Purpose: The purpose of the course is to familiarize students with the major issues in the fields of program and policy evaluation. Students will develop an understanding of the theoretical frameworks used for evaluative research, validity issues in evaluative research, and the multi-methods, theory-driven approach to evaluation, including the development of causal and logic models.

Students will also develop an understanding of the relative value of different designs that can be applied to evaluation research. Students will have the opportunity to develop their theoretical, methodological and interpretive skills through various examples and applications and through the development of a proposal on an evaluation question of interest to them.

Classes:
Wednesday 2:30 – 5:30 pm. Room: K116 Kresge Bldg

Textbook:


Supplemental references:

https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25030/9781464807794.pdf?sequence=2 &isAllowed=y

(3) Theory at a Glance:


**Grades in this course will be based on the following:**
- Critical appraisal of published papers (class participation) 5%
- Critical appraisal of published papers (2 1-page critiques) 20%
- Group work logic model development 10%
- Presentation of logic model and draft proposal 15%
- Term Paper: (proposal for an evaluation study) 50%

**Instructional Objectives**

1. **Knowledge** - students will be able to recall principles and components of types of validity, types of research designs, components of evaluation research, and the causal and program logic model.

2. **Comprehension** - students will understand the political aspects and research dimensions of program evaluation which differentiate it from basic research. They also will understand the reasons for choices for theory-driven vs. methods evaluations, qualitative vs. quantitative methods, different types of research designs and different types of evaluation components.

3. **Applications** - students will be able to take the principles of theory-driven casual models, program logic models, validity, research designs and components of evaluation research and describe evaluative studies on the basis of these principles.

4. **Analysis** - students will be able to analyze the strengths and weaknesses as defined by the principles and components described above, of evaluative studies and be able to offer suggestions for the improvement of the studies.

5. **Synthesis** - students will be able to take an evaluation question, and work through the steps of a causal model, a logic model, components of evaluation, research design choice and assess threats to internal and external validity.

The first assignment, development of a group causal and logic model, will consist of dyads of students from different disciplines working together to develop a causal model, based on theory, on an evaluation publication of interest to them, and presented in class.

The second and third assignments are to review an article that was read for a class and to write a critique as one would for a journal editor.

The fourth assignment is an individual presentation by each student for 15 minutes (10 minutes ONLY - for BRIEF presentation of theory of cause and effect, theory of implementation, causal model, program logic model and research methods, and 5 minutes for group discussion of the evaluation question). The purpose is for students to present their conceptual thinking on the causal and program logic models and proposed research method(s) to their peers in order to obtain friendly feedback. As
the development of evaluations are often iterative and with other stakeholders, presentations and discussions with colleagues provide useful feedback and help.

The final assignment will be a proposal for the evaluation of a program/service/policy/activity that is of interest to you. Proposal writing for grants is a skill that may come in handy for your careers, and yet is not commonly taught to graduate students. Specifically, the Proposal Introduction should include: 1) what is the problem, 2) what is causing the problem, 3) solutions to problem, i.e. review of interventions similar to the one you are evaluating, theories they used, results they got, etc. A description of intervention to be evaluated is presented together with causal and logic models. The Methods section should discuss Sampling, Sample Size Calculations, Research Design, Measures, Statistical Analyses. The final section should outline Limitations and Strengths. Appendices can include tables, figures and other relevant materials. More information on proposal format presented below.

Spelling must be in Canadian English. Do NOT rely on Microsoft Word Canadian spellcheck. It does NOT flag American spelling as wrong. So you need to know your Canadian spelling. Canadian spelling is an Act of Parliament and required within any public sector workplace. Thus, it helps to know Canadian spelling. For example, it’s licence (noun) but licensed (verb); practice (noun) but practise (verb). Modelling, counselling, barrelled, etc., all have 2 “l’s; litre not liter; cheque not check; catalogue not catalog; acknowledgement not acknowledgment, organize not organise, behaviour not behavior.

Check:
http://www.mohawkcollege.ca/Assets/Communications+Centre/Helpful+Facts+Sheets/Canadian+vs+American+Spelling.pdf
http://www.luther.ca/~dave7cnv/cdnspelling/cdnspelling.html
http://btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tcdnstyl-chap?lang=eng&lettr=chapsect3&info0=3

One mark is taken off for every 3 incorrectly spelled words. So if 6 words are spelled incorrectly, 2 marks will be taken off the assignment.

