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. While the evaluation tools learned in this class can be used in all policy arenas – by public (government) and private (foundation and other) funders, as well as by public and private sector program managers, and in developed and developing countries – this section will focus specifically on examples and applications from development economics.

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 written assignments and 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 are an essential aspect of this course and the learning process associated with it.

Readings
The required textbook for this course is:


This is a classic textbook. One advantage over Bamberger is that each chapter is more closely linked to a single topic, which in turn relate quite closely to our lectures.

A supplemental textbook for this course is:


This textbook is very practical in nature and can be read on multiple levels – read the introduction to get a sense of how the book was designed and organized. There are a number of empirical cases integrated into its chapters

An optional textbook is:


Also a classic reference.
In addition to the main textbook, there are additional readings and web material that you are required to read/complete. These are listed in the Syllabus and are usually available on our course web directory. Students should read the required readings in detail, and are encouraged to prioritize, scan, and digest all the readings.

**Course Requirements**

Class participation, **10%**.

Three writing exercises, **ungraded**.

Four written assignments (one submission per group), 3.5% each for a total of **15%**.

An in-class group presentation **10%**.

Peer-evaluation of your participation in and contribution to the group, **10%**.

An individually written evaluation design paper based on the group work, **30%**.

Take-home midterm, **25%**.

**Group Work**

Group work is an important element of this course. In the real world, evaluations are always developed in a group setting and by interacting with a range of evaluators, stakeholders, and policymakers. Based on a survey that I will distribute electronically, I will form groups based on common interests (number and size of groups to be determined). As a group, you will complete the writing assignments and writing exercises – essentially selecting a program to evaluate and working your way through to a detailed evaluation design. The group work will culminate in an in-class group presentation of the evaluation design. Based on the material the group has prepared, each group member will individually write up an evaluation design as a final paper.

**Peer Evaluation**

At the end of the semester, each individual will submit an evaluation of his or her group members, on a 0 (worst) to 10 (best) scale. You should consider how well prepared an individual came to group meetings and their contribution to the final output. Your group participation grade will be an average of your peers' evaluation of you, dropping the lowest and highest score.

**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 presentation and paper throughout the course, but to struggle with real-world applications of what you are learning in the readings and lectures. Assignments are to be worked on in groups, and a joint write-up is due in class on the days listed in the syllabus. Assignments should be informed by the readings for that day or from the previous week. In other words, read everything first, then work on the assignment.

**Writing Assignment 1 – Analyze the Program** (Due Sept 17): Select a program (ideally the one for which you will develop an evaluation design in your presentation and 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]**

**Writing Assignment 2 – Design an Evaluation** (Due Oct 8): 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. **[1 page, single-spaced]**

**Writing Assignment 3 – Measuring Variables** (Due Nov 12): For the program you have selected and the design you developed in assignment 2 (or if you’ve come up with an even better research design since then, use that design), describe the measures, data collection sources and strategies, and sampling
procedures you would use to implement the evaluation design. Refer to empirical articles for guidance on the format and how much detail to provide. [1 page, single-spaced]

Writing Assignment 4 – Full Evaluation Outline -- (Due December 3): 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]

Exercises
Three individual assignments in which you are asked to commit writing to paper both to make you think and to help you identify what you’re struggling with. Each is required but is not submitted and not graded. They will aid your individual thinking, and then can be used as an input into group discussions. You don't have to agree as a group on these. Indeed, some degree of disagreement and discussion can be very productive.

Exercise 1 – Find a Program - (Due Sept 10): Simply start thinking out loud (and eventually 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 figure out what “program” you want to spend the rest of the semester thinking about.

Exercise 2 – Literature Review - (Due Oct 22): Find (using electronic database searching strategies) at least six empirical articles that are relevant to your evaluation and summarize the overall “state of the art” based on those articles – what do we know about this topic?

Exercise 3 – Critique an Evaluation Study -- (Due Nov 26): Fully critique one of the empirical articles you found in your literature review.

Midterm Examination (Oct 29)
The midterm exam is take home, ideally to be completed the night of October 29. I will email you and post the exam questions by 3 p.m. on the 29th and you have until 5 p.m. the next day (Wednesday, October 30) to take the examination and submit your responses back to me (hard copy to be turned in at the Puck Building – electronic copies won't be accepted). That gives you a day but you shouldn’t need more than 2 hours or so to actually write the exam and an hour or so for thinking about the exam prior to writing.

Final Presentation (Dec 3 / 10) and Paper (Dec 17): Evaluation Design
This is the culmination of the course and the opportunity for you to learn the most about program evaluation. The presentation and paper build 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 consult with me about this. Good evaluations are seldom developed in isolation – feedback from others always helps make a good evaluation even better. This is a challenging assignment and you should be thinking about and working on this throughout the course. The group will present its evaluation design in class (on December 3rd or 10th). Then each group member will individually write up the design into a paper (the material will clearly overlap within a group, but the write-up must be individual). There is a 10 page maximum for the paper (with 12 point font and one inch margins). The final paper is due on Tuesday 17 December. Late papers will not be accepted.

Class Participation
Students are encouraged to actively engage with the course materials. To that end, students should read the required class materials in advance of every class, skim supplemental material where possible or when interested, and be prepared to discuss them. Every class will include opportunities for class discussion and students are
strongly encouraged to ask and answer questions. Students are invaluable resources for each other and provide insights that go far beyond what this one professor can provide. Students will be graded on their participation; this reflects not just the frequency of class contributions, but also their quality, relevance, precision, and originality. If I haven't heard your thoughts in class for a while, I may call on you.

Expectations
Preparation before class: come prepared for each class having read the assigned material carefully.

Absenteeism, punctuality, and in-class conduct: You are expected to attend all classes, and arrive on time. Systematic tardiness, disruptive behavior (including side conversations and use of your cell phone) will negatively impact your class participation grade. If you miss a class due to unavoidable circumstances, please contact another member of the class and ask him or her about what was covered in class.

Laptops and other technologies: To make the classroom environment as engaging as possible for everyone, I ask that you use laptops and tablet computers only for note taking. Please refrain from using these devices and cell phones for texting, web browsing, and social media. These are distracting not only for your fellow students and me, but also you! I will post my slides the evening before each class, allowing you to focus on and participate in the class discussion

Key dates
September 10: Exercise 1 due.
September 17: Assignment 1 due.
October 8: Assignment 2 due.
October 22: Exercise 2 due.
October 29: Midterm exam.
November 12: Assignment 3 due.
November 26: Exercise 3 due.
December 3: Assignment 4 due (you can submit earlier if you want more time to respond to feedback).
December 3 / 10: Workgroup presentations.
Legend
- Required reading.
  - Supplemental reading: readings mentioned in the lecture that you may wish to glance at before the lecture or read after the lecture.
    - Extra reading: additional readings listed on the syllabus, but not specifically discussed in class; for further reading if interested.

The course web directory at http://users.nber.org/~rdehejia/eval/ is organized by lecture and will provide copies of most readings mentioned in the syllabus under these three headings, except for required and supplemental textbooks mentioned above. For some lectures there is also a sub-directory labeled “yet more”: these are further readings that related to our topic that you can pursue if you have an interest in the topic.

Meeting 1: Sept 3
Topic: Introduction to the Course, Overview of Program Evaluation
Assignment due: None.
Readings:
- Rossi, Chapter 1.

Meeting 2: Sept 10
Topic:
- Needs Assessment: Understanding the Need for the Program, Engaging Stakeholders
- Understanding the Program: Program Theory, Theory of Change, Logic Models
Assignment due: Exercise 1: Describe a (some) program(s) you might want to evaluate.
Readings:
- Rossi, Chapters 4 and 5.
- CDC, pp. 21-36.
  - Bamberger, Chapter 1 (pp. 17-34), Chapter 2 (pp. 35-50), and Chapter 16, pp 373-379.
  - Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide

Meeting 3: Sept 17
Topic: What Does the Program Do?
- Process Evaluation
- Formative Evaluation
- Program Monitoring and Quality Improvement
- Implementation Analysis
Assignment due: Assignment 1: Describe Your Program – Explain it’s theory of change and sketch a logic Model

Readings
- Rossi, Chapter 6.
  - WHO Process Evaluation Workbook
  - Bamberger: Chapter 9 (pp. 169 – 193) and Chapter 8 (pp. 156-168).

Meeting 4: Sept 24
Assignment due: none.
Topic: Outcome evaluation: Cause and Effect (Internal Validity);
  - How Isolate the Impact of the Program?
  - Experimental Designs

Readings:
- Rossi, Chapters 7 (pp. 204-213) and Chapter 8.
  - Bamberger, Chapter 7 (pp. 132-144) and Chapter 10 (pp. 194-208).

Meeting 5: Oct 1
Topic: Quasi-experimental Designs
Assignment due: none.
Readings:
- Rossi, Chapter 9.
- Dehejia, Montgomery, and Morduch (2010). "Do Interest Rates Matter: Loan Demand in the Dhaka Slums".
- Galasso, Emanuela, “With their effort and one opportunity”: Alleviating extreme poverty in Chile, manuscript.
- Litschig, Stephan, "Intergovernmental Transfers and Elementary Education: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Brazil," manuscript.
  - Bamberger, Chapter 10 (pp. 209-240).
Meeting 6 Oct 8
Topic: Non-Experimental Designs: Matching, Reflexive Designs
Assignment due: Assignment 2: Outline both an experimental and a quasi-experimental design to evaluate program.
Readings:
- Bamberger: Ch 12, pp 266-277 and Ch 16, pp 373 – 391.
- Litschig, Stephan, "Rules vs. political discretion: evidence from constitutionally guaranteed transfers to local governments," manuscript.

Meeting 7 Oct 22
Topic: Review of research designs.
Assignment due: Exercise 2: Search, find, and broadly summarize > 6 evaluation studies
Readings:
- International Finance Corporation. Innovations in impact evaluation in IFC. Monitor: Results measurement for advisory services.
- Bamberger, Appendix 1, pp 403 -410 and Appendix 2, pp 411 – 416

Meeting 8 Oct 29
Take-home Midterm

Meeting 9 Nov 5
Topic: External Validity Measurement
- Reliability
- Construct Validity
- Types of Variables
- Indicators
Assignment due: none.
Readings:
- Rossi, Chapter 7 (pp. 213-232).
- Bamberger, Chapter 5 (pp. 88-111) and Chapter 11 (pp. 240-262).
- Preparing to Collect Data:
- National Quality Center, Quality Academy Measurement and Data Tutorials (Tutorials 7, 8, 9)

Meeting 10 Nov 12
Topic: Data Collection, Sampling and Power (Effect Size and Sample Size), Overview of Data Analysis.
Assignment due: Assignment 3: Outline possible measures, data collection, and sample (sampling) for your Evaluation

Readings:
- Rossi, Chapter 10.
  - Bamberger: Chapter 14 (pp. 323-354).
  - Ellen Taylor-Powell, Program Development and Evaluation Sampling Guide.

Meeting 11 Nov 19
Topic: Review of Measurement and Data Collection
Assignment due: none.

Readings:
- World Bank Evaluation Manual, Chapter 10
  - Bamberger, Chapter 16 (pp. 391 – 402).

Topic: Qualitative Evaluations; Cost Benefit and Cost Effectiveness Analyses; Meta Analysis, Systematic Review, Synthesis; Mixed Method Evaluations
Assignment due: Exercise 3: Using template, fully critique one evaluation study

Readings:
- Rossi, Chapter 11.
  - Bamberger, Chapter 11 (pp. 230-236) review, Chapter 12 (pp. 266 – 302), and Chapter 3 (pp. 303 – 322).

No class Nov 26 - Thanksgiving

Meeting 13 Dec 3
Topic: Wrap-up of qualitative evaluation
**Topic:** Real World Evaluation
- Politics, Controversy
- Research with Human Subjects
- Regulations
- Ethical Obligations and Responsibilities, NYU Human Subjects Tutorial

**Assignment due:** Assignment 4: Final Outline
- Research Questions
- Design
- Measures/Data Collection
- Sample/Sampling and Power
- Strengths and Limitations
- Implications

**Readings:**
- Rossi, Chapter 12. [Rossi, 1997](#).
- NYU Human Subjects Application:
  - [http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/docs/application.doc](http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/docs/application.doc)

**Meeting 14 Dec 10**
**Topic:** Group Presentations.
**Assignment due:** Final presentations.

**Dec 17:** Final paper due.