

WWS 515c: Program Evaluation – Quantitative (C-track)

Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, Fall 2005

Main Lectures 7-10 pm Monday, Room **XX**

Applied Data Analysis Sections 7-8:30 pm, alternate Wednesdays, Room **XX**

This course will be limited to a total of 20 students. 507c and 508c are prerequisites.

Instructors:

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Office Hours by appointment

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The team of instructors brings over 28 years of experience designing and implementing evaluations of a broad range of health, labor, education, nutrition, and welfare policies at Mathematica Policy Research.

- **Dr. Debbie Peikes** (Ph.D. and M.P.A. Public Policy, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University). A Senior Researcher, Debbie has evaluated employment promotion policies for people with disabilities, disease management programs for Medicare beneficiaries, health insurance expansion for low-income children, and foundation programs. Debbie will lead the first third of the course, covering how to frame an evaluation, develop the logic model and evaluation questions, measure implementation, and monitor performance. She will also provide an overview of strategies to assess impacts.
- **Dr. Chris Trenholm** (Ph.D. economics, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill). A Senior Economist, Chris has conducted major impact evaluations on a diverse range of program areas, from abstinence education and children's health insurance to Medicare home health care. Chris's portion of the course will cover experimental and quasi-experimental methods for evaluating program impacts.
- **Dr. Anu Rangarajan** (Ph.D. economics, Brown University). Associate Director of Research and Senior Economist. Anu has evaluated a wide range of policies including welfare reform, unemployment insurance, maternity group homes, food stamps, and programs for teenage parents. Anu's portion of the course will cover two broad topics: (1) findings from a large-scale evaluation, including a discussion of pitfalls, and (2) assessing program costs and benefits.
- **Dr. Melissa Clark** (Ph.D. economics, Princeton University). As an Economist, Melissa has designed and conducted experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of a range of policy interventions, including education technology products, early reading programs, and abstinence education programs. Melissa will lead the applied data analysis component of the course.

TEXTS

1. Social Experiments: Evaluating Public Programs with Experimental Methods. 1999. Larry Orr. Sage Publications. An excellent book on random assignment evaluations. **Required text.**
2. Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation. 2nd Edition, 2004. Edited by Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer. An excellent reference book with well-written chapters addressing many evaluation areas—such as developing surveys, running focus groups, etc.
3. Evaluation, 7th 2004 Ed. By Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman, Sage Publications, 2004.
4. Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs by Shadish, Cook and Campbell (2002). An excellent reference for those that want a more technical, statistically oriented book.
5. Learning more from Social Experiments. 2005. Edited by Howard Bloom. Russell Sage Foundation. ISBN 0-87154-127-0

Readings can be found on the Princeton University Library Electronic Reserves. All five texts are on reserve in the library.

OBJECTIVES

1. To learn tools to determine whether programs and policies are achieving their objectives
2. To develop expertise in framing evaluation questions and designing an evaluation plan
3. To develop the technical expertise to conduct high-quality impact analyses using experimental and quasi-experimental methods, and to critically assess the work of others
4. To gain hands-on experience analyzing real data from large scale impact evaluations
5. To gain skills in using program evaluation as a management tool
6. To design and describe an evaluation plan that would be suitable for a grant proposal
7. To learn how to assess the costs and benefits of a policy or program

TEACHING APPROACH

We will use several different approaches to learning: lectures, class discussion of assigned articles, cases, Stata problem sets, small group exercises, student presentations, and a final exam. The use of these different formats reflects the fact that learning how to conduct and critique evaluation research draws on a combination of theory and rolling up your sleeves and applying the theory to real-world programs and policies. Because most evaluation work is conducted by teams, having the opportunity to discuss and design evaluation approaches jointly is essential to the learning process.

In addition to the topics covered in the main lectures, there will be a series of four applied data analysis sections that will meet on alternate Wednesdays and will take the place of a precept. These lectures will build upon the topics covered in the main lectures, focusing on the technical and data analysis aspects of impact evaluation. In-class examples and Stata problem sets will be based on data from real world impact evaluations.

