

**URPA 5345  
EVALUATION RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS**

Spring 2008  
Wednesday 7:00-9:50 pm

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-5:00 or call for appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides the student with an overview of public policy analysis and program evaluation-- what it is, how to do it, and most important, how to critically assess studies others have done. Although the course will examine both quantitative and qualitative methods for analyzing public policies, emphasis will be placed on quantitative methods and students should have completed an introductory statistics course (URPA 5302 is fine). While some statistical material will be covered, emphasis will be placed on discussion of research strategies, designs, and interpretation of results.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to ...

- 1) Explain how problems are defined, who brings to light problems, and why some problems are missed.
- 2) Describe the theories of causal inference and their implications to applied social science.
- 3) Define validity and reliability and analyze research studies with respect to their validity and reliability.
- 4) Critique the various types of data collection methods available to applied social scientists.
- 5) Define experimental design, quasi-experimental design, and case study design and compare the costs and benefits of each.
- 6) Discuss the stages of evaluation.
- 7) Design a valid and reliable study to address a specific research question.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Evaluations for this course will be based on:

15% Social Indicator Paper	due February 20
25% Midterm Exam	March 12
25% Final Exam	April 30
35% Evaluation Proposal	due May 7, 2pm

*Class Participation:* Each week you will read one or two case studies using a particular design. We will dissect the study during class so all students must come prepared for discussion.

*Social Indicator Paper:* For this paper, you will select a social indicator (e.g., poverty, unemployment, crime, etc.) and track that indicator over time from 1960 to the present, at the nation, state, and county or city level (3-levels, two of which must be nationwide and state). In your paper you should discuss how the indicator is measured and in what ways, if any, measurement of the social indicator has changed over time and what the implications of these changes, if any, are for interpreting the incidence of the social phenomenon the indicator

tracks. Use graphs and/or figures to highlight your results. See instructions on page 7 of this syllabus.

*Exams:* The course is divided into two halves. During the first half of the semester we will be examining different evaluation methodologies. At the end of this portion, you will be given a midterm exam. The final exam will be a closed-book exam consisting of 25 multiple choice questions. The final exam will cover topics from the second half of the course only.

*Evaluation Proposal:* This project requires you to decide upon a problem to address and then develop an evaluation prototype appropriate for the particular situation. For example, some problems may best be addressed through a needs assessment while others might suggest a demonstration project. You will decide upon the appropriate type of evaluation (through informed reading, of course), then present in a report format, results from past studies, the suggested evaluation strategy and reasons for it. You must defend your methodology, but also recognize and critique the potential disadvantages and flaws. Masters-level students will be assigned to groups for the project; PhD-level students will do individual projects. See instructions on page 8 of the syllabus.

## TEXTS

The following books are required reading and are available for purchase at the UTA Bookstore. In addition, a photocopied packet of required readings can be purchased from Bird's Copies. Supplemental readings are provided at the end of the required reading list for those students wishing to explore a specific topic further. In addition, articles on policy analysis and program evaluation can be found in a variety of journals and periodicals (see especially, *Evaluation Review*, *Journal of Human Resources*, and *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*).

- Krueger, Richard A. 2001. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. ISBN: 0761920714.  
 Rossi, Peter, Howard Freeman, and Mark Lipsky. 2003. *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. ISBN: 0761908943.  
 Yin, Robert E. 2002. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. ISBN: 0761925538.

## REQUIRED READINGS AND WEEKLY DISCUSSION TOPICS

### I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

**January 16**

**I. Overview: Analysis, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsky, *Evaluation*, Chap. 1

**II. Problem Definition**

Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsky, *Evaluation*, Chap. 3

### II. DESIGN AND ANALYSIS ISSUES

**January 23-January 30**

**I. Causal Inference**

Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsky, *Evaluation*, Chap. 5

Ross, L. E. 2001. "Associate Editor's Editorial: Problems of Correlation as Proof of Causation in Social Science Research." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 45(2): 141-43.

**January 23-January 30, continued**

**II. Validity Issues in Evaluation Research**

Fogg, Louis, and Deborah Gross. 2000. "Threats to validity in randomized clinical trials." *Research in Nursing and Health* 23(1): 79-87.

Stratford, R., J. Mulligan, B. Downie, and L. Voss. 1999. "Threats to validity in the longitudinal study of psychological effects: The case of short stature." *Child: Care, Health, and Development* 25(6): 401-419.

