Course Description and Objectives
Program evaluation is a critical component in designing and operating effective programs. This course serves as an introduction to evaluation methodology and to the evaluation tools commonly used to assess effectiveness of a wide variety of programs and policies. There is no specific policy or sector focus – the evaluation tools learned in this class can be used in all policy areas and by public (government) and private (foundation and other) funders as well as by public and private sector program managers.

You will become familiar with the concepts, methods and applications of evaluation research; learn how to read evaluation research critically; understand how to use evaluation results to anticipate or improve program performance; and be able to propose an appropriate evaluation plan to assess the implementation and effectiveness of a program.

Course Structure
The class includes lectures, readings, discussion, and group consultation sessions and class presentations. You are strongly encouraged to relate the general material of the course to your specific policy interests throughout the course and especially in the final paper where you are asked to propose an evaluation of a program of your choosing. Class participation is critical as class discussion and input is an essential aspect of this course and the learning process associated with it.

Readings
The required textbook for this course is:


This textbook is very practical in nature and has a number of empirical articles integrated into its chapters – please read those articles carefully and be prepared to discuss them in class.
An optional textbook is:


In addition to the main textbook, there are additional readings, websites and tutorials that you are required to read/complete. These are listed in the Syllabus and are usually available in BlackBoard AND online (addresses provided). Please let me know if you have trouble locating anything online as addresses may change.

Students should read everything listed but are encouraged to prioritize and develop and/or make use of their skills in quickly scanning the readings. In general, the readings are listed in order of importance. However, students should always read the empirical articles (actual examples of evaluations) as they will form the basis for class discussion and are essential for concretizing the material.

Course Requirements
Class preparation and participation are critical for this “tool-based” course. You should read the required chapters and articles in advance and be prepared to discuss and apply them in class. There are four written (graded) assignments (see below) that are due in class on the days listed in the syllabus and should be informed by the readings for that day or from the previous week. In other words, read everything first, then write the assignment. There are also a series (3) of feedback exercises that are required (but not graded) – these are meant to get you thinking about particular aspects of the course (possible programs to evaluate) and/or practice doing particular evaluation activities (namely critiquing evaluations and conducting a literature review) and are not graded as my main goal in requiring them is to give students practice in these areas as well as some feedback if needed.

In addition to these written assignments, there is an in-class, mid-term examination (take home) and a final evaluation design paper. And while class participation is important throughout the course, at the end of the course, you must present your evaluation proposal and be prepared to defend your evaluation design.

Writing Assignments – Preliminary Steps in Writing the Final Design Paper
Short, thought pieces in which you are asked to apply the course readings to the development of your evaluation design paper. These assignments serve not only to encourage you to think about your final paper throughout the course, but to struggle with real-world applications of what you are learning in the readings and lectures. They are due in class. You are expected to get some things “wrong” in these exercises – that’s an important part of the learning process as these assignments often ask you to do something that you haven’t had sufficient time to fully understand or process. Don’t be concerned if the class lecture and discussion makes you realize that “missed the boat” in your writing assignment. I will give constructive feedback on each assignment.

#1 (Due Feb 4): Select a program (ideally the one for which you will develop an evaluation design in your final paper) and indicate the problem to be addressed by the program, the degree to which the need for the program has been established, the intended beneficiaries or targets of the program, the intended benefits, and most importantly the program theory underlying the program. Draw a logic model representing the program theory and/or describe/depict the causal model.
[1 page, single-spaced.]
#2 (Due Feb 18): Using your selected program (again, ideally the one that will be the focus of your final paper), describe both an experimental and also a quasi-experimental research design that you think could be used to “evaluate” the impact of the program. Describe the goal of each evaluation and then discuss the merits of the design you’ve proposed for achieving that goal. Identify and describe three plausible threats to internal validity and then discuss the degree to which each design controls for or deals with each of these threats. [1 page, single-spaced]

#3 (Due Apr 1): For the program you’ve selected and the design you developed in assignment #2 (or if you’ve come up with an even better research design, use that design), describe the measures, data collection sources and strategies, and sampling procedures you would use to implement the evaluation design. Refer to the empirical articles you’ve read for guidelines on the format and how much detail to provide. [1 page, single-spaced]

#4 (Due Apr 22): This writing assignment is essentially a summary of the three previous assignments. You should provide a one-page outline of your entire evaluation design proposal. This final version allows you to improve upon your earlier attempts (as demonstrated in the first three assignments). Describe the program, the theory underlying the program, the research question your evaluation addresses, the research design, the outcome and input measures, data collection, and sampling procedures, and finally what the results from this evaluation will tell us about the program. You will be presenting this proposal and therefore should be prepared to defend your proposal. [1 page, bulleted and/or outline format]

Each assignment is worth 5 points for a total of 20 points or 20% of your final grade.

