



**SAINT LOUIS
UNIVERSITY™**
— EST. 1818 —

**College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

SOC 5850

Program/Policy Evaluation and Needs Assessment

**Fall Semester 2018
Thursdays from 4:15 – 7:00 pm**

Syllabus

**Course Information
3 Credits
Course Meeting Location:
Beracha Hall, Room 211**

Instructor:

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Office Hours: by appointment

Objectives

The importance of evaluation research in the policy process and recommendation has presented academia and practicing researchers with challenges to develop sound methods of assessing the impact and importance of various programs and policies. This has not been an easy task for a system of learning that derived its early approaches and techniques in the controlled laboratories of natural science. While two artificial environments can be made very similar in laboratory settings, two organizations, two cities, or two communities, cannot. Where do evaluators get control groups, and how do evaluators control the environment of a community? How can their subjects be isolated from external changes in politics, economy, race relations, and/or demographics? Besides methodological challenges, researchers face difficulties in meeting diverse needs from stakeholders. Do stakeholders want a formative evaluation or summative evaluation? How will the results be disseminated? Which policy recommendations will mostly likely be adopted? Unlike academic research, program/policy evaluation and needs assessment often go through several layers of approvals by stakeholders. This course will focus on hands-on learning of program/policy evaluation and needs assessment, collaborating with a community organization in the St. Louis area.

The materials to be covered during the semester are as follow:

1. Specification of programs/policies to be evaluated,
2. Identification of stakeholders,
3. Designing methods for data collection and analyses, and dissemination of results, and
4. Cost-Benefit Analysis and Policy Recommendations.

The course schedule remains flexible. There are so many potential areas for discussions that there may be times when we deviate from the schedule. At the end of this course, students will have a good understanding of the process of program/policy evaluation.

Textbooks

Required Textbook

McDavid, J.C., Huse, I, & Hawthorn, L.R.L. (2013). Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement An Introduction to Practice, Second Edition. Sage ISBN: 9781412978316

Recommended Textbooks

Rossi, P.H., Freeman, H.E., & Lipsey, M.W. (2004). Evaluation: A systematic approach, 7th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. ISBN: 9780761908944

SPSS Application Guide. SPSS Inc.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

An adult-learner model is the basis of the course. Emphasis is placed on active student participation during all classes. Class sessions comprise primarily of lecture and discussion. Examples are extensively utilized throughout the course, especially the students' projects.

Most class sessions will follow this sequence:

- Discussion of projects and logistics
- Lecture and discussion
- Break
- Exercises, guest speakers, or continued lecture

Evaluation

Course grades are based on three elements: mini projects, a term paper, and presentation/class participation. Course grade will be given according to the following weights:

Mini Projects	30%
Term Paper/ Report	40%
Class participation/ Presentation	30%

Detailed explanations for each element will be discussed during the class period.

General Course Outline

1. Introduction and Key Concepts
2. The Field of Evaluation Research and Methods
3. Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning
4. Impact and Process Evaluations
5. Issues in Measurement and Data Sources
6. Drawing Conclusions and Recommending Policy

Course Schedule

The below schedule is tentative, and will be revised according to the progress of data collection and analyses.

Week 1 August 30th: Introduction, Course Overview, Key Concepts in Evaluation

Course overview
Key Concepts in Program Evaluation
Why evaluations?
Programs and Policies
Formative and Summative Evaluations
Ex Ante and *Ex Post* Evaluations
Causality in program evaluation
Steps in conducting program evaluation
Stakeholders in program evaluation
Types of program evaluation – needs assessment, implementation assessment, outcome/impact evaluation, cost-benefit analysis
Reading Assignment: Chapter 1 PP 1- 40

Week 2 September 6th: Program Logic Models

Framework for Modeling Program logics
Reading Assignment: Chapter 2

Week 3 September 13th: Developing research designs

Experimental Design
External and internal validity
Threats to validity
Reading Assignment: Chapter 3

Week 4 September 20th: Developing designs continued

Quasi-Experimental designs
Causal Linkages
Case Study: Time-series design for a National Occupational Health Policy Program
Reading Assignment: Chapter 3

Week 5 September 27th: Measurement for Program Evaluation and Performance Monitoring

Reliability and Validity of Measures
Units of Analysis and Levels of Measurement
Sources of Data in Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement system
Reading Assignment: Chapter 4
Preparation of IRB protocol and associated materials
Students need to complete CITI training by mid-October.

