# SSC 200

## Evaluation, Planning and Policy

S2 External 2014

*Sociology*

# Contents

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# General Information

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Convener
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Credit points
3

Prerequisites
SSC100 and SOC224 and admission to BSocSc

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This social science unit continues from where SOC224 left off, focusing on vocational application and approaches to social research for purposes of policy and planning. We cover key aspects of evaluation research, with a particular focus on practical tools (including program logic), research methodologies, report writing and the conduct of research in social science workplaces. In doing this, we link the social science foundations established in the first and second year courses with the vocational experience students receive through the internship program at third year. This develops generic and specific social science research skills required by graduates.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

# Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

> build on existing knowledge about social science applications of qualitative and quantitative methods

consider what a multi-disciplinary approach offers to our understanding of public policy and program evaluation

understand how to develop program logic models through critical analysis of public policy

discuss the impact of values, stakeholder perspectives and politics in shaping evaluation research.

identify the role of evaluation research in ongoing cycles of planning, implementation and review.

understand how to identify and approach the wide range of ethical issues raised by evaluation research

explain issues around a range of important social and/or environmental issues

apply knowledge of evaluation research and policy planning to respond to 'real world' problems

competently access, use and synthesise information. This involves organising and summarising data efficiently, concisely and clearly.

display creative and critical thinking through workshop participation and written assessments

demonstrate effective time management and self organisation skills

reflect on how you have analysed information and solved problems, incorporating lessons into future work.

participate in group work to analyse research problems and design evaluation tools

# Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Due |
|------|-----------|-----|
| Program Logic Task | 20% | 11:59pm on Sep 14 |
| Evaluation Research Proposal | 40% | 11:59pm on Nov 8 |
| Short Class Test | 30% | Week 13 |
| Course Participation | 10% | Continuing |

## Program Logic Task

Due: **11:59pm on Sep 14**
Weighting: **20%**

As program logics are one of the most widely used tools in evaluation research, this task requires you to develop a program logic for ONE of four policies and programs identified on the course iLearn page and explain the theory of change that underpins it. Alternatively, if you would

like to develop a program logic for another program, please contact the course convenor before proceeding. At the very least, the program logic should include: the issue; needs; desired outcomes; resources/inputs; activities/outputs; and actual outcomes. You should present the program logic in diagrammatic form and outline the core compenents of each aspect of the program logic in a table. You should also describe the program logic in the text of your paper and explain the theory of change that underpins it. And, you should briefly discuss the assumptions and limitations of the program logic model presented. Please note, we encourage you to choose the same policy or program for this assessment and the evaluation research proposal. Also, **the word count does not have to include the diagrammatic presentation of the program logic or the table that outlines its different elements.**

**N.B Please submit this assignment via Turnitin ONLY.**

On successful completion you will be able to:

- build on existing knowledge about social science applications of qualitative and quantitative methods
- understand how to develop program logic models through critical analysis of public policy
- explain issues around a range of important social and/or environmental issues
- competently access, use and synthesise information. This involves organising and summarising data efficiently, concisely and clearly.
- display creative and critical thinking through workshop participation and written assessments

# Evaluation Research Proposal

Due: **11:59pm on Nov 8**
Weighting: **40%**

This research assignment requires you to develop an evaluation research proposal. You should organise the proposal into the following parts: background information on policy issue; an outline of the program logic; a brief literature review; the aspects of the policy to be evaluated; a methodology; and ethical issues. When outlining the methodology, you should select one of Owen's (2006) five approaches to evaluation. The methodology should also identify the research methods that will be used and provide a justification for their selection.  This task is similar to the research proposal you developed in SOC224, but it requires you to develop a methodology for a policy or program evaluation. More details will become available on the iLearn page. Again, if you have any doubts about the suitability of a particular program or policy, please contact the course convenor.

 **N.B Please submit this assignment via Turnitin ONLY.**

On successful completion you will be able to:

- build on existing knowledge about social science applications of qualitative and quantitative methods
- understand how to develop program logic models through critical analysis of public policy
- discuss the impact of values, stakeholder perspectives and politics in shaping evaluation research.
- identify the role of evaluation research in ongoing cycles of planning, implementation and review.
- understand how to identify and approach the wide range of ethical issues raised by evaluation research
- explain issues around a range of important social and/or environmental issues
- competently access, use and synthesise information. This involves organising and summarising data efficiently, concisely and clearly.
- display creative and critical thinking through workshop participation and written assessments
- reflect on how you have analysed information and solved problems, incorporating lessons into future work.

