

EPPS 6352.501 (86571) Fall 2016 (3 hrs)
Monday 7:00-9:45 pm. SLC 3.102
Office hours: Monday 11:00-12:30 and 5:30-6:30
Wednesday 11:00-12:30
Thursday 5:30-6:30 and by appointment

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Evaluation Research Methods in the Economic, Political and Policy Sciences

This course introduces a collection of analysis and synthesis activities that fall within the broad domain of policy, program and project evaluation, and the various steps involved in its implementation. Themes include overview of alternative frameworks/approaches to evaluation, identifying causal relationships that underpin programs and projects, how to ensure that findings are valid, different types of evaluation design, acquisition and/or production of essential data and effective communication of results.

The course looks closely at evaluation techniques and procedures, which to the extent feasible try to reflect essentials of social science research. The nuance here, in addition to usual empirical research concerns and problems of rigorous inquiry, is that evaluation faces some special challenges, such as accounting for the interests of a wide spectrum of stakeholders and judging whether implementation of a treatment or other intervention actually produces its intended effects. This often is hard to do.

A. Learning Outcomes: Students will:

- ❖ be familiar with the array of investigative activities that fall under the rubric of evaluation in public and non-profit agencies, and of steps involved in their implementation;
- ❖ understand different evaluation approaches, frameworks and design dimensions;
- ❖ demonstrate sound knowledge in applying basic components of evaluation, such as operational logic, effects measurement and collection of reliable data; and
- ❖ be able to design convincing proposals for evaluation of social or economic programs.

B. Pre-requisite: None. Familiarity with research methods and statistics can sometimes be helpful.

C. Required Texts:

Program Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines. 4th edition (2011). Jody L. Fitzpatrick, James Sanders and Blaine Worthen. Pearson **[FSW]**

The Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation. 4th edition (2015). Kathryn Newcomer, Harry Hatry and Joseph Wholey, Jossey-Bass **[NHW]**

The Research Methods Knowledge Base. 2nd edition (2006). William Trochim. **[RKB]** at:
<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/>

[or book: **The Research Methods Knowledge Base** 3rd ed (2007). Trochim & Donnelly, Atomic Dog Publishing]

D. Grading:

Grade structure is: A(4.0), A-(3.67), B+(3.33), B(3.00), B-(2.67), C+(2.33), C(2.00), and F(0). The grade reflects performance in five (5) class assignments, an evaluation design proposal (i.e., this is student's class paper), a formal presentation of the proposal, and a final examination, as follows:

Assignments (4 assignments at 10% each):	40 %
Summary and discussion of 2 instructor-assigned articles:	10 %
Evaluation proposal:	20 %
Presentation of evaluation proposal:	10 %
Final examination:	20 %
Total:	100 %

E. Class Schedule (abbreviations refer to texts in Section C, above):

1. August 22: The Art and Science of Evaluation

FSW Ch: 1 Evaluation's Basic Purposes, Uses and Conceptual Distinctions (pp 3-27)
2 Origins and Current Trends in Modern Program Evaluation

NHW Ch: 1 Planning and Designing Useful Evaluations
18 Using the Internet

2. August 29: Processes and Frameworks I

FSW Ch: 4 Alternative Views of Evaluation (pp 111-120)
5 First Approaches: Expertise and Consumer-Oriented Approaches
11 Clarifying the Evaluation Request and Responsibilities (pp 259-271)
12 Setting Boundaries and Analyzing the Evaluation Context (pp 286-290)

NHW Ch: 2 Analyzing and Engaging Stakeholders

3. September 12: Processes and Frameworks II

FSW Ch: 6 Program-Oriented Evaluation Approaches
7 Decision-Oriented Evaluation Approaches

NHW Ch: 5 Performance Measurement

4. September 19: Processes and Frameworks III

A1- Program Summary due today

FSW Ch: 8 Participant-Oriented Evaluation Approaches
9 Other Current Considerations: Cultural Competence and Capacity Building
10 A Comparative Analysis of Approaches

NHW Ch: 8 Conducting Case Studies
11 Evaluating Community Change Programs
12 Culturally Responsive Evaluation

