

# EDUCATION POLICY AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

LPO 3906  
Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations  
Fall 2005

Meeting Location: Mayborn 105

Meeting Dates and Times:

Friday, Sept. 16	<b>4:15 - 8:30pm</b>
Saturday, Sept. 17	<b>8:30 am - 5pm</b>
Friday, Oct 7	<b>4:15 - 8:30pm</b>
Saturday, Oct 8	<b>8:30 am - 5pm</b>
Friday, Nov. 4	<b>4:15 - 8:30pm</b>
Saturday, Nov. 5	<b>8:30 am - 5pm</b>

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## COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to:

- introduce students to concepts and methods of policy and program evaluation.
- enable students to design, analyze and interpret policy and program evaluations; to determine appropriateness and rigor of an evaluation's theoretical framework, design, methodology, analysis, and conclusions.
- build students' understanding of the politics of policy and program evaluation and its role in mediating the impact of evaluation on policy.
- improve students' skills in oral and written analysis and presentation.

## REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS

- (1) Rossi, P. & Lipsey, M., & Freeman, H. (2004). Ch. 1, An Overview of Program Evaluation, pp. 1-28. In *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. 7th Edition. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- (2) Weiss, C. (1998). *Evaluation research: Methods for studying programs and policies*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- (3) Assorted articles and chapters, available one of two ways:
  - (1) Coursepak, available at Campus Copy in mid-August
  - (2) Currently on-line (e-reserves) for LPO 3906 at <https://oak.vanderbilt.edu/webapps/login>

## COURSE EVALUATION

### **Class Participation** **30%**

- General class discussion, debates
- In-class written assignments
- Participation in work group discussions and activities
- Presentation of readings

### **Mini-paper - due Monday, October 17th** **20%**

### **Final paper - due Monday, November 21st** **50%**

*Late assignments will be downgraded a full letter grade for every day that they are late.*

## DESCRIPTION OF PAPERS

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**Purpose:** To enable you to demonstrate your mastery of the major methodological, analytical, and substantive issues in policy and program evaluation.

**Assignment:** Design an evaluation of a program or policy of interest to you. The paper should include a description/analysis of the following components:

- (1) the problem/opportunity to which the intervention is a response
- (2) a review of the literature that makes the case for the importance of the problem and the promise of the intervention
- (3) the theoretical framework on which the evaluation is based (i.e., the set of assumptions about cause and effect on which the intervention is based)
- (4) the elements of the intervention (i.e., description of each component of the program, its objectives, and who it is intended to benefit)
- (5) evaluation design to assess the impact of the intervention, including description and justification for (a) study design (e.g., experiment, quasi-experiment), (b) method (e.g., surveys, observations, assessments) timing (e.g., every week, every month, once a year) and targets for data collection (e.g., teacher, students, administrators); (d) how implementation of the policy/program will be documented and (e) internal and external validity threats of the design you propose (i.e., how you will account for them when possible, how they will be considered in the interpretation of the results) and (f) data analysis techniques.

### **3-5 page Mini-paper**

*The mini-paper will serve as the foundation for your major paper.*

The mini-paper should use the readings from the syllabus to establish the framework for the evaluation and identify methodology and design issues. You are expected to provide

citations for your design decisions from the readings on the syllabus. **For the mini-paper, you are not required to cite sources outside the syllabus** (although it is fine if you do). The mini-paper should address each of the 5 areas listed above, and provide enough information to indicate how you are thinking about each issue, given the limited space.

A **one page outline** of your paper is due by Monday, October 3.

**20-25 page Major Paper, 5300-6650 words (this is usually roughly 10-12 pages single spaced – but the word count is what you must abide by, not the page numbers – that’s just an estimate to use as a guide)**

Building on your mini-paper, your major paper will allow you the opportunity to provide a more detailed description and analysis of each component of the mini paper. In addition, **the major paper should include a review of the literature that makes the case for the recognition of the problem and the promise of the intervention** (i.e., readings outside those listed on the syllabus that apply to the problem addressed by the policy/program for which you are designing an evaluation).

In addition to the components list under “mini-paper”, your final paper should also include:

- (6) dissemination strategies,
- (7) relevant political issues and how they might affect the design of the study, the implementation of the program, and how the results are received by the public and by policymakers and stakeholders, and
- (8) discussion of how and why results of the evaluation could and should influence policy.

**ASSIGNED READINGS**

All readings are in the two required texts or the Coursepak/e-reserves.

**Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>****WHAT IS EVALUATION? WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?**

Rossi, P. & Lipsey, M., & Freeman, H. (2004). Ch. 1, An Overview of Program Evaluation, pp. 1-30. In *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. 7th Edition. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Weiss, C. (1998). Ch. 1, Setting the Scene, pp. 1-19 and Ch. 2, Purposes of Evaluation, pp. 20-45. In *Evaluation: Methods for studying programs and policies*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

**HISTORY OF EVALUATION**

Cronbach, L., Ambron, S., Dornbusch, S., Hess, R., Hornik, R., Phillips, D., Walker, D., & Weiner, S. (1980). Ch. 1, Where evaluation stands today, pp. 12-35 (first section of the chapter). In *Toward reform of program evaluation: Aims, methods and institutional arrangements*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

**THEORY-BASED EVALUATION**

Weiss, C. (1997). How can theory-based evaluation make greater headway? *Evaluation Review*, 21(4), 501-524.

Patton, M.Q. (1997). Ch. 10, The program's theory of action: conceptualizing causal linkages, pp. 215-238. In *Utilization-focused evaluation: The new century text*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**DESIGNING EVALUATIONS**

Rossi, P. & Freeman, H, Lipsey, M. (2004). Ch. 3, Identifying Issues and Formulating Questions, pp. 67-99. 7th Edition. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.

Weiss, C. (1998). Ch. 4, Planning the Evaluation, 72-96. and Chapter 8 Design of the Evaluation, pp. 180-214. In *Evaluation Research*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

**Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>****METHODS**

Rossi, P. & Lipsey, M., & Freeman, H. (2004).

- Ch. 8, pp. 234-238
- Ch. 7 pp. 208-217, “Identifying relevant outcomes” through “Measuring Program Outcomes”
- Ch. 7, pp. 218-220, “Reliability” and “Validity” sections
- Ch. 10, pp. 306-308, “Detecting Program Effects” and subsections “Statistical significance” and “Type I and Type II errors”
- Ch. 10, pp. 324-328, “The Role of Meta Analysis”

Shulman, L. (1997). Disciplines of Inquiry in Education: A new Overview, pp. 3-31. In R. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary Methods for Research in Education, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Washington, DC: American Education Research Association.

**Experiments**

Porter, A. (1997). Comparative experiments in educational research, pp. 524-557. In R. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary Methods for Research in Education, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Washington, DC: American Education Research Association.

Weiss, C. (1998). Ch. 9, The Randomized Experiment, pp. 215-234. In *Evaluation*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

**Quasi-experiments**

Rossi, P. & Lipsey, M., & Freeman, H. (2004). Ch. 9, Quasi-experimental impact assessments, pp. 265-3007. In *Evaluation: A systematic approach, 7th Edition*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Weiss, C. (1998). Qualitative Methods, Ch. 11, p. 252-270. In *Evaluation Research*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Jaeger, R. (1997). Survey research methods in education, pp. 449-485. In R. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary Methods for Research in Education, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Washington, DC: American Education Research Association.

**Measures**

Weiss, C. (1998). Developing Measures. Ch. 6, pp. 114-151. In *Evaluation Research*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

**Analysis**

Weiss, C. (1998). Ch 12, Analyzing and Interpreting the Data, pp. 271-293. In *Evaluation Research*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

### Dissemination

Patton, M.Q. (1997). Ch. 13, Deciphering data and reporting results: analysis, interpretations, judgments, and recommendations, pp. 301-338. In *Utilization-focused evaluation: The new century text*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### **Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>**

#### **WHAT EFFECT DOES EVALUATION HAVE ON POLICY?**

Cohen, D., & Garet, M. Ch. 11: Reforming educational policy with applied social research, pp. 123-140. In D. Anderson & B. Biddle (1991), *Knowledge for policy: improving education through research*. London: Falmer Press.

Hill, P. (1996). Education (how research affects policy and how both affect education), pp. 131-155. In G. Galster (Ed.) *Reality and research: Social science and U.S. urban policy since 1960*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.

Weiss, C. (1998). Ch. 13, Writing the Report and Disseminating Results, pp. 310-319 (“Utilization of Evaluation Results” section). In *Evaluation* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

#### **CASE STUDY**

House, E., Glass, G., Mclean, L., & Walker, D. (1978). No simple answer: Critique of the Follow Through Evaluation. *Harvard Educational Review*, 48(2), 128-160.

Anderson, R., St. Pierre, R., Proper, E., & Stebbine, L. (1978). Pardon us, but what was the question again? A response to the critique of the Follow Through evaluation. *Harvard Educational Review*, 48(2), 161-170.

Wisler, C., Burns, Jr., G., & Iwamoto, D. (1978). Follow through redux: a response to the critique by House, Glass, McLean, & Walker. *Harvard Educational Review*, 48(2), 171-185.

#### **POLITICS**

Birman, B., & Kennedy, M. (1989). The politics of the national assessment of Chapter 1. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 8(4), 613-632.

Chelmsky, E. (1987). What have we learned about the politics of program evaluation? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 9(3), 199-213.

Rossi, P. (1987). No good applied social research goes unpunished. *Society*, 74-79.

**CONTEXT****Social context**

Rossi, P. & Lipsey, M., & Freeman, H. (2004). Ch. 12, The social context of evaluation, pp. 369-421. In *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. 7th Edition. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.