COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to expose you to some of the models and methods used in program evaluation. Program evaluation is emerging as an important function of management at all levels of government. You as a manager will increasingly be asked to defend your programs, and to recommend improvements to how they are designed and implemented. Performance management implies linking the program to desired goals and outcome, and the tools of program evaluation are an important part of evaluating the program’s success. Even if you do not plan on being a professional program evaluator, per se, you will undoubtedly be a consumer of what they do, or may hire evaluators for your program. While you will not become an expert in program evaluation from this course, you should be comfortable with simple applications of these tools and, most importantly, learn to be an intelligent consumer of evaluations prepared by others.

The objective for the first segment of the course is to provide conceptual and methodological tools to analysts charged with assessing and evaluating program implementation. Because there are many ways of approaching evaluation research, this course will help students develop an understanding of different analytic strategies for assessing if a program is being instituted as designed and is reasonably connected to its articulated goals.

We will focus on two types of program evaluations: formative evaluations and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations are assessments of how well a program is being implemented, or how closely program implementation fits with the intentions of policy-makers. Summative evaluations assess whether the program achieved its desired objectives. These evaluations often use statistical methods, such as multiple regression, to help isolate the impact of the program. A good evaluation design will both differentiate impact and process objectives, as well as match data collection and analysis to these different needs. Higher quality program evaluation integrates both the quantitative and qualitative data and analysis, which will be the
ultimate objective of this course. In addition to highlighting different data gathering and analytic methods, this course will also consider the challenges of evaluating different types of programs in different contexts.

The first part of the semester will focus on designing **formative evaluations** to assess in-stream implementation of programs and will prepare you for the advanced statistics topics of the second half of the course. We will discuss how to design and perform formative evaluation research so as to maximize its utility to program managers. In addition, the first part of the course will provide more in-depth exposure to the SPSS statistical software package, focus on basic data management, and cover a number of qualitative data collection methods.

The second part of the course will pick up where PPA721 left off by addressing multiple regression analysis in more detail. As indicated above, multiple regression analysis is one of the principal tools used to estimate the impact of a program on outcomes. Professor Duncombe will use various program evaluation examples to illustrate this method. You will learn how to use SPSS to carry out regression analysis. Near the end of the semester we will turn to the main topic of this course, program evaluation. There are three major goals for this part of the course. First, to provide you with a background on how to design an impact assessment. Half the battle in program evaluation is coming up with a good research design that eliminates as many potential biases as possible. Second, you will link these different designs to the statistical tools used to analyze the results. Third, you will get practice reading summaries of program evaluations, identifying the research design, and analysis methods; and discussing strengths and weaknesses of these studies.

**COURSE PREREQUISITES**

Generally this course is open to students who have successfully completed PPA 721, or have taken the statistics waiver exam offered by the PA department. Exceptions will require the approval of the instructor.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS**


**New books (at Orange Bookstore):**


**Readings Packets (available at Campus Copy Center):**

1) **Course readings** not in the above books are in a reading packet. **Note that Prof. Allard (#1022) and Prof. Duncombe (#1009) have separate coursepacks.**

2) **Lecture notes** (\#1010 - Prof. Duncombe only). These are a good place to start your readings, but are no substitute for the other assigned reading. Professor Duncombe will reference the Lecture note number in this packet; they don't always match the lecture note number in the reading list.

**Optional Readings:**

For those of you that are more technically inclined and are seriously considering doing research (e.g., prospective Ph.D.students), there are several more advanced statistics texts that Prof. Duncombe would recommend. These are not in the bookstore, but are easily ordered through Amazon.com.


For those of you who may want to probe into these topics in more depth, several good books on evaluation include:


**WEB SITES RELATED TO PROGRAM EVALUATION**

**Domestic Organizations**
- U.S. Department of HHS,
  Office of the Asst. Secretary for Planning and Research: [http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov](http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov)
- Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation: [www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org)
- Mathematica: [www.mathematica-mpr.com](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com)
- Urban Institute: [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)

**International Organizations**
- Canadian Evaluation Society: [www.evaluationcanada.ca](http://www.evaluationcanada.ca)
- Asian Development Bank: [www.asiandevbank.org](http://www.asiandevbank.org)
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development: [www.ebrd.com](http://www.ebrd.com)
- Inter-American Development Bank: [www.iadb.org](http://www.iadb.org)
- North American Development Bank: [www.nadbank.org](http://www.nadbank.org)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)
Grading and Written Assignments – Professor Allard