Week 6 October 4th: Applying Qualitative Evaluation Methods
Comparing Different approaches to Evaluation
Qualitative Evaluation Design: some Basics
Designing and Conduction Qualitative Program Evaluations
Assessing the Credibility and Generalizability of Qualitative Findings
Assigned Reading: Chapter 5

Week 7 October 11th: Needs Assessment
Reading Assignment: Chapter 6
Reading Assignment: Matsuo, et al. Needs Assessment of Older Immigrants in St. Louis (2015)

Week 8 October 18th: Program Evaluation vs. Performance Measurement
Discussions on dissemination methods
Finalizing the data collection instruments/tools
Discussions on data collection
Reading Assignment: Chapters 8

Initial interview with program administrator.

Week 9 October 25th: Design and Implementation of Performance Measurement System
Identify Organizational Champions
Key Steps in Designing and Implementing a Performance Measurement System
Multichannel Communication – Top-Down, Bottom-Up
Performance Measurement for Public Accountability
Reading Assignment: Chapter 9

First assignment: rough draft due.

Week 10 November 1st: Using Performance Measurement for Accountability
Using Performance Results
High Stakes Use of Performance Measures
Reassessing the Performance Management Cycle
Using Performance Information for Management
Using Performance Measures in a Non-Adversarial Political Environment
Increasing use of Performance Information by Elected Officials
Reading Assignment: Chapter 10

First assignment (preparation of tools, brief literature review, and IRB protocol) is due Friday, November 2nd.

Schedule interviews with program participants.

Week 11 November 8th: Program Evaluation and Program Management: Joining Theory and Practice

Evaluators and Managers as Partners in Evaluation
Manager Involvement in Evaluations: Limits and Opportunities
Striving for Objectivity in Program Evaluation
Criteria for High-Quality Evaluations: The Varying Views of Evaluation Associations
Reading Assignment: Chapter 11

Week 12 November 15th: Performance Measurement

Performance Measurement: Real World Experience
Guest Lecturer: Michele Bildner, MPH, MCHES
Assessment, Evaluation, & Policy Coordinator
Division of Health Promotion & Public Health Research
Saint Louis County Department of Public Health
Reading Assignment: Chapter 11
Instructions on a preparation of executive summary
Evaluations and Professional Judgment
Reading Assignment: Matsuo, et al. Needs Assessment of Older Immigrants in St. Louis (2015)

Week 13 November 22nd: No Class – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY!!!

Week 14 November 29th: Concepts and Issues in Economic Evaluation

Three types of Economic Evaluation
Economic Evaluation in the Performance Management Cycle
Historical Developments in Economic Evaluation
Cost-Benefit Analysis
Cost-Effectiveness Analysis
Cost-Utility Analysis
Reading Assignment: Chapter 7

Week 15 December 6th: Students' Presentation

Meeting with program representatives

Week 16 Term paper is due by 5:00pm Friday, December 14th.

Student Success Center Updates Academic Support Statement

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- * Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) talk to your course instructor.

- * University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) visit the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Disability Services Academic Accommodations Statement:

This course is intended to be accessible to all students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that may negatively affect one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the semester, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome (and not required) to contact me by email, phone, or during class hours to discuss your specific needs. I also encourage you to contact the Office of Disability Services at Disability_services@slu.edu or 314.977.3484 to schedule an appointment. If you have a diagnosis, the office of Disability Services can help you document your needs and create an accommodation plan. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact the Disability Services.

Student Support

Basic Needs

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, you are urged to contact the [Dean of Students](#) for support. Likewise if you have concerns about your mental or physical health needs, or lack access to health care services you require, you should contact either the [Dean of Students](#), [Student Health Services](#), or the [University Counseling Center](#).³

If you feel comfortable doing so, please discuss any concerns you might have with me. Doing so is particularly important if believe your performance in this course might be affected. I will do my best to work with you to come up with a plan for successfully completing the course and, if need be, work with you to identify on-campus resources. I will treat all discussions with discretion, though please be aware that certain situations, including disclosures of [sexual misconduct](#) or self-harm, must be reported by faculty to the appropriate University office.

Writing Services

I also encourage you to take advantage of the [University Writing Services \(UWS\) program](#). Getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels and the quality of your writing will be reflected in assignment grades. The UWS has trained writing consultants who can help you improve the quality of your written work. UWS's consultants are available to address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources.

Student-athletes

If you are a student-athlete who is in-season, you should discuss your game schedule with me after the first class and share your travel letter with me as soon as you have a copy. You are reminded that games and tournaments are not excuses for failing to complete assignments, and that NCAA rules prohibit student-athletes from missing classes for practice. Low grades that jeopardize eligibility must be addressed immediately by you, not by a coach or academic coordinator.