To contact professor: Jodi.Paroff@nyu.edu, Phone: (973) 934-7214
Adjunct mailbox: 57 (in the Puck Building)
Office hrs: Wed 4:15-6:15pm Adjunct Office 3047 or by appointment
(Please use email to request an appointment in advance or to notify the professor of any papers left in the adjunct mailbox.)

Course Pre-requisites: You 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 (Evaluation of Health and Social Programs).

Course Description and Objectives: Program evaluation is a critical part of 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 taking this course can expect to

- 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. You are encouraged to relate the general material of the course to your specific policy interests.

Readings: The required textbook for this course is:

An optional and recommended text is:


In addition to the required text, you will need to read one chapter from the optional textbook and many journal articles. All of the articles are available through Bobst electronic journals and I will make them available on blackboard. The 4 readings that are chapters from books and are not available for downloading can be downloaded directly from NYU Classes.

There is a sizable 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. You need to read required text and articles in advance and be prepared to participate in class discussion. In addition to class participation, you will: write two brief memos, complete one take-home exam, create a poster with your group for peer review, and write a final evaluation design paper. It is expected that you are familiar with NYU’s honor code and will uphold the university’s standards for academic honesty in all of your work.

**Attendance:** No grades are given for attendance, but you should notify the professor of any days you will be missing. You are responsible for any missing information and meeting all assignment deadlines during your absences.

**Program Statement Memo, due Feb 27, (5%)**
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.

**Midterm Examination:** Take-home essay style exam due Mar 27, (40%)

**Measurement Memo, due Apr 10, (5%)**
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) due May 8**
It is important to become a good evaluator and a good consumer of evaluations. Review one of three selected evaluation articles. In 2 - 3 pages, summarize the type of evaluation described, its design and methods, and write a critique of the evaluation.

**Poster Sessions & Feedback due Apr 24 and May 1, (10%)**
Each group will create a poster that presents the evaluation design proposal of their final paper/project. Posters will include program theory and descriptions and outcome measures from earlier assignments, as well as design rationale, and data collection strategies. Sharing with your peers will be emphasized.

**Final Paper: Impact Evaluation Design, due May 17, (35%)**
The final paper builds on earlier assignments. You will design a comprehensive evaluation plan/design for your chosen program. The design 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>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster session</td>
<td>10%</td>
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*Note: the above descriptions are not enough to complete the assignments adequately. More detailed instructions for each assignment will follow.*

**Course Schedule**

**Part I: Planning and Implementation**

**Jan 30**

**Class 1: Introduction to the course and the field of program evaluation; stakeholders; ethical considerations**
- Weiss Chapters 1 & 2
- Oakes, J.M. (2002). Risks and wrongs in social science research: an evaluator’s guide to the IRB. (pp. 443-454)

**Feb 6**

**Class 2: Pre-program evaluation activities: needs assessment**
- Review Weiss Chapter 2 (Purpose of eval)
Feb 13

**Class 3: Explicating and assessing program theory**

- Weiss Chapter 3 (Understanding the program)
- **Optional:** RFL Chapter 5
- **Optional:** Cooksy, G. & Kelly (2001). The program logic model as an integrative framework for a multi-method evaluation.

Feb 20

**Class 4: Formative evaluation, program monitoring, and implementation analysis**

- Weiss Chapter 11 (Qualitative Methods)

**Part II: Measuring the Impacts of Programs**

Feb 27

**Class 5: Outcome/Impact evaluation: design, internal and external validity**

- Weiss Chapter 8 (Design of evaluation, pp 180-214)
- [http://www.ted.com/talks/esther_duflo_social_experiments_to_fight_poverty.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/esther_duflo_social_experiments_to_fight_poverty.html)
- **Program memo due**

Mar 6

**Class 6: Outcome/Impact evaluation: randomized experimental design**

- Weiss Chapter 9
- Seron, C., Ryzin, G.V., Frankel, M., & Kovath, J. (2001). The impact of legal counsel on outcomes for poor tenants in New York City's housing court: results of a randomized experiment.


- Optional: RFL Chapter 8

- Program memo returned, midterm question pool shared

Mar 13  Class 7: Outcome/Impact evaluation: quasi-experimental designs with comparison groups
- RFL Chapter 9 pp 265-286

- Actual midterm questions released

Mar 20  NYU closed for Spring Break

Mar 27  Class 8: Formulating research questions and measurement
- Weiss, Chapter 6 (Measures)
- Litwin, M.S. (2003). How to Assess and Interpret Survey Psychometrics, Ch 2 (Reliability) & 3 (Validity)

- Mid-term answers due

Apr 3  Class 9: Measurement, continued

- Mid-terms returned

Apr 10  Class 10: Sampling
- Babbie, E. (1992). The Practice of Social Research, Chapter 8

- Measurement memo due
Apr 17  
**Class 11: Strengthening full coverage and reflexive designs**
- Weiss, review Chapter 8 pp. 191-199
- RFL Chapter 9 pp. 289-295
- *Measurement memo returned*

Apr 24  
**Class 12: Final review of research design & Ethical Considerations in Program Evaluation (continued)**
- Weiss, Chapter 14 (Ethics)
- Bluestein, J. (2005). Toward a more public discussion of the ethics of federal social program evaluation. (pp. 823-840)
- Oakes, J.M. (2002). Risks and wrongs in social science research: an evaluator’s guide to the IRB. (pp. 460-467)
- *Poster Session I & Poster critique and feedback*

May 1  
**Class 13: Ethical Case Studies**
- *Poster Session II & Poster critique and feedback*

May 8  
**Class 14: Evaluation Synthesis/Meta-Analysis**
- Weiss Chapter 10, pp 235 – 244 (good design)

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

**May 17**  
**Final Paper Due**