

University of Manitoba
Department of Sociology

SOC 7470 A01 (3 credit hours)
Evaluating Social Programs

Winter, 2008
Tuesday, 9:30-12:30
Room 335 Isbister Building
Office Hours: Thursday morning
Or by appointment

Instructor: E. Jane Ursel
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to provide both a conceptual and practical introduction to program evaluation. We will begin with a discussion of how the field of evaluation has become transformed in the past 15 years due to the increased demand for organizational accountability. We will discuss both formative and summative evaluation processes, feasibility studies and cost benefit analyses. The emphasis in this course will be assessing and designing program evaluations. Assignments will reflect this 'hands on' approach. We will also have guest speakers who reflect both the consumer perspective of what they want from an evaluation and issues of cultural competency and diversity in conduction evaluations.

The course format is a seminar. The expectation is that students will be active participants in each class. Each student will responsible for presenting and leading the discussion on the assigned readings once during the course. Students will also present their evaluation assessment (Assignment 2) and their major project, Program Evaluation Plan (Assignment 3) in class. Our meetings will be structured in the manner that research workshops are conducted: what is the goal; what are the questions we need to ask to achieve that goal and which method will best provide those answers. In class we will work together on the assessing existing evaluations and designing a program evaluation.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

McDavid, James, C. & Hawthorn, Laura R. - Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement: An Introduction to Practice, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA 2006

REQUIRED READINGS

In addition to the required book, evaluation reports and articles will be assigned each week to address the specific topics of discussion for the week. These articles will be made available to all students several weeks before the discussion and will be required reading for the course.

RECOMMENED READING

Seigart, Denise & Brisolaro, Sharon. - Feminist Evaluation: Explorations and Experiences: *New Directions for Evaluation* Number 96, 2002 San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Course Requirements:

Evaluation: term work and assignments	Value	Due Date
1. Seminar Presentation – student responsible for		
a. leading the discussion on the assigned readings for one class	10%	
b. submitting a 3 page summary of the issue	10%	As Assigned
2. a. Program evaluation assessment – class presentation	10%	February 12
b. Program evaluation assessment – written report (8 pages)	20%	
OR		
Critical Review of Seigart and Brisolaro 2002 “Feminist Evaluation”		March 11
a. Class presentation	10%	
b. Written report (8 pages)	20%	
3. Major evaluation project:		
a. Class Presentation	10%	April 1 or 8
b. Preparation of Ethics Submission	10%	
c. Major Evaluation Project – Written Report	30%	April 12

Policy on Grades:

The following letter/percentage/GPA/descriptive scale will be used.

A+	90 - 100%	4.5	Exceptional
A	80 - 89%	4	Excellent
B+	75 - 79%	3.5	Very Good
B	70 - 74%	3	Good
C+	66 - 69%	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60 - 65%	2	Adequate
D	50 - 59%	1	Marginal
F	49% or less		Failure

Only documented reasons will be accepted for late submissions of written assignments. It is the student’s responsibility to inform me as soon as possible of requests for deferrals for reasons of health, compassion or disability. With prior approval from instructor a late submission will be marked without penalty. **Without prior approval** a late submission will be docked one grade point per day overdue. A missed assignment which is unexplained will result in no grade for the missing assignment.

The University acknowledges the right of all students to observe Holy Days of their faith which fall within the academic year. I should be notified ahead of your intended absence.

If you have special learning needs (if you require extra time to complete assignments, aids or other supports) please introduce yourself to me at the beginning of the term and suitable arrangements will be made.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is a serious offence, with grave consequences. You should acquaint yourself with the University of Manitoba's academic regulations and policy on 'Examinations: Personations' (p.26) and 'Plagiarism and Cheating' (p.27) found in the University Undergraduate Calendar. (See attached policy)

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL

March 20 – Last date for voluntary withdrawal without academic penalty from second term half courses. You will have returned grades before that date.

OVERVIEW OF WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Jan 8 - Introduction to the course - plan for a full three hours. Because the emphasis in the course is on doing program evaluation a great deal will need to be discussed to prepare you to enter the field. If you have a particular interest or idea for a program evaluation project come to the class prepared to discuss it. In a half course there is little time for all of the preparation necessary to design an evaluation, so the first class will focus on assessing where folks are at, what they want to do and to outline some agencies students can consider if they don't have a particular project in mind.

Key Concepts and Issues in Program Evaluation

Readings:

McDavid & Hawthorn – Introduction and Chap 1

Gauthier, Benoit et. al 2006. "Evaluation Practices in Canada: Results of a National Survey" *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 21 (3) 1-42

Blomberg, Thomas & Gordon Waldo 2002 "Evaluation Research, Policy and Politics" *Evaluation Review* 26 (3) 340-351

Jan 15 - Understanding and Applying Program Logic Models

Readings:

McDavid & Hawthorn - Chap 2

Kaplan, Sue A. and Katherine E. Garrett, 2005 "The Use of Logic Models by Community Based Initiative" *Evaluation and Program Planning* 28:167-172

Renger, Ralph, Melissa Page, Jessica Renger. 2007 "What an eight-year old can teach us about logic modeling and mainstreaming." *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 22(1): 195-204

Mercier, Celine, Myra Piat, Normand Peladeau, Christian Dagenais 2000, "An Application of Theory-Driven Evaluation to a Drop-In Youth Centre" *Evaluation Review* 24 (1); 73-91

Jan 22- Designing a Program Evaluation

Readings: McDavid and Hawthorn – Chap 3

Guest Panel: What Stake Holders Want – Service Providers Perspective

Jan. 29 – Measurement

Readings: McDavid and Hawthorn – Chap 4

Poulin, Mary; Phillip Harris; Peter Jones. 2000 "The Significance of Definitions of Success Success in Program Evaluation" *Evaluation Review* 24 (5): 516-536

Feb 5 - Qualitative Evaluations

Readings: McDavid and Hawthorn – Chap 5

Sieppert, Jacquie. 2005 "Evaluation in Canada's Social Services: Progress, Rifts and Challenges" *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 20(3):101-121

Guest Speakers: What Stake Holders Want – The Funders Perspective

Feb 12 - Class Members Report Feminist Evaluation Assessment

Readings: McDavid and Hawthorn Chap 6 Needs Assessment

Hood, Denise W. & Cassaro, D. "Feminist Evaluation and the Inclusion of Difference" in Chap. 3 in Seigert & Brisola 2002 –Feminist Evaluation: Explorations and Experiences. P.27-40

Feb 26 - Cost Benefit Analysis of Social Programs

Readings: McDavid and Hawthorn Chap. 7

Guest Speaker - Dr. Linda deRivierre

March 4 – Class Members Report on Program Evaluation Assessment

Readings: McDavid and Hawthorn Chap. 8 & 9

March 11 – Case Studies: Considering Diversity

Readings: McDavid and Hawthorn Chap. 11

Anderson-Draper, Michelle (2006) "Understanding cultural competence through the evaluation of "Breaking the Silence: a project to generate critical knowledge about family violence in immigrant communities." *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 21 (2): 59-79

Baugh, Eboni and Lisa Guion (2006) "Using Culturally Sensitive Methodologies when Researching Diverse cultures" *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation* 4:1-12

Guest Panel: Dr. Michelle Owen and Ms. Ximena Munoz

March 18 – Case Studies in Evaluation: Cultural Competences; Evaluating Aboriginal Agencies

Readings:

- MacDonald, Robb. (2006) "First Nations child and Family Caring Society of Canada; Program Evaluation Research, Final Report." Ottawa: First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (Available online at: <http://www.fncfcs.lcom/docs/EvlauationReport.pdf>)
- Kerr, Sandy. (2006) "First Person, First Peoples: A Journey through Boundaries" American Journal of Evaluation 27(3):360-369

Guest Speaker: Working with Aboriginal Agencies (Lucille Bruce)

March 25 – Professional Judgment in Program Evaluation

Readings: McDavid and Hawthorn Chap.12

Class Discussion: Response Strategies when problems arise in the evaluation process

April 1 – Student Project Reports

April 8 – Student Project Reports

GUIDELINE FOR EVALUATION FRAMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of this exercise is to give you practical skills in conceptualizing, developing and writing up an evaluation proposal for an existing program in an individual or team setting (2 students per group), which includes the following activities:

- Consulting and site visit with the program contact person
- Write up a program description, including the history of the program, financial analysis, record-keeping of statistical data
- Write up a literature review (*the program's position or fit within the external community; what is known about similar programs and any evaluations that have been conducted; success factors or common challenges and weaknesses*)
- Write up an assessment of program need, based on the literature review and program description
- Theory of the program and logic model; a flow chart showing the relationship between the objectives, activities, outputs, and outcomes
- Identify the evaluation issues and design evaluation approaches for the program. Select suitable research designs in your program evaluation; the question matrix, quantitative and qualitative methodologies (*focus groups, surveys, site visits, file reviews, interviews, primary and secondary data sources*)
- Prepare a questionnaire (or series of questionnaires) for the purposes of collecting data to support your program evaluation
- Prepare an ethics submission
- Understand and identify some of the major challenges and limitations in the practice of program evaluation as it applies to your program
- Write up a report that combines all of these steps (*approximately 25 -30 typed pages, double spaced, excluding references and appendices*). It will propose a research design, methodology and schedule using the following headings.

GUIDELINE FOR FINAL PAPER

- Title page
- Executive summary
- Table of contents
- Overview of the proposed evaluation plan
- Program Description
- Literature review and needs assessment
- Program theory and objectives (logic model)
- Evaluation issues and data collection methodologies
- Proposed work plan schedule or timeline
- Summary and conclusions
- References & Appendices: Ethics submission and questionnaires, etc.

Potential Sign Up Dates for Students to Lead Class Discussion

Date	Topic	Student
January 22	– Designing a Program Evaluation	_____
January 29	– Measurement	_____
February 5	- Qualitative Evaluation	_____
February 26	- Cost Benefit Analysis	_____
March 11	– Considering Diversity	_____
March 25	– Profession Judgment	_____