Feedback Assignments – Practice and/or Put it Out There to Get Feedback
3 assignments in which you are asked to put some stuff down on paper both to make you think and/or get practice and also for me to see how students are doing and/or what feedback and/or additional teaching would be helpful. Each is required and if not submitted will count toward your class participation grade.

#1 (Due Jan 18): Simply start thinking out loud (on paper) about which programs, kinds of programs you might want to choose for your final paper in which you have to design an evaluation of a program (or policy or intervention or curricula or legislation etc etc). This is a chance to get feedback and/or ask me questions directly – would this program work? will I know enough about this program to evaluate it? does this count as a program? [1/2 page, single-spaced.]

#2 (Due Mar 4): Using the template provided, critique 2 of the 3 empirical chapters included in the Eval in Practice book (Chs. 17, 18, 19).

#3 (Due Apr 8): Using the table provided as a guide, find (most likely by using electronic database searching strategies) at least six empirical articles that are relevant to your evaluation and summarize them – i.e., conduct a brief literature review.
Mid-Term Examination (Mar 11)
The Mid-Term exam is in class, the week before Spring Recess. This exam focuses on research design and internal validity and requires that you develop designs for particular evaluation scenarios. I’ll email you and post the exam questions by 3 p.m. on the 11th and you have until 11:59 p.m. the next day (Thursday, March 12) to take the examination and email your responses back to me. For each evaluation scenario, you will be asked to come up with the strongest design possible given the situation and then discuss the relative merits of that design in terms of controlling for threats to internal validity.

The mid-term is worth 30 points in total or 30% of your final grade.

Final Paper: Evaluation Design (May 3)
This is the culmination of the course and the opportunity for you to learn the most about program evaluation. The paper builds on the four writing assignments as well as any feedback you may have received from me and/or from your fellow students during the last class. You must select a program and then design a comprehensive evaluation plan for that program. You are strongly encouraged to talk with me about this paper. Good evaluations are seldom developed in isolation – feedback from others always helps make a good evaluation even better (which is why you’ve been asked to write assignments related to this paper throughout the course AND will have “workshopped” with your fellow students before completion). This is a very difficult paper to write and you should be thinking about and working on this paper throughout the course.

The final paper is worth 40 points in total or 40% of your final grade. It is due by midnight on Friday, May 3rd either via e-mail or hard copy in my mailbox (adjunct mailboxes on 3rd floor of Wagner, #104). Late papers will not be accepted.

Class Participation
Students are encouraged to actively engage with the course materials. To that end, every class will include opportunities for class discussion and students are strongly encouraged to ask questions and interrupt lectures whenever they need clarification. Students are invaluable resources for each other and provide insights that go far beyond what this one professor can provide. Class 12 (Apr 15) and the final class (Class 14, Apr 29) will more formally require consultation and participation: In order to review what we’ve learned throughout the course, get a sense of the breadth of evaluation approaches and solutions, and get feedback from your like-minded colleagues, you will be required to present your evaluation proposal to a smaller group of students working on similar topics and then the workgroups will summarize and present the issues and types of designs used by the group at the next class session. Students proposing to evaluate programs in a particular sector or area will “workshop” their proposal within the group, get input or feedback on issues they are struggling with, and give input and feedback to others. This will occur during the 3rd to last class of the course to give you plenty of time to work recommendations into your final paper. Then two weeks later each workgroup will summarize the breadth of designs, measures, data collection strategies, sampling approaches, etc used with the group and discuss some of the central issues specific to the topic or sector area of focus during the final class. These consultations and presentations are guaranteed to help you with your final proposal!

