

**Program Evaluation (583)**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**Sam Houston State University**  
**Course Outline**  
**Spring 2008**

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**Office Hours:**  
Tuesday: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm  
Thursday: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm  
or by appointment

Class meets: University Center, Tuesday 6:00 pm – 8:50 pm

**Course Description**

In this introductory course, you will learn how to evaluate public programs. That is, how to develop strategies for doing an evaluation, implement them, derive meaningful conclusions and then decide on the future course of action.

**Course Objectives**

The main emphasis will be on how to design and conduct an evaluation. The course will introduce the different types of evaluations that are available to assess programs, teach how to pose relevant questions and choose an appropriate design for evaluation that would help to answer the main question in the study. It is through the design and execution of an evaluation plan that one can develop awareness of the methodological, administrative, and political constraints associated with any project. So, this class will help to create an awareness of obstacles and the many challenges that are encountered in the course of an evaluation. Throughout the course, the emphasis will be on a practical hands-on approach in conducting evaluations.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

Bingham, Richard B. And Claire L. Felbinger. 2002. *Evaluation in Practice: A Methodological Approach, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ed.* New York: Chatham House Publishers.

Sam Houston State University, Office of Graduate Studies. 1997. Unpublished Manuscript “Directions on Form, Preparation, and Submission of the Final Copies of Master’s Theses and Doctoral Dissertations.” Huntsville, Texas. (Distributed in class)

**RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS:**

Czaja, Ronald and Johnny Blair. *Designing Surveys: A Guide to Decisions and Procedures.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. 1996.

Guba, Egon. G. “The Elements of a Proposal.” NP: ND.

O'Sullivan, Elizabeth and Gary R. Russel. *Research Methods for Public Administrators*, 3rd Edition. New York: Longman. 1999

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 1996.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Class attendance on required should be a priority for all graduate students. Since classes are offered once a week, please try not to miss any class. In case, you need to be absent for a legitimate cause then do not forget to inform the instructor the date and the reason for your absence. It is the student's responsibility to copy notes and make up the required work missed during the period of absence.

**EXAMINATIONS:**

A take home final examination will be given. In this exam, students have to write two critiques of evaluation papers that have been published in a journal. The guidelines for the critique will be provided.

**GRADING:**

Research Report (capstone paper)	50
Oral presentation of Research Report	10
Discussion of Case Reports	15
Final Examination (take home)	<u>25</u>
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	100

90 – 100 = A

80 – 89 = B

70 – 79 = C

69 and below = F

**REPORT ON RESEARCH:**

A complete research report has to be submitted followed by its oral presentation. For your oral presentation, use powerpoint slides and be prepared to answer questions that might be posed by other students and the instructor. You should present your findings as succinctly as possible and use visual aids like graphs, charts, schematic diagrams and others to convey the logic of reasoning or findings of your study. You must inform the audience the obstacles/challenges that you may have encountered in the course of your study and how you had overcome them. Please do not forget to mention the implications of your study in your presentation.

**Written Report:**

Your written report will follow the Guba style using the Turabian citation method. You will report the identification of the problem, research questions, identification and measurement of the variables (parts of the research design you have already prepared can be used). The newer

part of your report will explain the collection of the data and the findings. The findings should be related to the hypotheses you had already written and the criteria you used to determine whether a hypothesis is true or not. You will need to show that you have ruled out rival explanations that might also explain a cause. The various threats to validity should be clearly stated. Lastly, you will need to explain the “meaning” of the findings and discuss its utility in the field of public administration.

As you read for this course, particularly Bingham and Felbinger, you will get ideas of how these reports are supposed to look and the type of information you need to include. Bingham and Felbinger’s examples are part of published literature, so they are “peer reviewed” and have been scrutinized. Thus, they are examples of “good” research. Keep that in mind as you read them.

**Ordinarily reports of this magnitude can be quite long. I would encourage you to keep your report under 100 pages, including appendices and works cited.**

Remember to follow Turabian style and the SHSU Manual for Theses. You will need

- chapters and chapter titles so you will need a table of contents.
- use a works cited, NOT a bibliography.
- all tables are in Turabian format and must be included immediately after they are mentioned in a paragraph.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

This instructor takes academic dishonesty very seriously and will penalize students who engage in it. SHSU defines “cheating” as

“1) copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs.

2) Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test.

3) collaborating, without authorization, with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work.

4) knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test....

7) Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one’s own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm.

5.312 ”Plagiarism” means the appropriation of another’s work or idea and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work or idea into one’s own work offered for credit.”

([Http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty](http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty))

Students engaged in any of the above will receive a grade of 0 on the examination or paper in question and be sent to the Dean of Students. Other academic sanctions including expulsion from the university are possible.

## **Tentative Course Outline**

**Please Note:** *The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus, including dates for examinations as needed. These changes will be announced in class and may appear in Blackboard announcements. It is the student's responsibility to become aware of the changes.*

January 22	Introduction to Evaluation	Chap. 1
January 29	Evaluation designs and measurement	Chaps. 3 & 4
February 5	<b>No class. Send me a memo discussing the progress of your research report</b>	
February 12	<b>No class. Focus on your research report.</b>	
February 19	Performance measurement Pretest and posttest designs	Chaps. 5 and 6
February 26	Solomon and Control Group design	Chaps. 6 and 7
March 4	Pretest and posttest designs Interrupted time series	Chaps. 8 & 9
March 11	<b>No class. Spring Break!</b>	
March 18	Posttest only design One group pre and posttest	Chaps. 10 & 11
March 25	Cost benefit analysis Cost effectiveness analysis Patched designs	Chaps. 13 Chap. 14 Chaps. 15
April 1	<b>No class. Focus on your research report</b>	
April 8	Meta evaluation designs Fifth year report School choice	Chap. 16 Chap. 20 Chap. 21
April 15	<b>No class. Focus on your research report. Send me the first draft of your research report.</b>	
April 22	Two sides of one story Speaker	Chap. 22
April 29	Oral presentation of Research Report Take home exam will be handed out.	
May 6	Submit Take Home Exam and Research Report	