

SPRING 2004
AJ203
Wed 5:30-8-PM
Mac Quarrie Hall Rm.526

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AJ 203 JUSTICE POLICY ANALYSIS

Course Description: An analysis of justice system policies and procedures, with an emphasis on how policies are formulated, evaluated and interpreted. Pre-requisites are Stat 95 (or equivalent), AJ 105, and AJ 202.

Course Objectives: The objective of the course is to provide a basic understanding of program evaluation and policy analysis and to use that knowledge in designing and implementing a research project in a real-life organization.

Course Structure: This is a seminar style course, where both students and instructor share responsibility for learning. Full participation in the class is required. This means more than attendance. It includes reading the assigned materials prior to each class meeting, taking turns in leading class discussion. Students are required to critique each other's oral presentation at the end of the semester.

Course Requirements and Grading: The course requires a short 3-5 page mid-term paper and a full report with oral and written presentation at the end of the semester.

Mid-term paper has 3 components related to the final project.

- Statement of purpose: why are you choosing this topic?
- Critical Literature review- what do you know and what do you want to know at the end of this project?
- Proposed methodology and analysis plan- how are you planning to get the information needed.

The Final Project

Students must work in small groups of three persons of their choice. The project is divided into separate and manageable pieces. Each student will be responsible for a separate piece of the project and for the overall quality of the project. Each group will:

1. Present their project at the end of the semester, and
2. Submit a final written report.

Individual grades are based on:

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| ➤ Student participation in class discussion | 20%; |
| ➤ The mid-term paper | 20% |
| ➤ Oral presentation of their section of the report | 10%; |
| ➤ Their individual component of the final paper | 30% |
| ➤ The final group paper as a whole | 20%. |

Each small group is expected to meet with the instructor before week 3 to define the topic and to assign individual responsibility for component pieces. The groups will meet with the instructor during the week prior to oral presentation to discuss the process and problem solve.

Required Texts:

Weiss, C.H. (1998). *Evaluation*. Second Edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
Patton, M.Q. (1997). *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage.

Supplemental Articles provided by instructor

Paper Format:

All written papers will be double-spaced, 1 inch margins, with readable font size (12). The references, figures, tables, and appendices are not included in the overall page size but should follow the formatting style. Use APA format for text and references including web site citations. Attention should be paid to punctuation, spelling, and grammar in order to present a professional product.

The Final paper will be organized under the following headings:

1. Executive Summary (to be written last but placed at the front of the paper). This is a 1-2 page succinct summary of the research in a non-technical manner describing the program, why it was important to study, a summary of the methodology you used to analyze the program, the findings and limitations of the research, and the social policy recommendations for changing or developing the program.
2. Introduction: This will be an opening introduction to the criminal justice program that you have chosen to study, a brief description of its historical development, its goals and objectives. It should also include a description of the topic or problem for the report.
3. Literature Review: Here you will review and synthesize previous research studies and policy articles that have addressed the topic. Look back at least 10 years or farther if the topic is an old one. A minimum of 10 articles should be reviewed. Cite websites if used.

The literature review should conclude with a 1-2 paragraph summary of what was found and why the topic is relevant. What was conclusive and was inconclusive about the studies cited, what are the gaps in knowledge, and what methodological flaws plague prior work. (If possible, identify and evaluate alternative programs or policies that may be compared to the criminal justice program you have chosen to evaluate). All of this should lead into a statement of the purpose of your research- a hypothesis- and help justify the approach you take in your research design and policy analysis.

4. Design of the Evaluation: Describe *both a formative and an outcome evaluation research design* and give the rationale for choosing it. List the goals and the strategies (or operations) of the program and choose corresponding measures for each important process variable and outcome variable. Include a logic model. Describe any informants or subjects, criteria for selection, and how they were recruited. Describe the methods of data collection in detail (e.g. focus groups, survey, documents, and observation). Justify the reliability and validity of the measures that are used.

5. Data Analysis and Findings: Using data you have collected, *undertake one piece of the evaluation (e.g. either the formative or the outcome evaluation or part thereof)*. A formative evaluation involves describing the number and demographic characteristics of the clients and the providers of the program and the extent to which the program operated according to plan (e.g. break downs by race, age, gender, criminal history etc.; variation in how the program was delivered in various settings, by different staff members; attendance and drop-out rates etc.) A formative evaluation can include qualitative descriptions of how the program operates from the point of view of various stakeholders or clients. An outcome evaluation means assessing the extent to which the program achieved the results that it was aiming to achieve (i.e. with reference to its goals). The outcome evaluation might include its cost-effectiveness. You may also undertake posthoc analysis examining who seemed to benefit from what, and other, non-intended effects of the program (both beneficial and deleterious). If you have significant amounts of missing data, attempt to assess how your results have been biased by the missing data.

6. Discussion and Policy Implications: Summarize, discuss, and interpret the principle findings, speculating how these data are similar or dissimilar to previous studies and why. Note the limitations of the research and caution about the possible misuse or over generalization of the findings. Most

importantly, discuss the policy implications for how the program could be better implemented or redesigned, for whom it works best and for whom it does not seem to be suited. Evaluate the work force and budgetary implications of the changes and redesigns that you are proposing. In making proposals, be realistic and aware of what is ethically sound, economically feasible, and politically acceptable.

7. References: Follow APA format

8. Figures and Tables referred to in the text of the report.

9. Appendix. This should include your evaluation measures, and any supporting documents from the agency that describe the goals, philosophy and operations of the program that are too lengthy to include in the text.

Course Outline and Required Reading:

- Feb. 4 Introductions, course overview and expectations;
Program & policy options discussed.
Weiss Chapters 1-3.
- Feb 11 Types of evaluations- Logic models
Gaining access and dealing with stakeholders.
Patton: Part 1.
- Feb 18 Identifying program goals and measures of process.
Groups formed and final selection of program for evaluation.
Weiss Chapters 4-6.
- Feb 25 Evaluation designs
Weiss Chapters 8-10.
Article on Logic Models
- March 3 Data collection - choosing a method to find your answer
Weiss, Chapters 7.
Patton Part 2.
- Mar 10 Data analysis and presentation
Weiss, Chapters 12-13
- Mar 17 Policy analysis: Economics and Politics.
Patton, Part 3.
Article illustrating Policy analysis
- Mar 24 Policy analysis: Ethics and social actors **Mid-term Paper due**
Weiss, Chapters 14.
Patton, Part 4.
Article on Writing Effective Reports
- Mar 31 SPRING Break**
- Apr 7 Research Day – Meet with instructor during class
Draft outline of chosen topic- relevance and scope- start literature review 1-2 pages.
(Group meetings)
- Apr 14 Research Day – Draft outline of evaluation plan, data sources, methodology due. 1-2 pages
(Group meetings)

- Apr 21 Research Day - Draft data analysis plan: what data you have so far. Tables, graphs, plans 1-2
Pages (Group meetings)
- Apr 28 Research Day - First draft outline of discussion & policy implications due.
(Group meetings)
- May 5 Oral Presentations
- May 12 Oral Presentations **Draft of Final Papers for early review DUE in class**
- May 19 Oral Presentations Drafts returned in class with comments

FINAL PAPERS DUE ON DAY OF EXAM SCHEDULED FOR THIS CLASS
Wednesday, May 26 at 5:30 PM.

First Class

Please fill in and return to instructor at the end of class

Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email address: _____

Justice system background or interest:

Career goals:

Other interests: