

**Simon Fraser University
Political Science, Departments
PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS
(POL 451)**

Spring 2011
Wed 9:30-13:20
AQ 5040

Prof. Hira
tel. 778 782 3286
e-mail: ahira@sfu.ca
website: www.sfu.ca/~ahira

Description and Schedule
Description

Objectives

Policy evaluation is a growing field that is garnering ever more interest. In theoretical terms, it is captured by calls for “good governance.” In practical terms, it is reflected in the need for accountability, transparency, and responsiveness by government, corporations, and non-profits in terms of how they use scarce resources, how they learn to improve their performance, and how they measure outcomes.

This course is designed to give students interested in policy the foundations of tools that would serve them well as analysts in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. The course is practical in orientation and gives background and practice in carrying a basic policy and program evaluation. The course offers students both quantitative and qualitative skill development for evaluation that is in demand in professional careers. Quantitative exercises are based on learning to use Excel and do not require a stats background, just a willingness to learn. Students complete the course with their own analysis of a project evaluation that can then be used as a writing sample. This course may be taken for graduate credit with some adjustments given by me.

Required Books

I will endeavour to place both books on reserve as well as ordering them through the bookstore:

Posavac, Emil J. and Raymond G. Carey. 2011 *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Wang, Xiaohu. 2010. *Performance Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*. Sudbury, Mass: Jones and Bartlett.

Assignments

The keys to success in any course for both the professor and student are thorough preparation and active participation. Students must not only attend every session, but also be prepared to participate in each meeting. In order to accomplish this, students should prepare an outline of the readings and work throughout the course of the term on any long-term assignments.

Students will be graded upon participation, homework, and writing assignments. Students will have multiple opportunities to interact with the prof and the students through discussion of the texts and homework assignments. Students will be asked to present their homework in every

class as part of a group discussion.

Grading

The assignments will be graded proportionally as follows:

-participation and attendance, 10%

-quizzes, 20%

-weekly homework assignments, including presentation of assignments in class 30%

-7-10 page evaluation of an evaluation report, including whether it meets its objectives, strengths and weaknesses, fit for audience, and how it could have been improved, 20%

-Peer review of evaluation report, 10%

-Presentation of evaluation report, 10%

Assignments are due promptly at the beginning of class.

Office Hours

My office is in AQ6048. I am generally around M-F 9-4. I do not mind students dropping in without an appointment unless the issue requires significant time. I encourage students to contact each other and me by e-mail. I will gather a voluntary contact list for this purpose early in the class.

Schedule

The schedule is planned by weeks. Readings should be done prior to each class. Assignments will be due at the beginning of the class.

I. Introduction to Course, Why Evaluation (Jan 12)

-About the Professor, the students, and the course

II. Identifying the Goals (Jan 19)

-Defining Needs and Objectives

-The Project Cycle

-Ethics in Evaluation

-Walkthrough example, Wang Chapter 3

Readings: Posavac, c.s 1, 5, 6; Wang, c.1, 2

Homework due: Posavac 5-4, Wang 2-3, & 2-4

III. Planning an Evaluation (Jan 26)

-Evaluation Models

-Prepping stakeholders, ensuring objectivity

-Preparing a survey

-Appropriate Criteria, Baseline analysis

-Evaluating sources of data and how they can contribute

-Qualitative vs. Quantitative Approaches?

-Categorical, Ordinal & Interval variables

-Walkthrough example, Wang c.s 4 & 5

Readings:

Posavac, c.s 2, 3, 4

Wang, c.s 2 & 3

Homework due: Posavac 3-3 or 4-5 & Wang 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4

IV. Program Monitoring (Feb 2)

-Developing sources of data: assessing reliability, validity

-Measures of Variance, standardizing different measures

Walkthrough Wang chapters 6 & 8

Readings:

-Posavac, c. 7,

Wang, c.s 4, 5

Homework due: Posavac 7-4 & Wang 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4; & 5-1

V. Theory Building (Feb 9)

-size of population

-constructing internal checks

-pre- and post-test design

-performance monitoring charts

-what do we mean by underperformance

Walkthrough Wang C.7

Readings: Posavac c.s 8, 9

Wang c.s 6, 8

Homework due: Posavac 8-1 or 8-3 or 8-5 & Wang, 6-3 & 6-4

***READING BREAK, FEB 14-18

VI. Statistical Concepts Applied to Performance Monitoring (Feb 23)

-Basic statistical concepts as applied to public policy performance with examples

Walk-through, Wang c. 9

Readings: Wang, c. 7

Homework due: Wang 7-1, 7-2, & 7-3 & Present a brief synopsis of the evaluation report you will examine for the course project. Send me a copy of the original report and the synthesis.