Class participation is worth 10 points in total or 10% of your final grade (these final two sessions will count towards your total class participation score).
# 2009 Program Analysis and Evaluation Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>In-Class Case Discussion: <em>Brooklyn Family Defense Project</em></th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course Overview of Program Analysis and Evaluation</td>
<td>“Naïve” questions about evaluating BFDP</td>
<td>NONE</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>Written (Graded) Assignment: Describe Your Program’s Theory/Theory of Change – Sketch a Logic Model</td>
<td>What Does the Program Do? • Process Evaluation • Formative Evaluation • Program Monitoring and Quality Improvement/Assurance • Implementation Analysis</td>
<td>o Outline a process evaluation for BFDP o Describe current program monitoring, QA efforts o Discuss key areas to include in implementation analysis</td>
<td>WHO Process Evaluation Workbook BB or <a href="http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/attachements.cfm/att_5866_EN_4_process_evaluations.pdf">www.emcdda.europa.eu/attachements.cfm/att_5866_EN_4_process_evaluations.pdf</a> EVAL in PRACTICE: pp. 45-54</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cause and Effect (Internal Validity) How Isolate the Impact of the Program? • Experimental Designs</td>
<td>Design a random assignment experiment to evaluate effects of BFDP</td>
<td>EVAL in PRACTICE: pp. 55-106</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Written (Graded) Assignment: Outline an experimental and a quasi-</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental Designs</td>
<td>o Design a quasi experiment to evaluate effects of BFDP o How many comparison groups can we identify?</td>
<td>EVAL in PRACTICE: pp. 107-150</td>
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<td>Class #</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Assignment Due</td>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>In-Class Case Discussion: Brooklyn Family Defense Project</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mar 4</td>
<td>Feedback Assignment: Using template, critique 2 of 3 articles in Part VII (Ch. 17, 18, 19) in Eval in Practice</td>
<td>Critique Eval in Practice Articles (Ch. 17, 18, 19) Design “best” evaluation for BFDP</td>
<td>o Design “best” evaluation</td>
<td>EVAL in PRACTICE: pp. 241-296</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 11</td>
<td>MID-TERM EXAMINATION</td>
<td>Evaluation Design and Internal Validity</td>
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<td>33-hour Take Home Exam</td>
<td>Questions Released 3 pm, Exam Due Back Thursday, March 12 by 11:59 pm</td>
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| 9       | Mar 25   | Written (Graded) Assignment: Outline Possible Measures, Data Collection, and Sample (Sampling) for your Evaluation | External Validity Measurement  
- Reliability  
- Construct Validity | o How generalizable are results from an evaluation of BFDP?  
o What measures should be included in an evaluation? | EVAL in PRACTICE: pp. 31 – 44 |
|         |          | Preparing to Collect Data: BB or                                               | Methods for Collecting Data BB                                          |                                                          |                          |
|         |          | http://www.neirtec.org/evaluation/PDFs/PreparingtoCollect2.pdf                | National Quality Center, Quality Academy Measurement and Data Tutorials (Tutorials 7, 8, 9) |                                                          |                          |
|         |          | http://nationalqualitycenter.org/home/quality-academy.cfm                     | Program Development and Evaluation Sampling Guide BB or                 |                                                          |                          |
| 10      | Apr 1    | Feedback Assignment: Using template, find and summarize at least 6 empirical articles with findings relevant to your Evaluation | Methods of Measurement and Data Collection  
Sampling and Power (Effect Size and Sample Size) | o How collect data?  
o How good are available measures?  
o What measures need to be developed?  
o How big an effect can we expect? What’s the minimum sample size? | EVAL in PRACTICE: pp. 225-240 |
| 15      | Apr 8    | Cost Benefit/Effectiveness Analysis Meta Analysis, Systematic Review, Synthesis |                                                                  | o What are some questions about BFDP and it’s impact that are best addressed via qualitative research?  
o How much does BFDP “cost”? | EVAL in PRACTICE: pp. 179-208 |
| Class # | Date | Assignment Due | Topics | In-Class Case Discussion: 
Brooklyn Family Defense Project | Reading |
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<td></td>
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<td>evaluation.</td>
<td>o How “cost” benefits of BFDP?</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Apr 15</td>
<td>Workshop Proposals</td>
<td>Topic-Specific Workgroups will Review/Consult (Workshop) Proposals Get Answers to Questions from Your Informed Peers Prepare to Summarize Issues/Solutions for Presentation Following Week <em>(Workgroups Can Meet in Person or Online)</em></td>
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| 13 | Apr 22 | **Written (Graded) Assignment:** Final Outline of Evaluation o Research Questions o Design o Measures/Data Collection o Sample/Sampling/Power o Strengths/Limitations o Implications | Real World Evaluation Politics, Controversy Research with Human Subjects Regulations Ethical Obligations | o What if positive evaluation results are ignored by the city? o How support an argument to replicate BFDP? Is it replicable? o What if an evaluation produced negative results? | **NYU Human Subjects Tutorial:** [http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/tutorial/](http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/tutorial/)  
**NYU Human Subjects Application:**  
BB or [http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/docs/application.doc](http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/docs/application.doc)  
**EVAL in PRACTICE:** pp. 295-350  
**Four Lessons from Evaluating Controversial Programs (Knickman)** BB |
| 14 | Apr 29 | Workgroup Presentations | Overview of Programs (needs address, approaches, theories) Evaluation Challenges and Solutions (issues related to design, measurement, sampling etc) | | |
| May 3 (Fri) | | **FINAL PAPER DUE**  
by midnight Friday via email  
NO LATE PAPER ACCEPTED! | | |