Term Paper: (proposal for an evaluation study)
The proposal will be in the format of a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The proposal must follow the CIHR format, including page length, content, etc. Please note that CIHR provides somewhat different details on format, depending on type of grant. Below is a generic format to follow for your proposal.

ONLY THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL IS REQUIRED!!! THIS SHOULD INCLUDE:

Summary of Research Proposal -
Summarize your research proposal. Your summary should not exceed one page.
Research proposal -
It CANNOT exceed 10 pages. At CIHR, anything longer than 10 pages will automatically have all pages past 10 pages removed. So use no title page, table of contents, etc. as they count as pages.

General Instructions for Grant and Salary Program Applicants

The research proposal should stand alone (i.e., it should contain all the information required to support your research plan and should contain a complete description of your project). For the purpose of peer review, the research proposal should not depend on information such as appendices that are not included in the page limit of the research proposal.

In the research proposal applicants must explain:

a. What do you want to do (central theory, hypothesis, research question, specific objectives)?
b. Why this is a reasonable thing to do (review of previous work done, theory, rationale)?
c. Why this is important (new knowledge to be obtained, improvements to health which will result)?
d. How are going to do it (work plan, timelines, detailed descriptions of methods, analysis and discussion/interpretation of results, pitfalls, ways around the pitfalls, alternatives)?

Legends should be succinct and should not contain detailed information pertaining to methods. Appendices may include references, tables, charts, figures, photographs, questionnaires and consent forms.

Marking

I rate the term papers (proposals) as per CIHR rating scale, see below so that you will have experience with the format and ranking. I provide comments on the proposal and send back to you via campus mail. The rating will be done on the quality of the paper, based on conceptual, methodological and analytical content, and at a level a little higher as it would be ranked at CIHR. For proposal submissions to CIHR, virtually no one ranks in the 4.5-4.9 scale and the top 15-20% will rank at “very good” or higher.

CIHR's rating scale for grant programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>4.5 – 4.9</td>
<td>May be Funded – Will be Discussed by the Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>4.0 – 4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>3.5 – 3.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable, but low priority</td>
<td>3.0 – 3.4</td>
<td>Not Fundable – May or May Not be Discussed by the Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs revision</td>
<td>2.5 – 2.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs major revision</td>
<td>2.0 – 2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously flawed</td>
<td>1.0 – 1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>0.0 – 0.9</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Expectations for class attendance

Students are expected to attend the classes and to prepare for each class by reading the articles and chapters listed below, and to actively participate in the discussions. There is substantive reading for the class because program evaluation is a mammoth discipline. For students to obtain just a basic knowledge of some of the concepts related to program evaluation, reading is necessary, although you will just be touching the tip of the iceberg. For each class, a number of critical themes, as outlined below, have been provided to guide students through the readings and activities, and to frame the lectures and discussion. The articles are very carefully chosen every year to reflect “classics” in the field regarding methodology or issues (never, ever dismiss articles by date of publication), current thinking or historical and current examples of evaluations. Thus, some articles are older for a reason, while many articles are changed yearly to provide current examples of evaluations. For students to receive marks for class participation they MUST contribute to each class discussion.

Teaching and learning is a shared responsibility, influenced by individual knowledge and experience, but achieved through expanding our awareness of the different issues and epistemologies that exist in different disciplines. Commitment, preparation and active participation are important ingredients to realize this goal. Your preparation and participation is important to your learning and the learning of your colleagues.

This course is an interdisciplinary course for a reason. Program evaluation is interdisciplinary as the methods of program evaluation have evolved from many disciplines. Learning from other disciplines will enhance your program evaluation knowledge and skills and therefore it is expected that students will act respectfully and collaboratively with one another. Indeed, virtually no comprehensive program evaluations are conducted by only one person and one discipline as many skills from different disciplines are required for a state-of-the-art evaluation.

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calender).

Plagiarism checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

What is evaluative research and what do we mean by programs and policies?

