

Professor McAvoy  
Political Science 611  
Spring 2007

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## **Program and Policy Evaluation**

Program evaluation is the process by which we assess the effectiveness or impact of the work of government or non-profit agencies. The challenge in program evaluation is to isolate the impact of program activities from environmental factors so that you can 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.

Performance measurement is a relatively new addition to the set of tools used to evaluate programs. In developing performance measures, programs try to put in place ongoing indicators of program performance. These measures can be used to determine where resources should be allocated, how programs are meeting their mission, and, sometimes, whether they will get additional funding to continue to provide services.

### **Goals**

In this course students will learn to:

- understand the role of evaluation in the policy process
- conduct and implement evaluations of public programs
- prepare and present evaluation reports to public officials and citizens
- develop and evaluate performance measures
- recognize the conflicts and limitations inherent in policy and program evaluations

### **Required Texts**

The following three books are required for this course and are available from the book store:

Peter J. Haas and J. Fred Springer. 1998. *Applied Policy Research: Concepts and Cases*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Harry P. Hatry. 1999. *Performance Measurement: Getting Results*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute

Emil J. Posavac and Raymond G. Carey. 2007. *Program Evaluations: Methods and Case Studies*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Emily Van Dunk and Anneliese M. Dickman. 2003. *School Choice and the Question of Accountability: The Milwaukee Experience*. New Haven: Yale University Press

A recommended book for the course is:

Evan M. Berman. 2002. *Essential Statistics for Public Managers and Policy Analysts*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly.

Other books that cover some of the same material are:

Edward Tufte, *Data Analysis for Politics and Policy*.

Elizabeth O'Sullivan and Gary Rassel. *Research Methods for Public Administrators*.

Susan Welch and John Comer. *Quantitative Methods for Public Administration*.

Kenneth Meier and Jeffrey L. Brudney. *Applied Statistics for Public Administration*.

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.

### **Course Requirements**

Grades for this course will be determined on the basis of the following course requirements: four "microtheme" response papers (15%); three small data analysis exercises (15%), a short paper on performance measurement (20%), a group project and report (25%), and an evaluation of Milwaukee's school choice program (25%).

### **Readings and Course Topics**

#### Week 1.(Jan. 11) Introduction

#### Week 2. (Jan. 18) Overview of an Evaluation

Posavac and Carey, Chapters 1-3

Haas and Springer, Chapters 1-3.

Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor, "Metropolitan Mosquito Control District: Executive Summary and Summary" 1999. (<http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/1999/pe9903.htm>).

Mary Jo Bane. 2001. "Presidential Address - Expertise, Advocacy and Deliberation: Lessons from Welfare Reform," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Vol. 20, No. 2, 191-197.\* (Journal Finder)

Week 3. (Jan 25) The Development of Measures and Ethics in Evaluation

Posavac and Carey, Chapters 4, 5 & 12

Berman, Chapter 1 (Research Design and Measurement)

David A. Reingold, Gregg G. Van Ryzin, Michelle Ronda .2001. "Does Urban Public Housing Diminish the Social Capital and Labor Force Activity of Its Tenants?," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Vol. 20, No. 3, 485-504.\* (JournalFinder)

Jan Blustein. 2005. "Toward a More Public Discussion of the Ethics of Federal Social Program Evaluation," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Vol. 24, No. 4, 824-846.\* (JournalFinder) Note: There are several responses that follow the article. You are welcome to read them, but do not need to.

Week 4. (Feb. 1) Approaches to Gathering Program Information

Posavac and Carey, Chapters 6 & 7

Haas and Springer, Chapter 10.\*

"Statistical Analysis of Factors That Affected Uncounted Votes in the 2000 Presidential Election," GAO Report, October 2001, Report No: GAO-02-122 (www.gao.gov).

Swain, David and Hollar, Danielle. 2003. "Measuring Progress: Community Indicators and the Quality of Life" *International Journal of Public Administration*, 26:7, 789 - 814  
\*(JournalFinder)

Week 5. (Feb. 8) Overview of Quantitative Analysis in Program Evaluation

Berman, Chapter 2 (Univariate Analysis); Chapter 3 (Hypothesis Testing); Chapter 4 (Measures of Association).