VII. Relationship Analysis (Mar 2)

-quasi-experimental design

-Contingency tables

-correlations

-scatterplots

-chi square

-evaluating hypotheses

-Walkthrough- Wang c.10

Readings: Wang, c.9, Posavac c. 10, 11

Homework due: Posavac 10-2 or 10-4 & (11-4 or 11-5) & Wang 9-1, 9-2, 9-3, 9-4, 9-5

VIII. Regression Modeling (Mar 9)

- What do we mean by modeling?
- When is modeling appropriate?
- Using linear regression to understand policy problems
- Walkthrough, Wang c.11, 12

Readings: Wang c.10

Homework due: Wang 10-1, 10-2, 10-3 & 10-4

IX. Sampling (Mar 16)

- Comparing Pre and Post Test Performance Means
- Using Benchmark comparisons
- Comparing means and proportions for significance
- Walkthrough, Wang c.13

Readings: Wang c.s 11, 12

Homework due: Any 3 of Wang 11-1, 11-2, 11 -3, 11-4, or 11-5 & any 3 of 12-2, 12-4, 12-5, 12-6

X. Cost Benefit & Participatory Analysis (Mar 23)

- Evaluating more than 2 means
- peer review assignment

Readings: Wang c.13, Posavac c.12, Hira chapter on CBA will be sent

Homework due: Posavac 12-2, & Wang 13-1, 13-2, & 13-3; present rough draft of evaluation report to peer for comments

XI. Evaluating the Results and Presenting Findings (Mar 30)

- Types of Reports
- Know your audiences
- Presentation of findings

Readings: Posavac, c.s 13-14

-Wang, c.14

Homework due: peer review comments (bring 2 copies)

XII. Discussion of Student Evaluation Projects (Apr 6)

Homework due: Final report due

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER:

Plagiarism involves using another author's words without attribution or otherwise presenting another person's work as one's own. It is a fraudulent and serious academic offence that will result in a severe academic penalty. Also, close paraphrasing of another author's work & self-plagiarism, including submitting the same, or substantively the same, work for academic evaluation more than once, are unacceptable practices that will result in a severe academic penalty.

The university policies on academic honesty are available at <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/t10-02.htm> and <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/t10-03.htm>.

The Department of Political Science's interpretation of this policy can be found at http://www.sfu.ca/politics/undergrad/ug_misc.html, and is available in hard copy format outside our General Office. All students are responsible for familiarising themselves with these policies.

A helpful SFU Library tutorial on plagiarism is at <http://www.lib.sfu.ca/researchhelp/tutorials/interactive/plagiarism/tutorial/introduction.htm>

The DOs and DON'Ts of AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Do not:

- submit an entire paper or part(s) of a paper or papers that has been written or researched by any other person(s);
- submit a paper as an assignment that has been bought from another person or from a 'paper mill' or essay service;
- submit a paper or other written assignment that has been submitted at another time or for a different course by yourself or any other student or former student;
- submit material that has been downloaded from a website, without acknowledging (using appropriate citation style) that you have done so;
- take someone else's idea(s) and represent it/them as your own;
- copy any text verbatim, or with only slight variation from the original text, without using quotation marks and documenting the source with proper citation style;
- do not closely paraphrase another's material; either paraphrase completely in your own words, or cite as a direct quotation using quotation marks (in either case, give full credit and details regarding authorship and location of the original material);

Do:

- learn how to cite material properly (there are many good guides on this, including the departmental one);
- use a recognized citation style (eg. APA, MLA, Chicago), according to instructions given by the course instructor, and be consistent in the use of the style throughout any single piece of written work;
- carefully read and make sure you understand the university's policy on academic honesty;
- ask the instructor of this course or other faculty members if you have any questions about plagiarism.