GAO Case Study Evaluations 1990

5. September 26: Linking Cause with Outcome I

FSW Ch: 12 Setting Boundaries and Analyzing the Evaluation Context (pp 292-307)

NHW Ch: 3 Using Logic Models

ICCC Toolkit for Evaluating Initiatives to Improve Child Care Quality, 2003

United Way Logic Model Handbook, 2007

6. October 3: Linking Cause with Outcome II

A2 - Evaluation Reports Review due today

CARE International: Rosetta Stone of LFA

European Commission Project Cycle Management Guidelines 2004 (pp 57-93)

Bakewell and Garbutt: The Use and Abuse of the Logical Framework Approach. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency 2005

7. October 10: Assuring Validity

FSW Ch: 15 Collecting Evaluative Information: Design, Sampling, and Cost Choices

NHW Ch: 7 Randomized Controlled Trials
6 Comparison Group Designs

RKB Sampling:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/sampling.php>

Probability Sampling:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/sampprob.php>

Nonprobability Sampling:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/sampon.php>

Internal validity:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/intval.php>

Establishing Cause & Effect:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/causeeff.php>

Single Group Threats:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/intsing.php>

Regression to the Mean:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/regrmean.php>

Multiple Group Threats: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/intmult.php>

Social Interaction Threats: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/intsoc.php>

8. October 17: Experimental Methods

- RKB** Introduction to Design: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/desintro.php>
Types of Designs: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/destypes.php>
Experimental Design: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/desexper.php>
Two-Group Experimental Designs: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/expsimp.php>
Probabilistic Equivalence: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/expequi.php>
Random Selection & Assignment: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/random.php>
Hybrid Experimental Designs: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/exphybrd.php>
GAO Designing Evaluations 1991

9. October 24: Not So Experimental Methods

A3 - Theory of Change 1- Logic Model due today

- RKB** Quasi-Experimental Design: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/quasiexp.php>
Nonequivalent Group Design: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/quasnegd.php>
Regression-Discontinuity Design: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/quasird.php>
Other Quasi-Experimental Designs: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/quasioth.php>
GAO Program Evaluation 2009 (pp 1-33)

10. October 31: Data Acquisition 1

- FSW** Ch: 16 Collecting Evaluative Information: Data, Methods, Analysis, Interpretation (pp 418-444)
NHW Ch: 13 Using Agency Records
14 Using Surveys
Clark and Schober: Asking Questions and Influencing Answers (1991), in J.M. Tanur (ed.) Questions about Questions: Inquiries into the Cognitive Bases of Surveys, Sage. pp. 15-48
Frery: A Brief Guide to Questionnaire Development (undated)

11. November 7: Data Acquisition II

- NHW** Ch: 16 Using Ratings by Trained Observers
19 Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews
20 Focus Group Interviewing
GAO Using Structured Interviewing Techniques, 1991

12. November 14: Program Worth

A4- Theory of Change 2 – Causal Theory due today

- NHW** Ch: 24 Cost-Effectiveness and Cost-Benefit Analysis
Fass and Pi: Getting Tough on Juvenile Crime: An Analysis of Costs and Benefits, Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency. 39(4), 363-399. 2002

13. November 28: Communicating Findings I

- FSW** Ch: 3 Political, Interpersonal, and Ethical Issues in Evaluation (pp 64-78)
17 Reporting Evaluation Results: Maximizing Use and Understanding
NHW Ch: 27 Providing Recommendations, Suggestions, and Options for Improvement
28 Writing for Impact

14. December 5: Communicating Findings II

- In class presentations of evaluation proposals, and then distribution of take-home exam

15. December 12: *Take-home exam due today before 4:00 pm* *Evaluation Proposal due today before 6:00 pm*

F. Resources:

The evaluation trade is blessed with individuals and institutions that take time to create and maintain a rich constellation sites with helpful information. There are well worth visiting. A partial list includes:

General

<i>American Evaluation Association</i>	http://www.eval.org/
<i>Better Evaluation</i>	http://betterevaluation.org/
<i>Campbell Collaboration</i>	http://www.campbellcollaboration.org
<i>Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy</i>	http://evidencebasedprograms.org/
<i>Cochrane Collaboration</i>	http://www.cochrane.org
<i>Evaluation Portal</i>	http://www.evaluation.lars-balzer.name/links/
<i>Free management library:</i>	http://managementhelp.org/evaluation/outcomes-evaluation-guide.htm
<i>ICAA Resources for Methods</i>	http://gsociology.icaap.org/methods
<i>Innovation Network</i>	http://www.innonet.org/
<i>Miniature Library of Philosophy</i>	http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/
<i>Online Evaluation Resource Library</i>	http://oerl.sri.com/

Federal Government

<i>Agency for International Develop.</i>	http://dec.usaid.gov
<i>Centers for Disease Control</i>	http://www.cdc.gov/eval/resources/
<i>Dept. of Education: What Works</i>	http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
<i>Department of HHS</i>	http://aspe.hhs.gov/
	http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/the-program-managers-guide-to-evaluation
<i>Department of Justice</i>	http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/
<i>Environmental Protection Agency</i>	http://www.epa.gov/evaluate
<i>Government Accountability Office</i>	http://www.gao.gov/

State Government

<i>Florida Office of Program Analysis</i>	http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/
<i>Idaho Office of Performance Eval.</i>	http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/ope/index.htm
<i>MN Office of Legislative Auditor</i>	http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/pedintro.htm
<i>Texas State Auditor's Office</i>	http://www.sao.state.tx.us/

Non-Profit/Other Organizations

<i>Evaluation Exchange:</i>	http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange
<i>Evaluation Center at WMU</i>	http://www.wmich.edu/evaluation
<i>Oxfam UK</i>	http://www.oxfam.org.uk/
<i>United Way</i>	http://strengtheningfamilies.unitedway.org/evaluating_resources.cfm
<i>Wisconsin Cooperative Extension</i>	http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/index.html
<i>World Vision International</i>	http://www.wvi.org/disaster-management/evaluation-and-impact

e. International Organizations

<i>Asian Development Bank:</i>	http://www.adb.org/site/evaluation/main
<i>European Commission</i>	http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm
<i>OECD</i>	www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork/derec
<i>UN Development Program</i>	http://www.uneval.org/evaluationresource/index.jsp?ret=true
<i>World Bank Evaluation Group</i>	http://www.worldbank.org/oed/
<i>World Bank Institute</i>	http://go.worldbank.org/WDOT4PAV80

G. The Evaluation Proposal:

The principal course product is a proposal to evaluate a program of some kind, i.e., to design an evaluation. This program serves as the vehicle around which students build other class assignments. It is therefore important to choose a program that is workable, i.e., that does not lead to the dead end of an impossible-to-do intelligibly evaluation, ideally before the second class meeting, among other reasons because the first assignment is due very soon afterward. The selected program must meet four criteria:

1. It must be *evaluable*. That is, some projects, by their nature, elude any method of meaningful evaluation, causing students no end of trouble (and, consequently, no floor to their course grade).
2. It must be *touchable*. That is, it must be something for which you can get a lot of basic information within a short time period, including information directly from program managers if you choose something live and local. You should be able to “wrap your hands” around the undertaking (but not necessarily your fingers around its neck).
3. It must be *dissectible*, amenable to forensic analysis. General information about programs that contain no specific materials to link design, implementation and outcome are not amenable to evaluation methods of kinds envisaged for this course, and are therefore off limits.
4. It must be *approvable* (and then approved) by me before you proceed too far.

Given the foregoing, it is to your advantage to identify at least two candidate programs very soon after class begins, for which you have prior assurance of access to a lot of information. This includes cooperation from program managers if you choose to go “live”, making clear to them that you are designing an evaluation for purposes of the course; you are not doing an actual evaluation.

The evaluation proposal has the following structure:

i. Introduction - 150 words

Brief lead-in on the problem(s)/issue(s) that the program addresses

ii. Program Description - 450 words

Overview that conveys to the reader a proper understanding of the program's:

- mission/vision, size, comparability with similar programs elsewhere, and theoretical/conceptual underpinnings; and
- goals/objectives, criteria and methods in current use to assess progress in achieving them (if any), and comparison with criteria and methods used by similar programs elsewhere.

iii. Evaluation Design - 1200 words

Detailed description the type of evaluation proposed, goals/objectives on which the assessment will be based, measures and methods of data acquisition/production you plan to use, and how you intend to do it all with respect to:

- processes: actions that the program undertakes to reach its stated goals/objectives; and/or
- outcomes: the short-, medium- and long-term goals/objectives that the program aims for.

iv. Appendices (e.g., notes, references, questionnaire designs, etc.)

