

**THE HELLER SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY**

HS247f
Evaluation For Managers
Fall 2007

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Mondays: 6:00 to 9:00 pm
Room: TBA

Course Description: This is a half course in the new MBA curriculum where we will focus on evaluation techniques of interest to managers. These include balanced scorecard methods, needs assessment, participatory evaluation methods, process/implementation analysis, social impact analysis, cost benefit analysis and utilization-focused evaluation. These techniques are discussed in the context of building “learning organizations” that enable the organization and its managers to know if they are succeeding. The course connects to others, including: Organizational Behavior, Information Systems Strategy, Operations Management, Statistics and other MBA courses, including policy courses, although none are requirements for taking this course.

Management Discipline Skills and Competencies: Managers and community activists both need to know whether the action programs made possible by public policies are working. This knowledge is all the more important in an environment in which private donors and policymakers alike have embraced results-based decision-making. The course reviews methods, tools and strategies to help managers and advocates to assess measurable impacts of implementation of programs. The course teaches students how to monitor/evaluate programs – what monitoring and evaluation is, how to do it and most importantly, how to critically review studies done by others of your organization and/or of emerging ideas in your field. Fundamentally, the course asks managers to *reflect* on knowing whether they are achieving their goals.

The course reviews: (a) cases of situations where organized knowledge on the achievement of goals would have been helpful, (b) program evaluation methods and tools, drawing on both social science approaches and management approaches used to measure program implementation, outcomes and impacts, and (c) special challenges of measurement, knowing what to measure and how to measure within real-world constraints. Throughout the course the differences between policy and program development, monitoring, and evaluation are discussed. Students also learn the key terms and language that evaluators use when conducting their craft.

This half course on evaluation connects to the “managing and measuring outcomes” competency in the MBA curriculum.

Materials: Course materials will be available only on LATTE.

One textbook is required: Program Evaluation Methods and Case Studies by Emil J. Posavac and Raymond Carey (Prentice Hall: Sixth edition 2003).

Requirements: The course is designed around lectures, class discussions of readings or cases, and written assignments. See requirements at end of syllabus.

Office Hours: You may see Dr. Hahn by appointment or open door. ahahn@brandeis.edu. 781-736-3774.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person- be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner – without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the sources of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student. Violations of university policies on academic integrity, described in Section 3 of *Rights and Responsibilities*, may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, and could end in suspension from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.

Notice: If you have a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and require accommodations, please bring it to the instructor's attention prior to the second meeting of the class. If you have any questions about this process, contact the disabilities coordinator for The Heller School.

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

I: INTRODUCTION TO EVALUATION

CONTEXT: History of evaluation, abuses and uses of evaluation, theory of evaluation, and how evaluation differs from regular management practice. What managers think about evaluation and why? (Session 1)

1. Weiss, Carol H. "Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-Based Evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families," in Connell, P. James, Anne Kubisch, Lisbeth Schorr, and Carol Weiss, New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts, The Aspen Institute, Washington DC, 1995.
2. "The Origins of Theory-Based Evaluation" in Evaluation Practice - Vol. 17, #2, 1996.
3. Chelimsky "The Political Environment of Evaluation and What it Means for the Development of the Field."

Text Book: Posavac, Latest Edition 6th (TEXT) Chapters 1,2,3

II: AN OVERVIEW OF MAJOR TYPES OF EVALUATIONS: NEED ASSESSMENT, PARTICIPATORY, PROCESS, IMPACT, NORMATIVE, AND COST/BENEFIT (Sessions 2-4)

4. Wholey, Joseph. "Evaluability Assessment" in Evaluation Research Methods (Rutman, editor), Sage.
5. Fetterman, David, Shakeh J. Kaftarian, and Abraham Wandersman (eds), Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-Assessment and Accountability, Sage, 1996. Excerpts on Empowerment Evaluation.
6. "Methods for Policy Relevant Applied Developmental Science: Some Limitations of the Experimental Model" by Beth Green and Robert McCall, NPC Research, University of Pittsburgh, unpublished (2004)
7. USGAO, "Assessing Social Program Impact Evaluations: A Checklist Approach" - Chapters 1-2.

Text Book: Posavac (TEXT) Chapter 6,7,8,9,10

III: FOCUS ON MEASUREMENT (Sessions 5)

Handouts and reproduced materials

IV: UTILIZATION AND MEDIA-DRIVEN EVALUATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

(Session 6)

Posavac (TEXT) Chapter 13-14. (Session 6)

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write a technical review of an existing evaluation of a program of interest to you or write a detailed evaluation plan for a program that interests you. With respect to the first option, imagine you are working in a donor agency and your boss asks you to evaluate the evaluation to see if the donor agency received a technically sound and useful report. I would prefer that you select an “impact evaluation” for this assignment but it is not a requirement. On the second option, I will expect a detailed evaluation plan and design that touches on technical issues such as the design itself, samples, measurement, etc.
2. The course is listed on LATTE. I will ask a student volunteer each week to suggest a question and then I will ask each student to submit a written response of a length not to exceed a paragraph in the discussion section. Finally, I will ask a volunteer each week to read the comments and summarize them for a few minutes at the beginning of class.