Course Description

The focus of this course in program evaluation is on the procedures and techniques that can be employed to scientifically document the implications of professional interventions (i.e., policies and programs). As planners, policy makers and practitioners you are faced almost daily with questions of professional efficacy. Did it work? What went wrong? Who benefited? What is the impact? Applied research or evaluative research can provide answers to these questions if conceptual, measurement and analytic tools are used properly.

Two types of policy/program assessment will be discussed in the course: policy/program implementation and monitoring, and policy/program impact. The course will examine a variety of research designs and the strengths and weaknesses of these designs in answering implementation and impact questions.

The student will become familiar with each through assigned readings, lectures, class discussions, problem sets and examination.

Course Objectives

1. To introduce the student to a set of concepts that are fundamental for understanding data-based program/policy evaluation;
2. To provide the student with methodological and statistical tools that are essential equipment for conducting data-based program/policy evaluation; and
3. To provide the student with research experience in assessing programs/policies.
Course Requirements

1. Complete assigned readings / problem sets
2. Complete mid-term Examination
3. Class presentation of one article of student’s choice relating to an evaluation study
4. Complete final examination

The course grade will be computed as follows:

- Mid-Term Examination: 30 percent
- Problem Sets: 25 percent
- Final Exam: 35 percent
- Class Presentations: 10 percent

Course Pre-requisites

This course assumes that the student has a working knowledge of multivariate regression methods.

Texts


Additional Readings – All readings are posted on Sakai class site


Course Topic Outline

Week 1  Sept 7
The Nature of Program Evaluation
Read (Rossi) Chapter 1
Read THDP Executive Summary

Week 2  Sept 14
Formulating the Scope of an Evaluation – Program Objectives, Activities, Participants, Outcomes and Logic Models
Read (Rossi) Chapters 2, 3
Read Bzdak (2007)

Week 3  Sept 21
Formulating the Scope of an Evaluation – Needs Assessment, Design Framework
Read (Rossi) Chapter 4
Jagannathan (2004c, Sections I and IV)

Week 4  Sept 28
Process Analysis: Methods of Intervention Monitoring
Read (Rossi) Chapter 5, 6
Read (Jagannathan, Camasso, Walker, 2005 – Part 1)
Read (Camasso, Jagannathan and Walker, 2004)

Week 5  Oct 5
Measurement Issues in Evaluation Research
Various types of research validities and reliabilities
Read (Shadish) Chapter 2

Week 6  Oct 12
Various types of research validities and reliabilities (Continued)
Read (Shadish) Chapter 3

Week 7  Oct 19
Impact Analysis – Social Experiments
Read (Rossi) Chapter 7, 8
Read (Orr) Chapters 1-2
Read (Riccio and Orenstein, 1996)
Read (Krueger, 1999)

Week 8  Oct 26
Impact Analysis – Social Experiments (Continued)
Read (Orr) Chapter 4, 6
Read (Jagannathan et al., 2010a)
Read (Jagannathan and Camasso, 2003)
Read (Jagannathan, Camasso, and Killingsworth, 2004a)
Read (Boudett and Friedlander, 1997)
Week 9  Nov 2  MID-TERM EXAMINATION

Week 10  Nov 9
Read (Jagannathan et al., 2010b)
Read (Camasso, Jagannathan and Walker, 2004)

Week 11  Nov 16
Impact Analysis - Quasi-Experimental Designs
Read (Rossi) Chapters 9, 10
Read (Jagannathan, Camasso, and Killingsworth, 2004b)
Read (Card and Krueger, 1994)
Read (Jagannathan, Camasso, and Walker, 2005 – Part 2)

Week 12  Nov 23
Impact Analysis and the Policy Process – Ethical, Empirical, and Political Issues
Read (Rossi) Chapter 12
Read (Orr) Chapter 7
Read (Quinn and Magill, 1994)

Week 13  Nov 30
Cost Benefit Analysis
Read (Rossi) Chapter 11

Week 14  Dec 7 – Last Day of Class - Class Presentations

Dec  21    FINAL EXAM