H. Guidelines for Preparing Class Assignments and the Evaluation Proposal

Writing: The presentation of written submissions must be clear. Say what you want to say in your own words. “Write like you talk” is good rule. If I understand what you say when you talk but cannot understand what you say when you write, then there is a brain-hand dysfunction that needs attention.

Length: 1800 (\pm 100) original words for the Evaluation Proposal, excluding quoted material, bibliography, notes, tables, etc. In other words, “original” refers to what you yourself write. Though rarely necessary, you can include quoted text. But this text does not count as part of the required length.

Format: I have specific preferences. It would be nice if you could adhere to them for all submissions:

- margins: 1-inch on all sides
- orientation: portrait
- font: times new roman, regular, 12 points (no HTML formatting)
- alignment: left (no justification)

- page numbering: on all pages, centered at the bottom
- line spacing: single-space (not 1.15 space) within paragraphs, double-space between paragraphs
- indentation: none
- paper title: at top of first page on one line (i.e. no cover sheet)
- student name: next line after the title
- citations in text: in any commonly accepted format (e.g., Smith, 2004)
- bibliography: in standard format (e.g., as you see them at the end of published articles)
- spelling: no errors (i.e., use spelling checker, and also review manually for wrong words)
- grammar: do not be horrible (i.e., use grammar checker set to strictest/most formal level)
- endnotes: place after bibliography (no footnotes)
- tables or graphics: include only if essential, place at very end.

I. Submissions:

All submissions must be submitted via elearning *messages*, saved in format that MS Word can read directly (i.e. no pdf or similar) and...

...file names must be last name then first name then assignment number.
 So if your name is **Bobbie Smith**, then the file name is: ***Smith Bobby Assignment 1***

J. Classroom Citizenship

Like academic integrity, debate about opposing views is a cornerstone of higher education. Your opinions matter as well as those of others. Please feel free to express yourself, but with courtesy and respect to all. Although large classes can make participation difficult, it is still the student's responsibility to engage with the material. This means paying attention and not texting, web surfing, having loud conversations or other disruptive behaviors. These kinds of behavior may influence a student's grade.

K. Electronic Devices

Electronic devices of any kind are not allowed in class unless the instructor invites students to use them for specific class business. Recording devices may not be used during class.

L. UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. It also provides information about your rights and links for a variety of services available to students: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

M. Syllabus Addendum (adapted from the Office of Judicial Affairs)

Each student must exercise independent thought, expression and aptitude. This addendum to the course syllabus is provided to assist you in developing and maintaining academic integrity while seeking scholastic success.

General Comments:

- All assignments, the class paper, presentation and examination, require individual, independent work. Any exception(s) to this will be clearly identified by the instructor.
- Be sure your name is on all your work.
- Complete and turn in assignments on time and in the required format.
- Retain all research notes and drafts until the assignment is graded.
- Obtain written authorization from the instructor prior to submitting a portion of academic work previously submitted for any academic exercise. (This includes an individual or group project submitted for another course or at another school.)

Academic Integrity for assignments, class paper and examination:

Be prepared:

- to present periodic drafts of work in progress
- to correctly and completely reference all sources of information using the citation format prescribed
- to submit your completed work in a timely and in the prescribed manner.

All episodes of suspected scholastic dishonesty will be reported according to University policy. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

To be as explicit as possible about the meaning of cheating (i.e. academic dishonesty): all assignments or other homework and exams are individual efforts (except when group work is assigned). Students do not collaborate with other students, or discuss assignments with other students prior to submission. Copying of assignments, other homework or exams, in whole or in part, from other students or from submitted academic work from previous semesters is an act of academic dishonesty. For more details please see: <http://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/integrity/>

All descriptions and timelines above are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor