett et al., (2009), Chapter 4
<b>Performance Measures – continued</b> Design and implementation Intended vs. actual uses Problems and issues in implementation and sustaining	Evaluation Review due	February 17	Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 7 – 8
<b>Reading Week</b>			

<b>Joining Theory and Practice</b> Cultures that Support Evaluation Ethics and evaluation practice		March 3	Howlett et al., (2009) Chapters 7 – 9  Mc David et al., (2013), Chapters 9 – 12
<b>Joining Theory and Practice (Cont'd)</b> Professional judgment The political factor	Evaluation proposal presentations (peer feedback)	March 10	Pal (2010) Chapters 8 & 9
<b>Criteria, Standards and Measures</b> Approaches to qualitative evaluation Connecting qualitative evaluation to performance method Benchmarking Needs assessments	Evaluation proposal presentations (peer feedback)	March 17	Howlett et al., (2009), Chapter 6
<b>Economic Evaluation</b> Types In Performance Measure Cost - Effectiveness, Utility, Benefit - Analysis	Case Study presentation	March 24	Gul & Dogutus (2009), <i>Providing efficient police services: a CBA</i> , Case Study
<b>Measurements in Program Evaluation</b> Measurement: procedures, terminology, and validity Units of analysis & sources of data Survey & Research Design	Case study presentation  Evaluation Proposal due	March 31	Hafstad, Aaro & Langmark (1996), <i>Evaluation of an anti-smoking mass media campaign</i> , Case Study

## University Policy on Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offenses. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offenses in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offenses include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been

obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate, consult your instructor. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" will not be accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offense include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

## **Procedures for Appealing Academic Evaluations**

In the first instance, all appeals of a grade must be made to the course instructor (informal consultation). If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal must be sent to the Assistant Program Director or Designate of the DAN Program. If the response of the Assistant Director is considered unsatisfactory to the student, he/she may then appeal to the Dean of the Faculty in which the course of program was taken. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean, may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office.

## **Support Services**

The Registrar's office can be accessed for Student Support Services at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca> Student Support Services (*including the services provided by the USC listed here*) can be reached at: <http://westernusc.ca/services/> Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

## **Other Issues**

### **Short Absences.**

If you miss a class due to minor illness or other problems, check your course outlines for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or exam. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow the missed lectures notes from a classmate.

### **Extended Absences.**

If you are absent more than approximately two weeks or if you get too far behind to catch up, you should consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses. The Academic Counsellors can help you to consider the alternatives. At your request, they can also keep your instructors informed about your difficulties.

### **Academic Concerns.**

If you are in academic difficulty, it is strongly recommended that you see your academic counsellor.

**For The University of Western Ontario Senate Regulations, please see the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy at: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>**