Week 6. (Feb. 15) Experiments and Quasi-Experiments

Posavac and Carey, Chapters 8 & 9

Haas and Springer, Chapter 9.\*

Berman, Chapter 6 and 7 (Regression and Assumptions)

Thomas S. Dee. 2001. "Does Setting Limits Save Lives? The Case of 0.08 BAC Laws," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Vol. 20, No. 1, 111-128.\*(JournalFinder)

Week 7. (Feb. 22) Experiments and Quasi-Experiments, continued

Posavac and Carey, Chapters 10 & 11

A.C. Lewin. 2001. "Changing Work Ethic and Welfare Dependence Through Welfare Reform: The 100-Hour Rule Waiver Experiment for AFDC-U," *Evaluation Review*. vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 370-388. \* (Journal Finder)

Haas and Springer, Chapter 6.\*

\*\* Analysis #1

Week 8. (March 1) Performance Measurement--Types of Measures

Hatry, Chapters 1-7

Primer on Performance Measurement (Handout)

\*\*Analysis #2

Spring Break (March 8)

Week 9. (March 15) Performance Measurement--Use of Measures

Hatry, Chapters 8-12

Burt S. Barnow. 2000. "Exploring the Relationship between Performance Management and Program Impact: A Case Study of the Job Training Partnership Act," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Vol 19, No. 1, 118-141.\* (Journal Finder)

\*\*Analysis #3

Week 10. (March 22) Performance Measurement--Summary

Hatry, Chapters 13-15

B. Guy Peters and Donald Savoie. 1996. "Managing Incoherence: The Coordination and Empowerment Conundrum." *Public Administration Review*. 56:3, 281-290.\* (Journal Finder)

Database Management and Performance Measures, *Handout*

Week 11. (March 29) Qualitative Evaluations

Posavac and Carey, Chapter 4

Haas and Springer, Chapter 7 and 12.\*

\*\*Performance Measurement Paper Due

Week 12. (April 5) Evaluation of Milwaukee's School Choice Program.

Paul Teske and Mark Schneider. 2001. "What Research Can Tell Policymakers about School Choice," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Vol. 20, No. 4, 609-631. \*(JournalFinder)

Emily Van Dunk and Anneliese M. Dickman. 2003. *School Choice and the Question of Accountability: The Milwaukee Experience*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Chapters 1-4.

John Witte, Troy D. Sterr, and Christopher A. Thorn. "Fifth Year Report of the Milwaukee School Choice Program." (Course Web Page).

Week 13. (April 12)

No class, Midwest Political Science Association Meeting

Week 14. (April 19) Evaluation of Milwaukee's School Choice Program, continued

Emily Van Dunk and Anneliese M. Dickman. 2003. *School Choice and the Question of Accountability: The Milwaukee Experience*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Chapters 5-8.

Christopher A. Simon and Nicholas P. Lovrich, Jr. 1996. "Private School Enrollment and Public School Performance." *Policy Studies Journal*, 24:4, 666-675. \*(Journal Finder)

William G. Howell, Patrick J. Wolf, David E. Campbell, and Paul E. Peterson. 2002. "School Vouchers and Academic Performance: Results from Three Randomized Field Trials," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Vol. 21, No. 2, 191-217. \*(Journal Finder)

Week 15. (April 26)

Presentation of Research Projects

**Final Project Due Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

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### Microthemes:

These must be NO LONGER than 1 page, single-spaced with an extra line between paragraphs, with 1 inch margins and a font size of 11 or larger. Despite the short length, the usual writing conventions should be followed -- like clear sentence structure with good transitions and adherence to rules of grammar and punctuation! I will ask you to do different kinds of things for your microthemes.

For example, I may have you do a "summary-writing" microtheme to work out a clear account of a section of argument that seems difficult and interesting to me. To do this in a page, you will obviously have to differentiate between the main ideas and less important points, and figure out what you can leave behind without losing the sense of the argument. For "thesis-support" essays, I will ask you to answer a particular question about the readings. You'll need to be able to support your answer with textual evidence, guard against any tendency to ignore textual evidence that might undermine your thesis, etc.

The point of writing microthemes is for you to practice and further develop your capacities for interpretation, analysis, and explication. Although you will not formally present microthemes, I expect you to use them to inform your participation in seminar. To facilitate this, **you need to get your micro-theme to me by noon on the day that it is due**. You can email, fax, or hand deliver it to me. You will choose which weeks you do microthemes, **but two must be before spring break and 2 must be after spring break**. The readings that are marked with an asterisks (\*) are those for which micro-themes can be written.

I will give you the assignment for each microtheme the class period before they are due, or email it to you in time for you to complete it for the following class.