The first portion of the class comprises 50% of your overall course grade. Students are expected to come to class prepared by having completed the assigned readings and any written assignments or group projects. A student’s course grade for the first portion of the course will be determined accordingly:

- 20% Focus Group/Survey Project
- 20% Data Assignment
- 60% Individual Project

**Focus Group/Survey Project:** Students will complete a two-step focus group and survey development assignment at the beginning of the semester. Each student will be assigned to a group of five. Each group will then select a topic and **will conduct a focus group on that topic in class on January 29, 2002.** Each group will interpret the findings from these focus groups and translate these findings into a brief 10-15 question survey that could be used to collect data from a larger population. This **survey instrument is due on February 3, 2002.**

**Data Assignment:** A short data assignment will be handed out on February 10, 2002 and will be due in class on **February 19, 2002.** This data assignment will ask you to examine data on substance abuse service delivery and will be related to a subsequent assignment in the second half of the semester.

**Individual Formative Evaluation Design Project:** Students will be required to design a formative program evaluation proposal for a program or policy of their own choice. **Students must outline the selected program and data sources in a one-page memo due on February 10, 2002.** Again, I would like this memo to describe the program and discuss the key aspects of the envisioned design. The final design should be 10 to 12 pages in length and include the following:

- definition of the program being implemented
- description of the implementation activities
- set of detailed evaluation questions that the study will address and how these questions are connected to the implementation process
- detailed description of data collection strategy and how data will answer questions posed by the study design
- plan for analyzing the data
- sample table of contents for the final evaluation project you would submit to the client upon completion of this project

Note that these final formative design projects should take great care to blend quantitative and qualitative methods. **This evaluation design is due in class on February 26, 2002.**
Students are required to read (and think about) all readings for the course in advance. As you may be aware, I use an interactive teaching style, which implies two-way communication. The material in this course is challenging enough that you do not want to fall behind. Cramming for a statistics exam is seldom successful. **Your grade in this section of the course will represent 50% of your course grade.** There will be three formal course requirements for this class;

1) **Final (60%)**: It will given during the regularly scheduled time for this class. **No make-up exams will be given and absence from the midterm will be recorded as an F!!** It is impossible to pass this class without taking the final. Exceptions to these times will only be made with the written permission of the department chair (P.A.) or the Dean (ESF, Law). The final will test primarily the tools of multiple regression, and program evaluation design. Any material covered during the second part of the course could be included in the midterm.

2) **Computer assignments (20%)**: You will get a chance to practice the skills required on the midterm with several computer assignments. I will review multiple regression procedures in SPSS in class, but it is up to you to know the basics of SPSS.

3) **Review of evaluation (20%)**: To give you practice as a consumer of program evaluations you will be required to write a memo summarizing one of the evaluation examples in the reading packet. You will critique the program evaluation design, and analysis methods. See the list of articles during sessions 10, 13, and 14 that are eligible for this assignment. You need to write a memo discussing your critique of the evaluation design and statistical methods. The memos are due at the beginning of class for the day the articles are going to be discussed; I will NOT accept memos turned in late. You must be in class to hand in class. You are required to do one memo. In preparing this memo consider the following questions (but this is a memo, not simply a list of answers to these questions).

   a. Describe the evaluation design used in the study. (You should try to connect this to designs we have discussed in this course.)
   b. Critique this evaluation design using the key criteria for internal validity we have discussed. Which of these problems do you think is the most serious?
   c. What are the statistical methods they used in the study? Do you think these methods appear to have adequately addressed the problems you identified above? What methods could they have used to help remove some possible biases?
   d. What would you have done to modify the basic design to help solve the problems that you have identified above? In answering this question, you cannot change the basic type of design. For example, if you are evaluating an experiment, how would you modify this experiment to reduce possible biases? If you are evaluating a quasi-experiment, are there modifications to this quasi-experimental design you might recommend, or another type of quasi-experiment? Be specific about how the treatment and control group are going to be selected under your alternative design, and what are important confounding variables you might want to collect data on.
### COURSE OUTLINE – FIRST PORTION (PROF. ALLARD)

