

Professor McAvoy  
Political Science 302  
Spring 2007

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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 (10%)
- in class simulation of Congressional hearing (10%)
- mid-term (20%)
- a program evaluation report (20%)
- quizzes (10%)
- data analysis assignments (10%)

**Letter grades** are assigned as follows:

A (100-94)	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 texts:**

Gupta, Dipak K. 2001. *Analyzing Public Policy: Concepts, Tools, and Techniques*. CQ Press.

Smith, Catherine F. 2005. *Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Policy-making Process*. Oxford University Press.

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>.

Specifically pertinent to this course are the following rules:

1. "Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise."
2. "Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise."

Do NOT engage in either cheating or plagiarism. The penalties for both offenses range from the need to re-do assignments to expulsion from the University, depending upon the severity of the cheating or plagiarism offense.

If you have any questions regarding what constitutes either cheating or plagiarism, please see me *immediately*.

Please pledge all work for this course.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
January 9, 2007	<i>Introduction</i>		
January 11, 2007	<i>Overview of the Policy Process</i>	Gupta, Chapter 1; Barro and Rouse. 2005. "Does College Still Pay?" <i>The Economists' Voice</i> , Vol 2, Article 3,* Journal Finder	
January 16, 2007	<i>Why We Need Program Evaluation, Market Failure</i>	Gupta, Chapter 2	
January 18, 2007	<i>Policy Process</i>	Gupta, Chapter 3	Quiz, Chapters 1-3
January 23, 2007	<i>How to Research a Bill</i>	White, Chapters 1-4	
January 25, 2007	<i>How to Research a Bill</i>	Turabian Guide	Citation Quiz
January 30, 2007	<i>Logic of Outcome Evaluation</i>	Gupta, Chapter 4, skip "Setting Goals" (pg 74-78)	
February 1, 2007	<i>Experiments</i>	Robinson, Thomas H. Reducing Children's Television Watching to Prevent Obesity, JAMA, October 27, 1999, Vol. 282, No. 16, 156-1567.	Legislative History Due
February 6, 2007	<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.* Journal Finder	
		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	
February 8, 2007	<i>Quantitative Analysis: Descriptive Statistics</i>	Gupta, Chapter 5	
February 13, 2007	<i>Descriptive Statistics, continued</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.* Journal Finder	
February 15, 2007	<i>Quantitative Analysis: Difference of Means Tests</i>	Gupta, Chapter 6	
February 20, 2007	<i>Difference of Means Tests, continued</i>		Presentations

February 22, 2007	<i>Measurement Strategies for Outcomes</i>	Gupta, Chapter 7	
February 27, 2007	<i>Measurement Strategies for Outcomes, cont'd</i>	Joseph Stiglitz (2006) "The High Cost of The Iraq War," <i>The Economists' Voice</i> : Vol. 3 : Iss. 3, Article 5.	
		Smith, Chapters 5-7	
March 1, 2007			Midterm
March 6, 2007	<i>Spring Break</i>		
March 8, 2007	<i>Spring Break</i>		
March 13, 2007	<i>Graphical Techniques</i>	Gupta, Chapter 8	
March 15, 2007	<i>Examples</i>	Student Presentations	
March 20, 2007	<i>Regression Analysis</i>	Gupta, Chapter 11, pages 245-253	2nd Policy Memo
March 22, 2007	<i>Regression Analysis, cont'd</i>	Gupta, Chapter 11, pages 253-265	
March 27, 2007	<i>Regression Analysis, cont'd</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>	
March 29, 2007	<i>Projections</i>	Gupta, Chapter 8	Data Analysis
April 3, 2007	<i>Global Warming</i>	TBA	
April 5, 2007	<i>How to Make Policy Presentations</i>	Smith, Chapter 8	
April 10, 2007	<i>Case Study</i>	TBA	Data Analysis
April 12, 2007	<i>No Class, Midwest Political Science Association Meeting</i>		
April 17, 2007	<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	
April 19, 2007	<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).	
		<a href="http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-13/driver-distraction/PDF/100CarMain.pdf">The 100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study, Phase II - Results of the 100-Car Field Experiment, read the Executive Summary and Report Overview, http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-13/driver-distraction/PDF/100CarMain.pdf</a>	
April 24, 2007	<i>Cost Benefit Analysis</i>	<a href="#">Gupta, Chapter 14</a>	
April 26, 2007	<i>Conclusions</i>		
Friday, May 3, 2007			Program Evaluation Due