Readings: Grembowski (2001) Chapters 1, 2 (p 3-31)


http://stroke.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/23/3/352

http://stroke.ahajournals.org/content/25/11/2132.short

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6WB0-4FTYSG8-GM&_user=940030&_coverDate=07%2F31%2F1989&_rdoc=1&_fmt=high&_orig=search&_origin=search&_sort=d&_docanchor=&view=c&_searchStrId=1575015233&_rerunOrigin= scholar.google&_acct=C000048763&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=940030&md5=89e3a3fcb363065d3ae8e86e33844755&searchtype=a

Reflective questions: Do the conclusions causally follow from the purpose and methods? Why or why not?


Methods-oriented vs. theory-driven evaluations. Type III error

Readings: Grembowski (2001) Chapter 3 (p. 34-63)


http://her.oxfordjournals.org/content/13/1/33.full.pdf+html

http://qualitysafety.bmj.com/content/early/2015/01/23/bmjqs-2014-003627.full.pdf+html

Supplemental:
http://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/46653.pdf

http://intqhc.oxfordjournals.org/content/19/2/57.full.pdf+html

http://evi.sagepub.com/content/18/3/348.full.pdf+html

**Reflective questions**: Compare and contrast the two cold education studies. Why do these two studies show different results of the same intervention? Which is blackbox and why?

**3. January 18, 2017: Approaches to Model Development**  
Causal model and program logic model

Readings: MPS Dept of Research and Development (2014) A Guide for Developing Logic Models through a Program Theory of Change. **Note: Process theory is same as implementation theory, and impact theory is same as cause and effect theory in Grembowski**  

Watch 10 minute video of Health Action Process Approach (HAPA) model as an example of a cause and effect theory. There are many types of cause and effect theories.  
http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/health/hapa.htm

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=MImg&_imagekey=B6W9M-49V14XB-5-7&_cdi=6686&_user=940030&_pii=S0196655302482284&_origin=search&_coverDate=10%2F31%2F2003&_sk=999689993&view=c&wchp=dGLbVtz-zSkWb&md5=482a32f0ea499fa5a30e109705cc0a5&ie=sdarticle.pdf
http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0149718903000521/1-s2.0-S0149718903000521-main.pdf?_tid=0c751412-92e3-11e5-9197-00000aab0f02&acdnat=1448394136_a6c8229c6f41c07ffca246c62cb443d3

http://heapol.oxfordjournals.org/content/26/6/508.full.pdf+html

If additional information and examples are wanted to understand, develop and use theory, causal and logic models:

*On how to think about causal theories*  

Wisconsin University Logic Model (2003)  
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/pdf/lmcourseall.pdf

W. K, Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide  


http://evi.sagepub.com/content/14/1/29.full.pdf+html

**Reflective questions:** What is the causal model of your proposed program, policy or service you want to evaluate? What theories inform your theory of cause and effect and theory of implementation?

**4. January 25, 2017 Group Causal and Logic Model presentations**  
Student dyads take 15 minutes each to present their causal and logic models

http://aje.sagepub.com/content/31/3/363.full.pdf+html

Reflective questions: What theories are you using to explain the problem and intervention, i.e. (theories of “cause and effect” and of “implementation)? How is your logic model being informed by your causal model? What does your logic model look like?

5. February 1, 2017: Validities and Research Approaches
Quantitative Research Designs
Sources of invalidity for designs
Pre-experimental, true experimental and quasi experimental


Reflective questions: Are Pulos and Leng’s and Tamiru et al’s evaluations “theory driven”? What type of designs are they using? What are the strengths and validity challenges with them?

6. February 8, 2017 Research Approaches Continued
Qualitative methods
Triangulation and mixed methods
Additional background reading if you want more “how-to” information. These papers will be helpful if you are planning a mixed methods project.

http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0162-3737%28198923%2911%3C255%3ATACFFM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-F

http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/119/10/1442.full.pdf+html

Reflective questions: Thinking of your evaluation, could you use qualitative methods or quantitative methods? Could you use a mixed methods approach? If so for what reasons?

Program rationale
Needs assessment

http://erx.sagepub.com/content/24/1/73.full.pdf+html

http://pdn.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=MiamiImageURL&_cid=271173&_user=940030&_pii=S0738399106001248&_check=y&_origin=toolbar&_coverDate=30-Nov-2006&view=c&originContentFamily=serial&wchp=dGLzVlt-zSkzk&md5=bdiff31ca

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1089055/pdf/hsresearch00022-0025.pdf

http://aje.sagepub.com/content/27/2/237.full.pdf+html

http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0149718915001032/1-s2.0-S0149718915001032-main.pdf?_tid=cde8f0ee-e082-11e5-bde6-00000aaf0f01&acdnat=1453410553_16ec1e2048cf2c19aef1f52b146340

http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/119/10/1442.full.pdf+html
http://download.springer.com/static/pdf/204/art%253A10.1007%252Fs10464-011-9474-6.pdf?originUrl=http%3A%2F%2Flink.springer.com%2Farticle%2F10.1007%2Fs10464-011-9474-6&token2=exp=1448651344~acl=%2Fstatic%2Fpdf%2F204%2Fart%2525252Fs10464-011-9474-6.pdf%3ForiginUrl%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Flink.springer.com%252Farticle%25252F10.1007%252Fs10464-011-9474-6%252C%252F2%252Flink.springer.com%252Farticle%252F10.1007%252Fs10464-011-9474-6%26hmac=bb6aafe47db1fa4f43b428dc2c85b949e1d2956b207b681337c623ff6345a00

Additional background reading if you want more “how-to” information. This paper will be helpful if you are planning a needs assessment for your project.


**Reflective questions:** How is the program rationale evaluated in Mercier et al? What are identified as key issues for needs assessment in the Mitra et al. and West et al. papers? On what needs are the assessments being made? What type of methods did they use? Why?

**Due Feb 15:** 1-page critical appraisal of one of the above studies

**February 22, 2017:** Reading week
no classes

**8. March 1, 2017:** Components of Evaluation Research, Part 2
Formative/process evaluation


complex interventions: Medical Research Council guidance. *British Medical Journal* 350, h1258. doi:10.1136/bmj.h1258
http://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/350/bmj.h1258.full.pdf


Additional background reading if you want more “how-to” information. This paper will be helpful if you are planning a process evaluation for your project.


Reflective questions: What type of designs did Paquette.Warn et al. and and Byng et al. use? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluations?

Short-term outcome evaluation
Summative/long-term outcome/impact evaluation

http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0114673&type=printable

DOI: 10.1177/1356389014551484
http://evi.sagepub.com/content/20/4/471.full.pdf+html


Reflective questions: How are the Barrett et al., Nayiga et al. and Marchal et al. evaluations similar? What are the differences? What are the different designs used by the different papers? Is any paper stronger in causal inference? Why?

Due Mar 8: 1-page critical appraisal of one of the above studies


Effectiveness evaluation


http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/188/4/323.full.pdf+html

http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/18/2/75.full.pdf+html

Additional background reading if you want more information on economic evaluation.

**Reflective questions:** What types of analyses were conducted? What are some challenges with the conduct of economic evaluations? What type of economic analysis could you consider for your own project?


Population, sampling, measurement, data collection, data analysis


If additional information is wanted on data issues:

DOI: 10.1080/09652140020004287

**Reflective questions:** Any issues with planning your proposal in light of sampling, measurement, etc?


Issues, challenges and examples.
Canadian Evaluation Society core competencies
Evaluation ethics

Readings: Grembowski (2001) Act 3 (p 256-289)

doi:10.1016/S0190-7409(97)00007-8
[http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0190740997000078/1-s2.0-S0190740997000078-main.pdf?_tid=9ceed7e7f6c-9787-11e5-acf2-00000aab0f6b&acdnat=1448904621_82629c680b2f857207af4de5d1226d9b](http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0190740997000078/1-s2.0-S0190740997000078-main.pdf?_tid=9ceed7e7f6c-9787-11e5-acf2-00000aab0f6b&acdnat=1448904621_82629c680b2f857207af4de5d1226d9b)

Reflective questions: What are your thoughts about Rubin’s experiences? How would you deal with similar problems? Did Bickman really have a “program theory”? What are your thoughts about his evaluation and outcomes? What are the challenges with participatory action research?

13. April 5, 2017: Student presentations of models and proposals

All students can have 15 minutes, (10 minutes for causal and logic model, and research method description of proposal, and 5 minutes group discussion). The purpose of the presentation, as is typical in program evaluations, is to obtain feedback from colleagues (friendly review), in order to improve final proposal. As a courtesy to other students, so that all will have equal time, PLEASE time your presentation to ensure it is 10 minutes. Presentation mark will also reflect keeping within one’s time limits as a show of courtesy to other students.

Final assignment (program evaluation proposal) due: April 30, 2017