# Short Class Test

Due: **Week 13**
Weighting: **30%**

This short class test will examine your knowledge of the content we cover in the course over the semester. It will cover materials from both the lectures and workshops. More details will become available on the course iLearn page.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- build on existing knowledge about social science applications of qualitative and quantitative methods
- identify the role of evaluation research in ongoing cycles of planning, implementation and review.
- understand how to identify and approach the wide range of ethical issues raised by evaluation research

- display creative and critical thinking through workshop participation and written assessments
- demonstrate effective time management and self organisation skills

## Course Participation

Due: **Continuing**
Weighting: **10%**

The weekly lectures and tutorials are compulsory. To meet the requirements of this course, you are required to participate in at least 80 per cent of the online workshops. As an incentive, 10 percent of your final mark will be awarded for your attendance and your participation. We will look for evidence that you have done the readings and your ability to engage respectfully with other students.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- build on existing knowledge about social science applications of qualitative and quantitative methods
- consider what a multi-disciplinary approach offers to our understanding of public policy and program evaluation
- identify the role of evaluation research in ongoing cycles of planning, implementation and review.
- understand how to identify and approach the wide range of ethical issues raised by evaluation research
- explain issues around a range of important social and/or environmental issues
- apply knowledge of evaluation research and policy planning to respond to 'real world' problems
- display creative and critical thinking through workshop participation and written assessments
- demonstrate effective time management and self organisation skills
- participate in group work to analyse research problems and design evaluation tools

# Delivery and Resources

## Lecture and workshop times

Tutorials are online

Lectures are scheduled for 11am to 1pm on Fridays in **E7B 100 Theatrette** and available online

soon after.

# Technology used

The following technologies are used in SSC200...

### Information about iLearn

Important information about the weekly schedule for SSC200, course readings and assessment are all available on the course *iLearn* page. If you do not have access, please contact IT help. You are required to check iLearn and your student email regularly for course updates and information.

### Information about Turnitin

All written assessments for SSC200 need to be submitted via Turnitin. A link to Turnitin is available via the Assessments tab on the iLearn page. Please contact the convenor if you cannot find it (do not leave it until the day of the assessment). Assignments will be marked via GradeMark and results available through Turnitin.

### Readings on e-reserve

The readings for the course should be available free-of-charge via e-Reserve or online. e-Reserve can be accessed via the Macquarie University library website.

# Changes since the last offering of this unit

The assessment structure and the course readings have changed since its second offering last year.

# Unit Schedule

| 1 | Introducing evaluation research | **No workshop** |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | Social issues, public policy & wicked problems | Introduction to SSC200 |
| 3 | Understanding the policy process | Wicked problems |
| 4 | Program logic: Policy as a theory of change | Engaging with the policy process |

| 5 | Research paradigms and evaluation research | Developing program logics |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | Designing evaluation research | Contemplating paradigms |
| 7 | Using observation & interviews in evaluations | Using evaluation approaches |
| 8 | Conducting social surveys for evaluation research | Outcomes hierarchies |
| 9 | The ethics and politics of evaluation research | Developing indicators |
| 10 | Presenting evaluation results | Contemplating ethics & politics |
| 11 | Social learning via evaluation (and beyond) | Presenting data |
| 12 | Evaluation in practice: A panel discussion | Contemplating scenarios |
| 13 | Course overview and evaluation | **No workshop** |

# Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy  http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html

Grading Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html

Grade Appeal Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

# Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty is an intergral part of the core values and principles contained in the Macquarie University Ethics Statement. Its fundamental principle is that all staff and students act with integrity in the creation, development, application and use of ideas and information. This means that:

- All academic work claimed as original is the work of the author making the claim
- All academic collaborations are acknowledged
- Academic work is not falsified in any way
- When the ideas of others are used, these ideas are acknowledged appropriately

See the link above for more information from *Policy Central*.