**February 6**

**I. Measurement and Reliability**

Sawicki, David S. 2002. "Improving Community Indicator Systems: Injecting more social science into the folk movement." *Planning Theory and Practice* 3(1): 13-32.

Wright, Lawrence. 1994, July 25. "One drop of blood." *The New Yorker*. (pp. 46-55)

**II. Data Collection**

Weimer, David, and Aldan Vining. 1989. *Policy Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. (pp. 219-238).

Goldstein, Kenneth M. and M. Kent Jennings. 2002. "The effects of advance letters on cooperation in a list sample telephone survey." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 66: 608-617.

**February 13**

**I. Qualitative vs. Quantitative Techniques**

Kidder and Fine. 1987. "Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: When Stories Converge." In M.M. Mark and R. L. Shotland, eds., *Multiple Methods in Program Evaluation*, New Directions in Program Evaluation, No. 35. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (pp. 57-76)

Fine, Gary Alan, and Kimberly D. Elsbach. 2000. "Ethnography and experiment in social psychological theory building: Tactics for integrating qualitative field data with quantitative lab data." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 36(1): 51-76.

**II. Experimental Designs**

Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsky, *Evaluation*, Chap. 8

Gennetian, Lisa A. and Pamela A. Morris. 2003. "The effects of time limits and make-work-pay strategies on the well-being of children: Experimental evidence from two welfare reform programs." *Children and Youth Services Review* 25(1-2): 17-54.

**February 20: Quasi-Experimental Designs**

Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsky, *Evaluation*, Chap. 9, 10

Rodriguez, N., and V.J. Webb. 2004. "Multiple measures of juvenile drug court effectiveness: Results of a quasi-experimental design." *Crime and Delinquency* 50(2): 292-314.

**February 27: Case Study Designs**

Yin, *Case Study Research*

Holleran, Lori K. 2003. "Mexican American youth of the southwest borderlands: Perceptions of ethnicity, acculturation, and race." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 25: 352-369.

**March 5**

**Data Collection through Focus Groups**

Krueger & Casey, *Focus Groups*

**March 12: MIDTERM EXAM**

**March 19: SPRING BREAK****III. POLICY ANALYSIS AND THE POLICY CYCLE****March 26****Needs Assessment**

Rossi and Feeman, *Evaluation*, Chap. 2, 4

Kernan, Joan B., Kim S. Giswold, and Christine M. Wagner. 2003. "Seriously emotionally disturbed youth: A needs assessment." *Community Mental Health Journal* 39: 475-486.

**April 2****Cost-Benefit Analysis**

Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsky, *Evaluation*, Chap. 11

Ginsberg, Gary. 1994. "A cost-benefit analysis of legislation for bicycle safety helmets in Isreal." *American Journal of Public Health* 84: 653-656.

**April 9****Program Monitoring and Implementation Assessment**

Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsky, *Evaluation*, Chap. 6

Zuckerman, Barbra, Hallie Preskill, and Cheri Levenson. 2001. "An evaluation of 'I Can Cope': Insights into program design and implementation." *Cancer Practice* 9: S31-S36.

**April 16****I. Evaluation Research for Advocacy**

Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsky, *Evaluation*, Chap. 12

Carol H. Weiss, "Evaluation for Decisions: Is Anybody There? Does Anybody Care?," *Evaluation Practice*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (February 1988): 5-19

**II. Ethical Issues in Evaluation Research**

Stake, R., and L. Mabry. 1998. "Ethics in program evaluation." *Scandanavian Journal of Social Welfare* 7: 99-109.

**April 23: Paper Brainstorming and Presentation****April 30: Final Exam****May 7, 2pm: Final Date to Hand in Evaluation Proposals.****SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS****Overview: Analysis, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Cook, Thomas D., and Donald T. Campbell. 1979. *Quasi-Experimentation*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Cronbach, Lee, and Associates. 1980. *Toward Reform of Program Evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Rivlin, Alice. 1971. *Systematic Thinking for Social Action*. Washington: The Brookings Institution.

Schultze, Charles. 1968. *The Politics and Economics of Public Spending*. Washington: The Brookings Institution.

Shadish, Cook, and Leviton. 1991. *Foundations of Program Evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Stokey, Edith, and Richard Zeckhauser. 1978. *A Primer for Policy Analysis*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Suchman, Edward. 1967. *Evaluative Research*. New York: Russell Sage.

Weiss, Carol. 1972. *Evaluation Research*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

**Problem Definition**

Bardach, Eugene. 1981. "Problems of Problem Definition in Policy Analysis." In John P. Crecine (Ed.), *Research in Public Policy Analysis and Management, Vol. 1*, Greenwich, CT: JAI Press. (pp. 161-171).

Stone, Deborah. 1997. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. NY: Norton.

Shadish, Cook, and Leviton. 1992. *Foundations of Program Evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. (Chapter 5, pp. 179-224)

**Causal Inference**

Cook and Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation*, Chap. 1

- Davis, James A. 1986. *The Logic of Causal Order*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Scriven, Michael. 1976. "Maximizing the Power of Causal Investigations: The Modus Operandi Method." *Evaluation Studies Review Annual*, Vol. 1 (pp. 101-118).

#### Validity Issues in Evaluation Research

- Campbell and Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*
- Cook and Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation*, Chap. 2
- Judd, Charles M. and David A. Kenny. 1981. Estimating the Effects of Social Interventions. NY: Cambridge University (Chap. 3, pp. 18-44)
- Reichardt, Charles, and Harry Gollob. 1989. "Ruling out threats to validity." *Evaluation Review* 13: 3-17.

#### Measurement and Reliability

- Blalock, Hubert. 1982. *Conceptualization and Measurement in the Social Sciences*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Cochran, Nancy. 1978. "Grandma Moses and the 'Corruption' of Data." *Evaluation Quarterly* 2: 363-373.
- Danziger, Sheldon, and Peter Gottschalk. 1983. "The Measurement of Poverty." *American Behavioral Scientist* 26:739-756.
- MacRae, Duncan Jr. 1985. *Policy Indicators*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- deNeufville, Judith Innes. 1975. Social Indicators and Public Policy. New York: Elsevier. (Chap. 6: "Sagas of Three Indicators")
- Nunnally, Jum, and Robert Durham. 1975. "Validity, Reliability, and Special Problems of Measurement in Evaluation Research." In E. Struening and M. Guttentag (Eds.), *Handbook of Evaluation Research, Vol. 1*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. (pp. 289-352)
- Zeller, Richard, and Edward Carmines. 1980. *Measurement in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

#### Data Collection

- Alonso, William, and Paul Starr. (Eds.). 1987. *The Politics of Numbers*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Anderson, Margo J. 1988. *The American Census: A Social History*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Burstein, Leigh, Howard E. Freeman, Kenneth A. Sirotnik, Ginette Delandshere, and Michael Hollis. 1985. "Data Collection: The Achilles Heel of Evaluation Research." *Sociological Methods and Research* 14:65-80.
- Keyfitz, Nathan. 1984. "Is the Census Good Enough?" *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 3: 597-620.
- Chelimsky, "Program Evaluation and the Use of Extant Data," pp. 181-206 in Leigh Burstein, Howard E. Freeman, and Peter H. Rossi, *Collecting Evaluation Data* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1985)
- Mitroff, Ian, Richard Mason, and V. Barabba. 1983. *The 1980 Census: Policymaking Amid Turbulence*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1980. *Census '80: Continuing the Factfinder Tradition*. Washington: USGPO.

#### Qualitative versus Quantitative Techniques

- Reichardt and Cook, "Beyond Qualitative Versus Quantitative Methods," pp. 7-32 in Thomas D. Cook and Charles Reichardt, eds., *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Evaluation Research* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979)

#### Experimental Designs

- Bench, L. L., and T.D. Allen. 2003. "Investigating the stigma of prison classification: An experimental design." *The Prison Journal* 83: 367-382.
- Cook and Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation*
- Campbell, Donald. 1975. "Reforms as Experiments." In E. Struening and M. Guttentag (Eds.), *Handbook of Evaluation Research, Vol. 1*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. (pp. 71-100)
- Campbell and Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*
- Fienberg, S., B. Singer, and J. Tanur. 1985. "Large-Scale Social Experimentation in the United States." In A. Atkinson and S. Fienberg (Eds.), *A Celebration of Statistics*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Greenberg and Robins, "The Changing Role of Social Experiments in Policy Analysis," *Evaluation Studies Review Annual, Vol. 10* (1985): 19-48
- Riecken, Henry, and Robert Boruch. 1976. *Social Experimentation*. New York: Academic Press.
- Hausman, Jerry, and David Wise (Eds.). 1985. *Social Experimentation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

#### Quasi-Experimental Designs

- Achen, Christopher. 1986. *The Statistical Analysis of Quasi-Experiments*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Barnow and Cain. "A Reanalysis of the Effect of Head Start on Cognitive Development" *Policy Studies Review Annual*, (1978): 587-607
- Brown, Bernard. 1985. "Head Start: How Research Changed Public Policy." *Young Children* 40:9-13.
- Campbell and Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*
- Cole, O. Jackson, and Valora Washington. 1986. "A Critical Analysis of the Assessment of the Effects of Head Start on Minority Children." *Journal of Negro Education* 55:91-106.
- Cook and Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation*
- Datta, Lois-Ellin. 1982. "A Tale of Two Studies: The Westinghouse-Ohio Evaluation of Project Head Start and the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies Report." *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 8:271-280.
- Lee, Valerie E., J. Brooks-Gunn, and Elizabeth Schnur. 1988. "Does Head Start Work?" *Developmental Psychology* 24: 210-222.
- Smith, M.S., and J.S. Bissell. "The Impact of Head Start." *Harvard Educational Review* 40:51-104.
- Stipek, Valentine, and Zigler, "Project Head Start: A Critique of Theory and Practice, pp. 477-494 in Edward Zigler and Jeanette Valentine, eds., *Project Head Start: A Legacy of the War on Poverty* (New York: Free Press, 1979)

#### Case Study Designs

- Lincoln and Guba. 1987. "But is it rigorous?" *Evaluation Studies Review Annual*. 12: 425-436.
- Murphy, Jerome. 1980. *Getting the Facts: A Fieldwork Guide for Evaluators and Policy Analysts*. Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear.
- Patton, Michael. 1980. *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- U.S. General Accounting Office. 1987, April. *Case Study Evaluations*. Washington: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.
- Yin, Robert K., and Karen A. Heald. 1975. "Using the Case-Survey Method to Analyze Policy Studies." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 20:371-381.

#### Cost-Benefit Analysis

- Gramlich, Edward. 1981. *Benefit-Cost Analysis of Government Programs*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

- Mishan, E.J. 1982. *Benefit-Cost Analysis*, 3rd ed. Winchester, MA: Allen and Unwin.
- Rothenberg, Jerome. 1975. "Cost-Benefit Analysis: A Methodological Exposition." In M. Guttentag and E. Struening (Eds.), *Handbook of Evaluation Research*, Vol. 2, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. (pp. 55-88)
- Thompson, Mark. 1980. *Benefit-Cost Analysis for Program Evaluation*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

#### **Program Monitoring and Implementation Assessment**

- Bailey and Berg. 1994. "The behavioral and attitudinal modification project." *The International Journal of the Addictions* 29: 1315-1345.
- Browne, Angela, and Aaron Wildavsky. 1984. "What Should Evaluation Mean to Implementation?" In Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation*, 3rd ed., Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. (pp. 181-205; 206-231)
- Dommel, Paul R., and Associates. 1982. *Decentralizing Urban Policy*. Washington: The Brookings Institution.
- Hall, John Stuart, and Susan A. MacManus. 1982. "Tracking Decisions and Consequences: The Field Network Evaluation Approach." In *Studying Implementation*. (pp. 100-118)
- Nathan, Richard. 1982. "The Methodology for Field Network Evaluation Studies." In *Studying Implementation*. (pp. 73-99)
- Nathan, Richard P., Fred C. Doolittle, and Associates. 1983. *The Consequences of Cuts: The Effects of the Reagan Domestic Program on State and Local Governments*. Princeton: Princeton Urban and Regional Research Center.
- Nathan, Richard P., Fred C. Doolittle, and Associates. 1987. *Reagan and the States*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Yin, Robert K. 1982. "Studying the Implementation of Public Programs." In Walter Williams (Ed.), *Studying Implementation*, Chatham, NJ: Chatham House. (pp. 36-72)

#### **Evaluation Research for Advocacy**

- Cook, Thomas D., Judith Levinson-Rose, and William E. Pollard. 1981. "The Misutilization of Evaluation Research." In H. Freeman and M. Solomon (Eds.), *Evaluation Studies Review Annual*, Vol. 6, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. (pp. 727-748)
- Lindblom and Cohen, *Usable Knowledge*
- Rich, Robert. (Ed.). *The Knowledge Cycle*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Verdier, James M. 1984. "Advising Congressional Decision-Makers: Guidelines for Economists." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 3:421-438.
- Weiss, Carol. 1987. "Congressional Committee Staffs (do, do not) Use Analysis." In M. Blumer (Ed.), *Social Science Research and Government*, New York: Cambridge University Press. (pp. 94-112)
- Weiss, Carol. 1977. "Research for Policy's Sake: The Enlightenment Function of Social Research." *Policy Analysis* 3:531-545.
- Weiss, Carol, and Michael Bucuvalas. 1980. *Social Science Research and Decision-Making*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Weiss, Carol, and Eleanor Singer. 1988. *Reporting of Social Science in the National Media*. New York: Russell Sage.

## **Social Indicator Paper**

Due February 20

In this paper, I would like you to choose a social indicator, such as poverty, unemployment, or crime, and track that indicator at the federal, state, and county/city level -- at least 3 levels, two of which must be national and state -- from 1960 to the present. You may be unable to follow the indicator up to 2007-08 but get as close as you can. Except at the county or city level, decennial data are not acceptable. If ten-year data are all that are available for your chosen indicator, you will need to choose a different indicator. Your paper should be written as a short report using appropriate tables or graphics to describe your data. Write it in such a way that your reader gains all the necessary information in as few words as possible. Writing is a very important part of being an evaluator. An evaluator must be able to convey technical information in a nontechnical manner so that all can understand. Your report should include at least two major pieces: 1) a description of the data, including a graphical presentation, and 2) an assessment of the quality of the data.

### Graphical Presentation

You will be compiling a large amount of information. The purpose of any graphical presentation is to simplify for the reader your description of the findings. Thus, you will need to choose a presentation that best represents your particular set of information. If you choose to include the actual data in your report, do so only in an appendix. You need not use sophisticated computer graphics; hand-drawn graphs, as long as clear, are fine. If you do use the computer, make sure the outcome is clear. Too often computer generated figures lose their clarity when printed in black-and-white from a color-coded screen. It is best to not depend on color to emphasize a point.

All figures and tables must have a title that describes the content (e.g., "Per Capita Poverty Rates at National, State, and Local Levels, from 1960 to 2005"). Finally, any graph or table included in your report must be referenced within the text (e.g., "As seen in Figure 1 ...").

### Evaluation of Data Quality

A significant part of this report should involve an assessment of the data themselves: e.g., how is the indicator measured? has measurement changed over time? could that change affect the findings? Discuss differences between data gathered at the various levels: who is doing the collecting? for what purpose? You will also want to pay attention to changes in the definition of the underlying construct or in society's acceptance of the construct (e.g., are women more likely today to report rape to the police than in the 1960s?). You will want to talk about what the implications of any changes are for interpreting the incidence of the social phenomenon that the indicator tracks. Not all the issues will be relevant to your particular indicators. The point is to be aware of potential invalidity and unreliability in the social indicator.

## **Evaluation Proposal Project**

Due May 7, 2pm

Email: ebarrett@uta.edu

You will prepare a proposal for conducting an evaluation. The writing in the proposal should be directed toward a government or private agency that might be interested in funding the project. For example, a proposal to evaluate the effectiveness of the Texas welfare reform policies might be directed at the Department of Human Services or the Coalition to Prevent Childhood Poverty, since either of these two agencies might be interested in funding such a project. Ph.D. students may prepare a proposal for dissertation work, if they prefer.

The proposal should address the following issues:

1. What is the background to the problem/policy being examined? Use the literature to briefly describe why the topic is of interest.
2. What research has already been done and how is your proposal contributing to it? What new information can your project offer? Be brief on this issue.
3. What is the evaluation design to be used? Who or what will be measured? What type(s) of data collection methods will be used? What are the measurement instruments?
4. What are some of the potential problems with the proposed evaluation, and how does your study attempt to overcome them? Are there any problems that your study cannot or does not address, and if so, what are they and why not address them? A strong proposal should recognize its strengths and weaknesses (but naturally have more strengths than weaknesses).
5. How will policy makers or program officials be able to use the results of your study?

Be clear and concise in your presentation. You may use graphs or tables if appropriate. As with all projects in this course, length is not nearly as important as content; the number of pages is neither a reliable nor valid measure of quality. With that said, however, the proposal should be no more than 20 double-spaced pages.