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 *The American Journal of Evaluation* and *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 will be posted.*

**Mid-Term Examination**

The Mid-Term exam is in class, the week before Spring Recess. I’ll email you and post the exam questions by 3 p.m. and you have until 11:59 p.m. the next day to take the examination and email your responses back to me.

**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 Program selection/theory of change:** Select a program 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.

**#2 Design Memo:** Using your selected program, 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.

**#3 Measurement Memo:** 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.

**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.

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

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.

**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!
Relative Weight of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Schedule

Part I: Planning and Implementation

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

Week 2: Pre-program evaluation activities: needs assessment
  Optional:
  - RFL Chapter 5

Week 3: Explicating and assessing program theory
- Weiss Chapter 3
  Optional:
  - RFL Chapter 5
Week 4: Formative evaluation, program monitoring, and implementation analysis


Optional
- RFL Chapter 6

Part II: Measuring the Impacts of Programs

Week 5: Outcome/Impact Evaluation: Design, Internal and External Validity

- Weiss Chapter 8

Week 6: Outcome/Impact evaluation: randomized experimental design

- Weiss Chapter 9

Optional
- RFL Chapter 8
Week 7: Outcome/Impact evaluation: quasi-experimental designs with comparison groups

- RFL Chapter 9 pp 265-286***

Optional

Week 8: Mid-term

Week 9: Spring Break – No Class

Week 10: Formulating Research Questions and Measurement

- Weiss, Chapter 6

Optional

Week 11: Sampling

- Babbie, E. (1992). The Practice of Social Research, Chapter 7***

Week 12: Full coverage and reflexive designs/other designs

- Weiss, review Chapter 8 pp. 191-199, Chapter 10, pp. 235-244

**Optional**
- RFL Chapter 10

**Week 13:** **Workshops**
- Get Answers to Questions from Your Informed Peers
- Prepare to Summarize Issues/Solutions for Presentation Following Week

**Week 14: Evaluations in the real world: context, politics, and ethics**
- Weiss, Chapter 14
- NYU Human Subjects Application: [http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/docs/application.doc](http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/docs/application.doc)

**Optional:**
- RFL Chapter 12
Week 15: Workgroup Presentations

- Overview of Programs (needs address, approaches, theories)
- Evaluation Challenges and Solutions (issues related to design, measurement, sampling etc)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/19</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/26</td>
<td>Needs Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>Program Theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>Formative Evaluation</td>
<td>Program Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5*</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Validity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/23</td>
<td>Experimental Designs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>Quasi-Experimental Designs</td>
<td>Review questions for midterm (handout)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring Break – No Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3/23</td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>Design Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3/30</td>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>Other Designs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13*</td>
<td>4/13</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Measurement Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>Context and Ethics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15*</td>
<td>4/27</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Extra Credit Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16*</td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>