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<td>Interviewing, Document Analysis, and Observation</td>
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<td>Handout Data Assignment &amp; Formative Design Proposal Due</td>
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<td>Session 9: February 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Participatory Strategies of Implementation Analysis</td>
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<td>Session 11: February 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Evaluating Evaluation Designs</td>
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<td>Ethics, Politics, and Human Subjects</td>
<td>Final Formative Design Due</td>
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## COURSE OUTLINE – SECOND PORTION (PROF. DUNCOMBE)

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<td>Session 1: March 3(^{rd})</td>
<td>Review of simple regression</td>
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<td>Session 2: March 5(^{th})</td>
<td>Review of simple regression</td>
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<td>Session 3: March 17(^{th})</td>
<td>Multiple regression basics</td>
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<td>Session 4: March 19(^{th})</td>
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<td>Session 14: April 23(^{rd})</td>
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**FINAL EXAM DURING REGULARLY SCHEDULED EXAM TIME**
**READING ASSIGNMENTS – FIRST PORTION (PROF. ALLARD)**

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<td>Readings</td>
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**Focus Groups Assigned**

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<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Linking Data to Performance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Trochim, Chapters 1 thru 3</td>
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**In-class Data Activity**

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<th>Session 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Weiss, Chapters 4 and 7</td>
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<th>Session 5</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
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<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Morgan, pp. 7-45</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Focus Groups for Social and Market Research” (coursepack)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chetkovich, Carol, Jane Mauldon, Claire Brindis, and Sylvia Guendelman.</td>
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**Focus Group Guide Due**

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<th>Interviewing, Document Analysis, and Observation</th>
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<td>Readings</td>
<td>Trochim, Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Weiss, Chapter 11</td>
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**Survey Instrument Due**
Session 7: Questionnaires and Surveys

Readings: Trochim, Chapter 4

In-class Survey

Session 8: Coding and Analyzing Open-Ended Questions


Handout for Data Assignment
Individual Formative Design Proposal Due

Session 9: Participatory Strategies of Implementation Analysis

Reitbergen-McCracken, Jennifer and Deepa Narayan, Participation and Social Assessment: Tools and Techniques. (coursepack)

Session 10: Data Management and Initial Analysis

Readings: Patton, Michael Quinn. “Qualitative Analysis and Interpretation.” (coursepack)
Patton, Michael Quinn. “Deciphering Data and Reporting Results.” (coursepack)

In-class Data Activity

Session 11: Report Writing and Utilization

Readings: Trochim, Chapter 12
Weiss, Chapter 13
Session 12: Evaluating Evaluation Designs


Session 13: Ethics, Politics, and Human Subjects

Readings: Weiss, Chapter 14
Patton, Michael Quinn. “Power, Politics, and Ethics.” (coursepack)
Review Weiss, Chapters 2 and 3

Individual Formative Design Due
READING ASSIGNMENTS – SECOND PORTION (PROF. DUNCOMBE)

Session 1 & 2: Review of Simple Regression

Readings: Schroeder, part 1
Mason, Chapter 12
Trochim, Chapter 10
Notes #1 and 2


Session 3: Multiple Regression Basics

Readings: Schroeder, part 2 and 3
Mason, Chapter 13
Notes #3

Session 4&5: Multiple Regression Extensions

Readings: Schroeder, part 4
Trochim, Chapter 11
Notes, #4


Computer Assignment #1 due during Session 4

Sessions 6&7: Regression Diagnostics

Readings: Schroeder, part 5
Trochim, Chapter 11 (reread)
Notes #5 and #6

Session 8:  **Summative designs/threats to validity**

Readings:  Weiss, Chapter 8  
Trochim, Chapter 6  

Notes #7 and #8  

Computer Assignment #2 due

Session 9:  **Experimental Designs**

Readings:  Trochim, Chapter 7  
Weiss, Chapter 9  
Notes #9

Session 10:  **Experiments--Examples**

Readings:  Trochim, Chapter 4  
Memos due in class

Sessions 11&12: Quasi-experimental Designs

Readings:
- Trochim, Chapter 8 & 11 (review)
- Rossi and Freeman, Chapter 9: "Quasi-Experimental Impact Assessments."
- Shadish, Chapter 6: “Quasi-Experiments: Interrupted Time-Series Design” (coursepack)
- Notes #10

Sessions 13&14: Quasi-experiments--Examples

Readings:

Memos due in class

Session 15: Presentation of Results/Ethics

Readings:
- Trochim, Chapter 12

FINAL EXAM (During scheduled time)