PA/POEC/SOC 6352-002 Spring 2009 (3 hrs)

Professor Simon Fass
M: 4:00-6:45 p.m. WSTC: 2.212.
Office hours: TR: 11-12:30; W: 5-6:30; and by appointment
e-mail: WebCT for course purposes, or fass@utdallas.edu when WebCT is not available

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Evaluation Research Methods in the Social Sciences

This course introduces a collection of analytical activities that fall under the general heading of policy, program or project evaluation, and the various steps involved in its implementation. Themes covered include fundamental design issues ranging from the philosophical to mundane but nonetheless critical matters of method, understanding of operational logic, measurement indicators and collection of reliable data; different evaluative approaches; and the challenges of interpreting results and reporting utilization-focused findings.

Along the way the course looks closely at evaluation techniques and procedures, which to the extent feasible try to mirror the essentials of social science research. The nuance in this instance, in addition to usual empirical research concerns and problems of rigorous inquiry, is that evaluation faces the special challenge of judging whether implementation of a policy, program, treatment or other intervention produces its intended effects. This is often very hard to do.

A. Learning Outcomes: Students will:
- be familiar with the array of investigative activities that fall under the rubric of evaluation in public and non-profit agencies, and of steps involved in their implementation;
- understand different evaluation design components, such as outcome and process evaluation;
- demonstrate sound knowledge in applying basic methodological components of evaluation, such as organization, measurement, and collection of reliable data; and
- prepare an evaluation design for an actual or imagined social or economic undertaking.

B. Pre-requisite: None, but completion of a basic course on research methods would be nice, statistics too.

C. Required Texts:


[FYI: Students sometimes find it more convenient to buy a secondhand, earlier edition of this text.]


D. Grades: The grade structure is

A (4.0)  A-(3.67)  B+(3.33)  B (3.00)  B-(2.67)  C+(2.33)  C (2.00)  F (0.00)
Grading is based on performance on five class assignments, an evaluation proposal, and a final examination, as follows:

- class assignments (5 assignments at 12% each): 60%
- evaluation proposal (i.e., class research paper): 20%
- final examination: 20%
- total: 100%

Written class assignments are submitted electronically via WebCT6, and use a word processing program that MS Word or WordPerfect can easily access. These assignments are judged on quality of substance and of writing. Good submissions are well organized and well researched. They are clearly documented and, as appropriate, end noted. They are natural (i.e., as one normally talks), concise and easy to read. They are correctly spelled, properly punctuated and grammatically correct. And they are neat and responsive to the spirit and specifics of the assignment.

E. Course Schedule:

1. January 12: Introduction to Evaluation
   * WHN: Intro: Meeting the Need for Practical Evaluation Approaches (xxxiii-xxxi-xliv)
   January 19: MLK Holiday

2. January 26: Tradecraft
   * Booth, Colomb and Williams: The Craft of Research (whole book)

3. February 2: Implementation and Performance Assessment
   * RFL Ch 1 Programs. Policies and Evaluations (4-9, 20-33)
   * WHN Ch. 3: Implementation Evaluation (63-97)
   * WHN Ch. 4: Performance Monitoring (98-125)
   * Model Evaluation Plan - Destination Graduation
     o Suggested: GAO. 1990: Case Study Evaluations

4. February 9: Evaluation Purposes and Feasibility
   * RFL Ch 2 Tailoring Evaluations 37-74
   * RFL Ch 5 Expressing and Assessing Program Theory (155-187)
   * WHN Ch. 2: Evaluability Assessment (33-62)

5. February 16: Fundamentals of Clear-Headedness
   * Rosetta Stone of LFA

   * WHN Ch. 1: Using Logic Models (7-32)
7. March 2: Assessment Measures/Indicators
   * IC CCC. 2003: Toolkit for Evaluating Initiatives to Improve Child Care Quality
   * PT Section 5: Objectives, Measures and Data Sources

8. March 9: Design I
   * RFL Ch 3 Identifying Issues and Formulating Questions 79-115
   * GAO 1991: Designing Evaluations
   * DCJD Evaluation Plan Revised

March 16:

9. March 23: Design II
   * PT Section 6: Planning for and Designing Evaluations (through 6.3, pp 35-57)
   * WHN: Ch. 5: Quasi-Experimentation (126-148)
   * WHN: Ch. 6: Using Randomized Experiments (150-172)

10. March 30: Asking Questions Directly I
    * WHN Ch. 9: Using Surveys (257-291)
    * GAO. 1991: Using Structured Interviewing Techniques
    * Creative - The Survey System: Survey Design
    * Deakin - Questionnaire Design
    * Principles of Questionnaire Construction
    * Frary: A Brief Guide to Questionnaire Development

11. April 6: Asking Questions Directly II
    * WHN Ch. 9: Using Surveys (257-291) - again

12. April 13: Asking Questions Indirectly
    * WHN Ch.10: Using Expert Judgment (292-309)
    * WHN Ch.12: Using Focus Groups (340-362)
    * WHN Ch.14: Using Agency Records (396-411)
      o Suggested: WHN Ch. 8: Trained Observer Ratings 211-256; WHN Ch.11: Role Playing 310-33.

13. April 20: Resource Efficiency
    * WHN Ch.18: Cost-Effectiveness and Cost-Benefit Analysis (506-542)

      PART VIII Dilemmas of Evaluation (295-350)
    * WHN Ch.19: Pitfalls of Evaluation (547-570)
      o Suggested: WHN Ch.21; Writing for Impact (606-627).

15. May 4: Evaluation Plan due today at 4:00 pm

May 11: Final Examination
F. Resources:
The evaluation trade is blessed (or perhaps, as some would have it, cursed) with individuals and institutions that take the time to create and maintain a rich array of internet connections to helpful information for evaluation research. The following is a partial list of these links.

i. General
   A Miniature Library of Philosophy
   http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/
   American Evaluation Association
   http://www.eval.org/resources.asp
   Centers for Disease Control
   http://www.cdc.gov/eval/resources.htm
   Digital Resources for Evaluators
   http://www.resources4evaluators.info/
   Evaluation Portal
   http://www.evaluation.lars-balzer.name/links/
   ICAAP: Resources for Methods in Evaluation and Social Research
   http://gsociology.icaap.org/methods
   Online Evaluation Resource Library
   http://oerl.sri.com/
   Research Methods Knowledge Base
   http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php

ii. Federal Government
   Government Accountability Office
   http://www.gpoaccess.gov/gaoreports/index.html
   Agency for International Development (advanced search for "evaluation" in title)
   http://dec.usaid.gov
   Department of Education
   Department of Health and Human Services
   http://aspe.hhs.gov/
   Department of Justice
   http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/
   Environmental Protection Agency
   http://www.epa.gov/evaluate

iii. State Government
   Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
   http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/
   Idaho Legislature Office of Performance Evaluations
   http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/ope/index.htm
   Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor
   http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/pedintro.htm
   Texas State Auditor’s Office
   http://www.sao.state.tx.us/
iv. Non-Profit/Voluntary Organizations

Innovation Network Advocacy Evaluation Project

United Way Outcome Measurement Resource Network
http://www.liveunited.org/outcomes/

Wisconsin Cooperative Extension
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/index.html

v. International Organizations

European Commission
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/index_en.htm

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork/derec

United Nations
http://www.uneval.org/evaluationresource/index.jsp?ret=true

World Bank Independent Evaluation Group
http://www.worldbank.org/oed/

World Bank Institute
http://go.worldbank.org/WDOT4PAV80

G. The Evaluation Proposal:
The main course assignment is preparation of a proposal to evaluate an actual or imagined program. We will discuss the kinds of activities that qualify on the first day of class, and students can suggest programs that seem of interest. Students should have selected their programs by the second class. Because the selected program must be of a type amenable to valid evaluation, you must get my approval before proceeding too far. Note also that if you choose an actual program, then you need to obtain assurance of cooperation from program managers, and make clear to them that you are designing an evaluation plan for purposes of this course. You are not going to do an evaluation.