All readings should be completed prior to the class in which they will be discussed.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Grade (%)
Problem Sets and Classroom/Case Participation	See syllabus	30
Papers	See syllabus	40
Final Exam	TBD	30

LECTURES AND READINGS

1. Sept. 19. Tailoring Evaluations—The Art of Evaluation, and Defining and Prioritizing the Questions (Peikes)

Readings:

Innovation Network, Inc. Logic Model Workbook

http://www.innonet.org/client_docs/File/LM_workbook.pdf

Rossi et al. Chap 3 pp. 70-97

Optional: W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide December 2001, pp. 35-48 <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>

In-class exercise: Logic Model

Hand out homework on logic models

(Due Friday September 23, email to Debbie by 4 pm)

2. Sept. 26. Implementation Evaluation and Monitoring, Data Collection (Peikes)

Readings:

1994 Wholey, Hatry and Newcomer: Ch 3 Designing and Using Process Evaluation

Wholey et al.(2004) Ch. 4 Performance Monitoring, pp. 98-125

Case: The Overcrowded Clinic

In-class exercise: The case

Hand out First Paper Assignment: *Implementation and Monitoring Design*

(Due in class on October 17)

3. Oct. 3. Data Collection and Strategies for Assessing Impacts (Peikes)

Readings:

Orr Chapter 1, pp. 1-22

Michalopoulos, "Precedent and Prospects for Randomized Experiments" (in Bloom, ed., *Learning More from Social Experiments*)

4. Oct. 10. Experimental Design Evaluations (Trenholm)

Readings:

Orr Chapter 2, pp. 46-64

Orr Chapter 3, pp. 69-100

Data Analysis Section 1. Oct. 12. Introduction to Impact Estimation (Clark)

Readings:

Orr Chapter 2, pp. 42-64; Chapter 6, pp. 187-210

Schochet Appendix E

Hand out Stata Problem Set 1: *Evaluation of the Impacts of Mexico's PROGRESA Program on School Enrollment*

(Due in main lecture, Monday October 24)

5. Oct. 17. Sample Size and Experimental Design Illustration (Trenholm)

Readings:

Orr, Chapter 4, pp.103-115, pp132-134

Maynard et al. "Impacts of Title V Abstinence Education Programs" (exec summ)

6. Oct. 24. A Large-Scale Summative Evaluation (Rangarajan)

Readings:

Wholey Ch 19—Pitfalls in Evaluation pp. 547-570

Rangarajan and Novak. *The Struggle to Sustain Employment: The Effectiveness of the Postemployment Services Demonstration.* Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, April 1999. Read the Executive Summary (will be distributed)

Data Analysis Section 2. Oct. 26. Strategies for Addressing Nonparticipation and Crossover (Clark)

Readings:

Orr Chapter 2, pp. 62-64; Chapter 6, pp. 210-213

Schochet Appendix C

Hand out Stata Problem Set 2: *Evaluation of the Job Corps Program*

(Due in main lecture, Monday November 14)

BREAK WEEK (October 29 – November 6)

7. Nov. 7. Cost effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses (Rangarajan)

Readings:

Wholey et al., Ch 18 Cost-Effectiveness and Cost-Benefit Analysis

Orr, Chapter 6, pp. 220-229

Thornton, et al. Evaluating the Benefits and Costs of the Job Corps.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, vol. 1, no. 1, fall 1981, pp. 55-76 (Optional)

McConnell and Glazerman, “National Job Corps Study: The Benefits and Costs of Job Corps.” Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., June 2001. Read the Executive Summary (will be distributed).

8. Nov. 14. Cost effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses (continued) (Rangarajan)

Readings:

See previous week

In-class exercise: Cost-benefit analysis

Data Analysis Section 3. Nov. 16. Sampling Weights (Clark)

Readings:

Orr Chapter 6, pp. 213-220

Schochet Appendix D, pp. 57-72

Hand out Stata Problem Set 3: *Evaluation of the Teach for America Program*
(Due in main lecture, Monday November 28)

9. Nov. 21. Quasi-Experimental Design Program Evaluations (Trenholm)

Readings:

Wholey et. al, Ch 5 pp. 126-149.

Valadez and Bamberger, Ch 8 Quasi-Experimental Designs pp. 227-288 (optional, contains many international examples)

Hand out Second Paper Assignment: *Designing an Impact and Cost-Benefit Study*
(Due December 16)

10. Nov. 28. Pros and Cons of Quasi-Experiments: Illustrations (Trenholm)

Readings:

Lave et al. “Impact of a Children’s Health Insurance Program on Newly Enrolled Children.” *JAMA*, vol. 279, no. 22, 1998, pp. 1820–1825.

Trenholm and Orzol “Impact of the Children’s Health Initiative of Santa Clara County on Medi-Cal and Health Families Enrollment”

Data Analysis Section 4. Nov. 30. Quasi-Experimental Techniques (Clark)

Readings:

TBD

Hand out Stata Problem Set 4: *Comparison of Experimental and Quasi-experimental Methods: Evaluation of the National Supported Work Demonstration*
(Due in main lecture, Monday December 12)

11. Dec. 5. No class

Small group meetings with professors to discuss impact and cost-benefit study papers

12. Dec. 12. Presentation of Impact Papers