

Professor McAvoy  
Political Science 302  
Spring 2009

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### **Applied Policy Evaluation**

Governments fund programs to remedy social problems. There is a growing interest in the assessment of these programs in order to gauge their effectiveness and learn from past failures and successes. Policy evaluation is the process by which we assess the effectiveness or impact of the work of government. A program can be evaluated from a number of perspectives: 1) was there a clear need for the program? 2) was it implemented as intended? 3) did it accomplish its ultimate purpose?

The challenge in program evaluation is to isolate the impact of program activities from environmental factors so that it is possible to determine the effectiveness of a program. There are a variety of strategies to try to best determine the impact of a program—from experiments to quasi-experiments to case studies. In this course, students will learn to research the goals of programs and to evaluate whether program goals have been met using quantitative and qualitative methods. They will also learn how to present their findings in a clear and concise manner in order to gain the attention of policymakers.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing the course will learn to:

- discover and express the logic behind a program,
- assess the need for a program,
- monitor program implementation and service delivery,
- assess the impact of social programs on social problems,
- design experiments for program evaluation,
- design quasi-experiments for program evaluation

#### **Course requirements:**

Students must complete all of the following assignments in order to pass the class:

- two policy memos (20%)
- short class presentation (5%)
- in class simulation of Congressional hearing (10%)
- mid-term (20%)
- a program evaluation report (20%)
- quizzes (10%)
- data analysis assignments (15%)

**Letter grades** are assigned as follows:

	B+ (89-86)	C+ (79-76)	D+ (69-66)
A- (93-90)	B (85-83)	C (75-73)	D (65-63)
	B- (82-80)	C- (72-70)	D- (62-60)

**Required readings:**

Dunn, William, 2007. *Public Policy Analysis: An Introduction*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: Longman

There are a number of articles that are required reading for the course. You can get them via the web at the web addresses provided, or through the UNCG Library on-line databases. I recommend using JournalFinder to locate the specific journal and then go to the assigned article.

**Honor Code:**

I expect all students in this course to abide by both the letter and spirit of the university's academic integrity policy. Violations of the university honor code will be prosecuted. The full text of the Academic Integrity Policy can be viewed at:  
<http://www.uncg.edu/reg/Policy/HonorPolicy.html>.

A fundamental tenet of all educational institutions is academic honesty; academic work depends upon respect for and acknowledgment of the work and ideas of others. Misrepresenting someone else's work as one's own is a serious offense in any academic setting and it will not be condoned. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for academic evaluation (e.g. papers, projects, examinations and assessments - whether online or in class); presenting, as one's own, the ideas, words or calculations of another for academic evaluation; doing unauthorized academic work for which another person will receive credit or be evaluated; and presenting the same or substantially the same papers or projects in two or more courses without the explicit permission of the instructors involved.

A student who knowingly assists another student in committing an act of academic misconduct shall be equally accountable for the violation, and shall be subject to the sanctions and other remedies described in The Student Code. Violations of the university honor code will be prosecuted.

**Etiquette**

During class sessions, I do not check my cell phone for messages, walk out of the room to take calls, text message, surf the Internet, check my email, go get something to eat from the vending machine, and neither should you.

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
20-Jan	<i>Introduction</i>		
22-Jan	<i>Overview of the Policy Process</i>	Dunn, Chapter 1;	
27-Jan	<i>Example of Analysis</i>	Barro and Rouse. 2005. "Does College Still Pay?" <i>The Economists' Voice</i> , Vol 2, Article 3,* <i>Journal Finder</i> ; Dunn Appendix 1	
29-Jan	<i>Policy Process</i>	Dunn, Chapter 2, 39-61	Definition and example of assigned term
3-Feb	<i>Structuring Policy Problems</i>	Dunn, Chapter 3, skip 95-106	
5-Feb	<i>Examples</i>	National Priorities Webpage	Brief Presentations
10-Feb	<i>Evaluating Performance</i>	Dunn, Chapter 7	
12-Feb	<i>Research Design</i>	Dunn, Chapter 6, 273-293; Smith and Pell, "Parachute Use to Prevent Death and Major Trauma...,2003"	
17-Feb	<i>Experiments</i>	Robinson, Thomas H. Reducing Children's Television Watching to Prevent Obesity, <i>JAMA</i> , October 27, 1999, Vol. 282, No. 16, 156-1567.	
19-Feb	<i>SimplyMap and Statistics Warehouse Demonstrations</i>	Meet In Graham 202 Lab	HW Assigned
24-Feb	<i>Quasi Experiments</i>	Jean T. Shope; Lisa J. Molnar; Michael R. Elliott; Patricia F. Waller. Oct. 2001. "Graduated Driver Licensing in Michigan: Early Impact on Motor Vehicle Crashes Among 16-Year-Old Drivers," <i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i> . 286:1593-1598.* <i>Journal Finder</i>	

		Arthur H. Goodwin and Robert D. Foss. 2004. "Graduated driver licensing restrictions: awareness, compliance, and enforcement in North Carolina," <i>Journal of Safety Research</i> , 35:4, 367-374 *Journal Finder	
26-Feb	<i>Quantitative Analysis: Descriptive Statistics</i>	Berman, Chapter 2, e-reserve	HW Assigned
3-Mar	<i>Graphical and Tabular Displays</i>	Dunn, Chapter 6, 299-319	
5-Mar		Midterm	
10-Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>		
12-Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>		
17-Mar	<i>Difference of Means Tests</i>	Berman, Chapter 5, e-reserve	
19-Mar	<i>Difference of Means Tests</i>	Computer Lab	HW Assigned
24-Mar	<i>Hypothesis Tests</i>	Berman, Chapter 5, e-reserve	
26-Mar	<i>Hypothesis Tests</i>		HW Assigned
31-Mar	<i>Example of Difference of Means</i>	<a href="#">School Finance: Per-Pupil Spending Differences between Selected Inner City and Suburban Schools Varied by Metropolitan Area GAO-03-234 December 9, 2002</a>	
2-Apr	<i>No Class, Midwest Political Science Association Meeting</i>		
7-Apr	<i>Developing Policy Arguments</i>	Dunn, Chapter 8	
9-Apr	<i>Peer Review Papers</i>		Policy Issue Paper Due
14-Apr	<i>Communicating Policy Research</i>	Dunn, Chapter 9	
16-Apr	<i>Prepare for Simulation</i>	Dunn, Appendix 4	Revised Issue Paper Due

21-Apr	<i>Is the Death Penalty a Deterrent to Crime?</i>	The Economics of Capital Punishment, Richard A. Posner & On the Economics of Capital Punishment, Gary S. Becker, <i>The Economists' Voice</i> , Volume 3 / Issue 3 (February 2006)	
		The Death Penalty: No Evidence for Deterrence, by John Donohue and Justin J. Wolfers; Reply to Donohue and Wolfers on the Death Penalty and Deterrence by Paul H. Rubin	
23-Apr	<i>Should Cell Phones be Banned for Drivers?</i>	Strayer, David L., Frank A. Drews, and Dennis J. Crouch. "A comparison of the cell phone driver and the drunk driver," <i>Human Factors</i> 48.2 (Summer 2006): 381(11).	
		Frank A. Drews, Monisha Pasupathi, and David L. Strayer, "Passenger and Cell Phone Conversations in Simulated Driving," <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied</i> , 2008, 392-400	
28-Apr	<i>Recommending Preferred Policies</i>	Dunn, Chapter 5	
30-Apr		Conclusions	
Saturday, May 9, 12:30			Program Evaluation Due