The evaluation proposal document has the following structure:

i. Introduction - 200 words
Brief lead-in on the problem(s)/issue(s) that the program addresses

ii. Program Description - 800 words
An overview that conveys to the reader a proper understanding of the program’s:
- origins and evolution, mission/vision, size, organizational structure, comparability with similar programs elsewhere, and theoretical/conceptual underpinnings; and
- goals/objectives, criteria and methods in current use to assess progress in achieving them, and comparison with criteria and methods used by similar programs elsewhere.

iii. Evaluation Design - 1500 words (1200 if section 4 is included)
Detailed description the type of evaluation proposed, goals/objectives on which the assessment will be based, measures and methods of data collection/production you plan to use, and how you intend to do it all with respect to:
- processes: actions that the program undertakes to reach its stated goals/objectives; and/or
- outcomes: the short-, medium- and long-term goals/objectives that the program aims for.
iv. Analysis (optional) - 300 words
   Outline of proposed quantitative and/or qualitative method(s) to analyze the collected data described in section 3 (attempt this only if you have a firm grasp of statistical and/or qualitative analysis techniques).

v. Appendices (e.g., notes, references, questionnaire designs, etc.)

H. Guidelines for Preparing the Evaluation Proposal:
An evaluation design is a professional research document. Accordingly, remember that research demands that you view the world from an analytical perspective, and be hardheaded and objective (to the extent feasible). You must remove yourself from the situation as much as possible, and then look at the matter at hand.

Writing: The logic and presentation of written submissions must be clear. Say what you want to say in your own words. “Write like you talk” is good rule. If I understand what you say when you talk but cannot understand what you say when you write, then there is a brain-hand dysfunction that needs cure.

Length: 2500 (± 100) original words, excluding quoted material, bibliography, notes, tables, etc. In other words, “original” refers to what you yourself write. Though rarely necessary, you can include quoted text. But this text does not count as part of the required length.

Format: I have very specific preferences about format. Please adhere to them closely:
   - margins: 1-inch on all sides
   - paper: white standard, 8½ inches by 11 inches
   - orientation: portrait
   - font: times new roman, regular, 12 points
   - alignment: left (no justification)
   - page numbering: on all pages, centered at the bottom
   - line spacing: single-space within paragraphs, double-space between paragraphs
   - indentation: none
   - paper title: at top of first page on one line (i.e. no cover sheet)
   - student name: next line after the title
   - citations in text: in any standard format (e.g., Smith, 2004)
   - bibliography: in standard format (e.g., as you see them at the end of published articles)
   - spelling: no errors (i.e., use spelling checker, and also review manually for wrong words)
   - grammar: do not be horrible (i.e., use grammar checker set to strictest/most formal level)
   - endnotes: place after bibliography (no footnotes)
   - tables or graphics: include only if essential, place at very end.

I. Submissions:
All submissions must be electronic (sent via WebCT6 or diskette/CD if WebCT6 is a problem), saved in any format that MS Word or WordPerfect can read directly. File names must be your name (last first) followed by the assignment number (e.g. Smith Bobby Assignment 1).

J. Additional Course Policies:
   - Class Decorum: no cell phones on or text messaging; no notebook computers on
   - Make-up Exams: none
   - Extra Credit: none
   - Late Work: 10% of assignment value is lost for each day overdue
   - Class Attendance: not obligatory
   - Classroom Citizenship: civility and politeness are appreciated
**Student Conduct and Discipline:** The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, A to Z Guide, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university’s Handbook of Operating Procedures. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents’ Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

**Academic Integrity:** The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one’s own work or material that is not one’s own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university’s policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

**E-mail Use:** The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student’s U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

**Withdrawal from Class:** The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester’s course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

**Student Grievance Procedures:** Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university’s Handbook of Operating Procedures. In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called “the respondent”). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent’s School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean’s decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the deal will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

**Incomplete Grades:** As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester’s end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.
**Disability Services**: The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is: The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22, PO Box 830688, Richardson, Texas 75083-0688, (972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student’s responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

**Religious Holy Days**: The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

**Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities**

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at: http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm

Additional information is available from the office of the school dean.

*The descriptions and timelines above are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.*

**K. Classroom Location**