

WWS 515b: Program Evaluation
Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University
Spring 2005

7-10 pm Thursday

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

Instructors:

Dr. Debbie Peikes

(609) 750-2005

dpeikes@mathematica-mpr.com

Dr. Chris Trenholm

(609) 936-2796

ctrenholm@mathematica-mpr.com

Dr. Anu Rangarajan

(609) 936-2765

arangarajan@mathematica-mpr.com

Office Hours by appointment

Assistant:

Debbie Nexon

342 Wallace Hall

258-1456

dnexon@exchange.Princeton.edu

The team of instructors brings over 27 years of experience designing and implementing evaluations of a broad range of health, labor, education, 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 will lead the second third of the course, covering 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) findings from two large-scale evaluations including a discussion of identifying pitfalls and using results from evaluations, and (2) assessing program costs and benefits.

TEXTS

1. Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation. 2nd Edition, 2004. Edited by Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer. ISBN 0-7879-6713-0 [Jossey-Bass] An excellent reference book with well-written chapters addressing many evaluation areas—such as developing survey, running focus groups, etc. **Required text.**
2. Social Experiments: Evaluating Public Programs with Experimental Methods. 1999. Larry Orr. Sage Publication. An excellent book on random assignment evaluations.
3. Evaluation, 7th 2004 Ed. By Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman, Sage, 2004.
4. Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs by Shadish, Cook and Campbell (2002) is an excellent reference for those that want a more technique, statistically oriented book.

Several of the cases we will use are available at the U-Store--in yellow envelopes. Readings can be found on the Princeton University Library Electronic Reserves. All four 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 gain skills in using program evaluation as a management tool
4. To gain skills needed to understand and critique evaluations of policy interventions
5. To design and describe an evaluation plan that would be suitable for a grant proposal
6. 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, homework, 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.

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

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Grade (%)
Classroom/Case Participation and Homework	See syllabus	20
Implementation and Monitoring Design Group Paper	March 10	20
Designing an Impact Study Paper and Presentation	April 11	20
Final Exam	TBD	40

LECTURES AND READINGS

1. Feb 3 Tailoring Evaluations—The Art of Evaluation, and Defining and Prioritizing the Questions

Readings:

JF Kennedy School Case 978.4 Public Sector Program Evaluation: Part A—Defining the Purpose, Setting Objectives and Designing Program Performance Measures
Innovation Network, Inc. Logic Model Workbook (www.innonet.org/files/vi.PDF)
Rossi et al. Chap 3 pp. 70-97
W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide December 2001, pp. 35-48
(www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/.PDF)

In-class exercise: Logic Model

Hand out homework on logic models
(Due Tuesday, **February 8**, email to Debbie by 4 pm)

2. Feb 10 Implementation Evaluation and Monitoring, Data Collection

Readings:

Wholey et al., Ch. 3 Implementation Evaluation, pp. 63-97
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 **March 10**)

3. Feb 17 Strategies for Assessing Impacts

Readings:

Kennedy School Case 979.4 Public Sector Program Evaluation: Part B—Selecting a Method, Collecting the Data and Analyzing the Results
Orr, pp 1-22

In-class exercise: Estimating impacts using different designs

4 Feb 24 Experimental Design Evaluations

Readings:

Orr Chapter 2, pp. 46-64
Orr Chapter 3, pp. 69-100

5. Mar 3 Sample Size and Experimental Design Illustration

Readings:

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

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

Hand out homework on sample sizes

(Due Tuesday, **Mar 8**, email to Chris by 4 pm)

6. Mar 10 Experimental Design Case

Readings:

Newman, Rawlings and Gertler "Using Randomized Control Studies in Evaluating Social Sector Programs in Developing Countries"

Case (in reading): Cognitive Abilities Of Malnourished Children In Columbia

In-class exercise: The case

Quasi-Experimental Design Program Evaluations

Readings:

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

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

Hand out Second Paper Assignment: *Designing an Impact Study*

(Due in class on **April 11**)

BREAK WEEK (March 12-20)

7. Mar 24 Pros and Cons of Quasi-Experimental Evaluations

Readings:

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, pp. 484-504

Heckman and Smith JSTOR JEP 1995 (optional)

Quasi-Experimental Design Illustration

Readings:

Trenholm and Orzol "Impact of the Children's Health Initiative of Santa Clara County Medi-Cal and Health Families Enrollment" (will be distributed)

8. March 31 A Large-Scale Summative Evaluation

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)

9. April 7 A Formative Evaluation

Readings:

Rangarajan et al. "Moving Clients into Self-Sufficiency: Summary of Findings from the Work First New Jersey Evaluation." Forthcoming (will be distributed)

10, 11 April 14, 21 Cost effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses

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

12. April 28 Presentation of Impact Papers