

**WWS 515: Program Evaluation –Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University,
Fall 2006**

Main Lectures 7-10 pm Tuesday, Robertson 16

This course will be limited to a total of 20 students. 507 is a prerequisite for all students.

Instructors:

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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 will lead the final third of the course which will cover two broad topics: (1) discussion of two evaluations: one using quasi-experimental methods, and the second which is a formative evaluation, (2) assessing program costs and benefits.

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

All readings can be found on the Princeton University Library Electronic Reserves. The five texts are on reserve in the library. All readings should be completed prior to the class in which they will be discussed.

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 (for c-track students)
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, 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.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Grade (%)
Homework and Exercise Participation	See syllabus	10
Papers	See syllabus	40
Final Exam	TBD	50

LECTURES AND READINGS

1. September 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 Sept 22, email to Debbie by 4 pm)

2. September 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 by 7 pm on October 17)

3. October 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. October 10. Experimental Design Evaluations (Trenholm)

Readings:

Orr Chapter 2, pp. 46-64

Orr Chapter 3, pp. 69-100

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

Readings:

Orr, Chapter 4, pp.103-115, pp. 132-134

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

6. October 24. 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 Study
(Due December 5)

BREAK WEEK (October 28-November 5)

7. November 7. 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"

8. November 14. Pros and Cons of Quasi-Experiments: Illustrations—Continued (Rangarajan)

In this class, we will discuss an evaluation in Mexico that looks to address different research questions using a variety of quasi-experimental methods. We will work through the appropriate methods for each study question.

9. November 21. A Formative Evaluation (Rangarajan)

Readings:

Rangarajan et al. Moving Clients into Self-Sufficiency: Summary of Findings from the Work First New Jersey Evaluation."

10. November 28. 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

11. December 5. Cost effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses (continued) (Rangarajan)

Impact paper due

Readings:

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.)

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)

In class exercise

12. December 12. Presentation of Impact Papers