# University Grading Policy

The grade that a student receives will signify their overall performance in meeting the learning outcomes of the unit of study. Graded units will use the following grades

| HD | High Distinction | 85-100 |
|----|------------------|--------|
| D  | Distinction      | 75-84  |
| Cr | Credit           | 65-74  |
| P  | Pass             | 50-64  |
| F  | Fail             | 0-49   |

# Return of marked work

As per university policy, written assessments will be returned to students within three weeks of the submission date. Early assignments will not be marked early. And, the short class test held during the examination period at the end of semester will not be returned to students.

# Extensions and special consideration

In the first instance, extensions for course assessments should be discussed with the unit convenor. Medical certificates or similar documentation will be needed to support requests for extensions. If you have any doubts about whether your situation qualifies for an extension, please contact the course convenor.

Special consideration should be applied for when students experience circumstances of three (3) consecutive days duration (or longer) within a semester that prevents completion of assessment or formal examination. You should apply online to the Faculty of Arts. For an application to be valid, it must include a completed Application for Special Consideration form and all supporting documentation.

The special consideration policy is available online at: http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html

# Late Penalties

For all written assessment tasks, the Department applies the following penalties for late work that does not have an extension:

**5 per cent for the first day (or weekend if the assessment is due on Friday and submitted the following Monday); 1 per cent for each subsequent day**

# Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

# Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

# Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

# IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

# Graduate Capabilities

# Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to

demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- understand how to identify and approach the wide range of ethical issues raised by evaluation research
- apply knowledge of evaluation research and policy planning to respond to 'real world' problems
- competently access, use and synthesise information. This involves organising and summarising data efficiently, concisely and clearly.
- demonstrate effective time management and self organisation skills

## Assessment tasks

- Program Logic Task
- Evaluation Research Proposal
- Short Class Test
- Course Participation

# Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- identify the role of evaluation research in ongoing cycles of planning, implementation and review.
- display creative and critical thinking through workshop participation and written assessments
- reflect on how you have analysed information and solved problems, incorporating lessons into future work.

## Assessment tasks

- Evaluation Research Proposal

- Short Class Test

# Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- build on existing knowledge about social science applications of qualitative and quantitative methods
- consider what a multi-disciplinary approach offers to our understanding of public policy and program evaluation
- identify the role of evaluation research in ongoing cycles of planning, implementation and review.

## Assessment tasks

- Program Logic Task
- Evaluation Research Proposal
- Course Participation

# Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- understand how to develop program logic models through critical analysis of public policy
- discuss the impact of values, stakeholder perspectives and politics in shaping evaluation research.
- understand how to identify and approach the wide range of ethical issues raised by evaluation research

## Assessment tasks

- Program Logic Task
- Evaluation Research Proposal

# Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- build on existing knowledge about social science applications of qualitative and quantitative methods
- understand how to develop program logic models through critical analysis of public policy
- apply knowledge of evaluation research and policy planning to respond to 'real world' problems

## Assessment tasks

- Program Logic Task
- Evaluation Research Proposal

# Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- consider what a multi-disciplinary approach offers to our understanding of public policy and program evaluation
- apply knowledge of evaluation research and policy planning to respond to 'real world' problems
- display creative and critical thinking through workshop participation and written assessments

## Assessment tasks

- Evaluation Research Proposal

- Course Participation

# Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- explain issues around a range of important social and/or environmental issues
- competently access, use and synthesise information. This involves organising and summarising data efficiently, concisely and clearly.
- participate in group work to analyse research problems and design evaluation tools

## Assessment tasks

- Program Logic Task
- Evaluation Research Proposal
- Short Class Test
- Course Participation

# Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- understand how to develop program logic models through critical analysis of public policy
- discuss the impact of values, stakeholder perspectives and politics in shaping evaluation research.
- understand how to identify and approach the wide range of ethical issues raised by evaluation research

## Assessment tasks

- Evaluation Research Proposal

- Course Participation

## Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- understand how to develop program logic models through critical analysis of public policy
- understand how to identify and approach the wide range of ethical issues raised by evaluation research
- explain issues around a range of important social and/or environmental issues

### Assessment tasks

- Evaluation Research Proposal
- Course Participation

## Changes since First Published

| Date | Description |
| --- | --- |
| 31/07/2014 | revised schedule |
| 25/07/2014 | new due dates |