



MRPE 9600B · Evidence Based Policy Making and Program Evaluation

Winter Term 2023
The University of Western Ontario

Angela Mawdsley
Ph.D., P.Eng.

Class: Tuesday 5:00-8:00pm
Office Hours: By appointment
Contact Details: amawdsl@uwo.ca

Although this academic year might be different, Western University is committed to a thriving campus. We encourage you to check out the [Digital Student Experience](#) website to manage your academics and well-being. Additionally, the following link provides available resources to support students on and off campus: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Course Description

Overview. The purpose of the course is to familiarize students with how research evidence is used to inform policy-program decisions, maximizing outcomes and utilizing the best available evidence. This includes evidence from scientific research, organizational data and facts, and experiential evidence from practitioners.

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) impact this process. Understanding of and strategies to cope with these issues are a key course component. In particular, students will learn to apply evidence-based decision-making tools and techniques to the evaluation and review of programs and policies.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- identify, collect, synthesize, prioritize and reconcile relevant sources of evidence in decision-making;
- compare different evaluation techniques employing them appropriately to the program-project and resources constraints;

- determine strengths and weaknesses of a policy-program through an analysis of its internal dynamics and operations;
- judge overall effectiveness of a policy-program through an outcome, results assessment and/or impact assessment; and
- conduct a cost-benefit analysis.

Course Materials

A combination of articles, book chapters and other media will be used. The assigned readings and materials will be made available through our OWL course site.

Readings. This course will rely primarily on the following textbook (available online through Western Libraries):

McDavid, J. C., Huse, I., & Hawthorn, R. L. (2019). *Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement: an introduction to practice (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Course Evaluation

The course is lecture based where concepts and ideas will be introduced and applied through problem solving in case studies, group discussions, assignments, and a group project.

Class Participation	20%
Assignment 1	15%
Assignment 2	15%
Assignment 3	15%
Group Project	35%

Class Participation. It is expected that students will come to class having completed all assigned readings and prepared to participate in case study analysis and class discussions. Attendance is expected and contribution to case studies and discussions will be evaluated as part of class participation.

Assignment 1- Policy-program development. Each student will develop a policy or program of their choosing. The proposed policy-program will include the identification of the current situation, needs, and objectives.

Assignment 2 - Program logic model. Each student will use the program logic model to evaluate the overall design and effectiveness of a policy-program of their choice.

Assignment 3 - Evaluation review. Each student will perform a review on an existing policy-program evaluation of their choice. The review will include the identification of strengths and weaknesses of the policy-program along with judgment on the effectiveness of the evaluation.

Group Project - Program evaluation. Each group will develop an evaluation plan for a policy-program. The intention of the group project is to apply the material and techniques presented throughout the course and to facilitate collaborate learning. The group project consists of a group class presentation, group report and individual reflection.

How to Contact Me

I can be reached on MS Teams chat or by email at amawdsl@uwo.ca and will do my best to reply within 24 hours. All office hours are by appointment.

Important Policies

Assignment Deadlines. Students must submit their assignments by the date and time stated in the course outline and on the OWL website. Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day they are late. Any assignment not received within 5 days of the due date will not be accepted, except in the event of a documented medical or family emergency. If a student anticipates an issue with an assignment, they are recommended to speak to the professor as early as possible to make alternative arrangements.

Plagiarism. Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea 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 scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar). All required assignments may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Standards of Professional Behaviour. It is the responsibility of all to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- Respect for others both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others' expectations of confidentiality and privacy).
- Active engagement in learning and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best). Take responsibility for your own learning by: relating course content and projects to your own professional interests; monitoring your own understanding; seeking clarification and assistance when necessary.
- Personal integrity (following through on commitments; doing one's own work).

Students should also be aware of the UWO Student Code of Conduct found at: <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

Copyright of Lectures and Other Course Materials. Any materials created by the instructor (e.g., videos, notes, handouts, summaries, slide decks, assignments, exams, etc.) are protected by copyright law and may not be copied or distributed in any form without the explicit permission of the instructor. Any non-authorized use of these materials constitutes an academic offence.

Scholastic Offences. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence (www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

Accommodation. Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility Services, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both SAS and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction. For more information, see <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>.

Completion of Course Requirements. Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall–December 31; Winter–April 30, Summer–August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. In such a case, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to request permission to carry the incomplete. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the graduate program office. More details regarding incompletes are outlined in the Graduate Handbook: http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html.

Accessibility Options. Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2111, x82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website: www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html.

Mental Health. Students in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Health and Wellness. As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. The Wellness Education Centre (lower level UCC) assists students in finding mental health and other related resources best suited to their needs (<http://se.uwo.ca/wec.html>). Western's School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' Living Well website provides tips for thriving at grad school and other helpful information (http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/living_well/index.html). Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in

Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Also, we encourage you to check out the Faculty of Music web page (<http://www.music.uwo.ca/>), and our own McIntosh Gallery (<http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>).

Disputing a Grade. Students who wish to dispute an assignment, exam, or course grade must write a one-page explanation justifying why their work should be re-evaluated. Work will not be re-evaluated on the basis that students were sick or feeling stressed when completing the assignment. Please be advised that a student's mark may go up or down upon re-evaluation.

Extraordinary Circumstances. The content and/or evaluation of this course is subject to change in the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's or instructor's control.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Class/Assessment Notes
1	January 10	Introduction	In-class exercise
2	January 17	Key concepts and issues	In-class case study analysis; assignment 1 introduction
3	January 24	Policy and program development	In-class case study analysis
4	January 31	Policy and program development	In-class assignment 1 discussion; assignment 1 time
5	February 7	Evaluation frameworks and models	In-class case study analysis; assignment 1 due; assignment 2 introduction
6	February 14	Evaluation frameworks and models	In-class assignment 2 discussion; group project introduction
7	February 21	Reading week - no class	
8	February 28	Performance measures	Group project time; assignment 2 due; assignment 3 introduction
9	March 7	Performance measures	In-class case study analysis
10	March 14	Program evaluation	Group project time
11	March 21	Economic evaluation	In-class case study analysis; assignment 3 due
12	March 28	Managing policies and programs	Group project time
13	April 4	Review and presentations	Group presentations; group report and individual reflection due April 10

Please note: This schedule is subject to change over the course of the term in order to meet the needs of the class. Any changes will be announced through our OWL course website.