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Institute for Education and Social Policy
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phone: 212 998-5817 fax: 212 995-4565
office hours: Wednesdays 3:30 – 5:30 pm or by appointment

Course Pre-requisites
Students must have completed (or waived) P11.1011 (Statistical Methods) and P11.1022 (Introduction to Public Policy). This course builds on these introductory courses and lays the foundation for P11.2875 (Estimating Impacts)

Course Description and Objectives
Program evaluation is a critical component in designing and operating effective programs. Evaluations supply information to program managers and policymakers that can assist them in making decisions about which programs to fund, modify, expand or eliminate. Evaluation can be an accountability tool for program managers and funders. This course serves as an introduction to evaluation methodology and evaluation tools commonly used to assess publicly funded programs. Students 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 lecture, readings, and discussion. There is no specific policy or sector focus to this course, as evaluation tools are used in all policy areas and by public (government) and private (foundation) funders as well as by public and private sector program managers. Students are encouraged to relate the general material of the course to their specific policy interests.

Readings
The required textbook for this course is:

An optional and recommended text is:


Both books are on reserve at Bobst. In addition to the required text, you will need to read one chapter from the optional textbook and 18 readings, which are mostly articles. Most of the articles are available through Bobst electronic journals. The readings and one chapter of the RFL textbook that are not available for downloading are on the file cabinet outside my office and three sets of copies will be made available in class. There are also 21 additional optional readings, all of which can be downloaded.

There is a sizable and growing body of literature, which deals with program evaluation and policy analysis. The journal *Evaluation Review* (previously *Evaluation Quarterly*) is an especially rich source on the subject, as is the *Evaluation Studies Review Annual* (Sage, more or less annually). *Evaluation Practice, Evaluation and Program Planning, New Directions for Program Evaluation* and *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* are also recommended. There are also evaluation journals for specific fields, including *Evaluation and the Health Professions, Evaluation in Education*, and *Evaluation and Human Services*.

**Course requirements**

Class preparation and participation are important for this “tool based” course. Students need to read required text and articles in advance and be prepared to participate in class discussion. In addition to class participation, students will write three brief memos, take one in-class exam, and write a final evaluation design paper. *Note: the following descriptions are not enough to complete the assignments adequately. More detailed instructions for each assignment is posted will follow.*

**Midterm Examination**

There will be a take-home essay style examination due *March 10*.

**Program Statement**

February 17

Students will submit a short (1 - 2 pages) description of a selected program, indicating the problem to be addressed by the intervention, the intended beneficiaries or targets of the program, the intended benefits, and the causal model/program theory underlying the program. This memo is a preliminary step in writing the final design paper.

**Measurement Memo**

March 31

Using the program model developed in the first memo, students will specify the research questions, operational definitions, and specific measures they would use in an evaluation of the program.

**OPTIONAL Evaluation Review (for extra credit)**

April 21

It is important to become a good consumer of evaluations, if not a good evaluator oneself. Review one of three selected evaluation articles. In 2 - 3 pages, students will summarize the type of evaluation described, its design and methods, and write a critique of the evaluation.
Final Paper: Impact Evaluation Design

The final paper builds on earlier assignments. Students will design a comprehensive evaluation plan for their chosen programs. The proposal will focus on outcome or impact evaluation but will include a brief section on process evaluation as well.

Relative Weight of Assignments

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two memos</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Course Schedule

Part I: Planning and Implementation

January 20

Class 1: Introduction to the course and the field of program evaluation; stakeholders.
- Weiss Chapters 1 & 2
- Optional: RFL Chapters 1 & 2

January 27

Class 2: Pre-program evaluation activities: needs assessment
- Review Weiss Chapter 2
- Optional: RFL Chapter 5

February 3

Class 3: Explicating and assessing program theory
- Weiss Chapter 3
- Optional: RFL Chapter 5

February 10 Class 4: Formative evaluation, program monitoring, and implementation analysis
- Optional: RFL Chapter 6

Part II: Measuring the Impacts of Programs

February 17 Class 5: Outcome/Impact Evaluation: Design, Internal and External Validity
- Weiss Chapter 8
- Program memo due

February 24: Class 6: Outcome/Impact evaluation: randomized experimental design
- Weiss Chapter 9
- Optional: RFL Chapter 8
- Program memo returned
- Potential midterm questions handed out

**March 3**

**Class 7: Outcome/Impact evaluation: quasi-experimental designs with comparison groups**
- RFL Chapter 9 pp 265-286***

**March 10**

**Class 8: Formulating Research Questions and Measurement**
- Weiss, Chapter 6
- Midterm answers due
March 24

Class 9: Formulating Research Questions and Measurement (continued)

Full coverage and reflexive designs
- Weiss, review Chapter 8 pp. 191-199
- RFL Chapter 9 pp. 289-295***

March 31

Class 10: Full coverage and reflexive designs (continued)

Sampling
- Babbie, E. (1992). The Practice of Social Research, Chapter 8***
- *Measurement memo due*
- *Mid-term exams returned*

April 7

Class 11: Sampling (continued)

Preparation for debates
- *Measurement memo returned*

April 14

Class 12: Evaluations in the real world: context, politics, and ethics
- Weiss, Chapter 14
- Optional: RFL Chapter 12

April 21

Class 13: Two Debates & Discussion
Evaluation Synthesis

- Weiss Chapter 10, pp 235 - 244

**OPTIONAL Evaluation review memo due (for extra credit)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>Class 14: Two Debates &amp; Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>Final Paper Due</td>
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