Objectives:
This course aims to help students: (a) engage with, constructively criticize, and learn from working papers and unpublished research; (b) get a “behind-the-scenes” peek on how research is conducted by those who are successfully conducting it; and (c) identify connections between apparently disparate fields, disciplines, or methodologies (and thus be ready to learn from scholars in “other” fields).

Meeting Times and Places:
Unless otherwise noted, the colloquium meets on selected Thursdays from 12:30-2:00PM in the Rudin Conference Room (see schedule below). These meetings are followed by a debrief session at Lafayette from 2:00 to 3:00PM, attended by enrolled students and the speaker. The papers for each talk will be distributed as they become available. A NYU Classes website with additional readings related to the craft and art of research is available as well.

Schedule:

Feb 4th - Kick-off meeting. We will go over the syllabus, set expectations, and get ready for a productive semester. Please read “That’s Interesting” by Murray Davis. I highly recommend you also read a book titled “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions”, by Thomas Kuhn, available on Amazon and other booksellers. This session is brown bag and it meets at Lafayette from 2:00 to 3:00.

February 11th - Bhaven Sampat: Associate Professor of Health Policy and Management at Columbia University. Professor Sampat’s research examines issues at the intersection of health policy and innovation policy. For instance, his research examines the effects of upstream patents on downstream innovation and commercialization, the roles of public and private sectors in drug development, and the returns to different types of medical research. He will present a paper titled “Public R&D Investments and Private-sector Patenting: Evidence from NIH Funding Rules”.

This version: January 24th 2016
February 25th - Margaret Keck: Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University. Professor Keck teaches comparative politics, Latin American Politics, and environmental politics. She is the author or co-author of four books, including Practical Authority: Agency and Institutional Change in Brazilian Water Politics; Greening Brazil: Environmental Activism in State and Society; Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics; and The Workers’ Party and Democratization in Brazil.

March 3rd - Lisa Powell: Professor of Health Policy and Administration in the School of Public Health, at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). Professor Powell current research examines the economics of health. For instance, she has examined the impact of alcohol use and educational and violence-related outcomes among youth, and also the importance of peer effects on youth smoking behavior. Additional research focuses on the impact of economic and environmental factors on physical activity and obesity.

March 10th - Christopher Ansell: Professor at the Charles and Louise Travers Department of Political Science at UC Berkeley. Professor Ansell’s interests include public policy, public administration, governance, and organization theory, with a geographical focus on Europe. His current research focuses on the collaboration of public and private institutions to manage risks and to govern unruly public problems. He has a strong substantive interest in public health and environmental policy.

March 24th – Norma Riccucci: Board of Governors Distinguished Professor of Public Administration at the School of Public Affairs and Administration at Rutgers University. Professor Riccucci has published extensively in the areas of public management, affirmative action, human resources and public sector labor relations. She has written many books, including How Management Matters: Street Level Bureaucrats and Welfare Reform and received numerous national awards. Between 2007 and 2009, Professor Riccucci was the president of the Public Management Research Association.

March 31st - Monica Prasad: Professor of Sociology at Northwestern University. Professor Prasad has examined the rise of neoliberalism, the development of tax systems, the effects of carbon taxes, and the persistence of poverty in America. Her latest book “The Land of Too Much” develops a demand-side theory to explain the surprisingly large role of the state in the U.S. She is spending the 2015-2016 year at the Russell Sage Foundation, working on a book about the origins of the US tax-cut movement. [NOTE: This event will be held at NYU-Sociology; Puck Building 4th Floor and the debriefing will take place at OCS Conference Room]

April 7th – Michah W. Rothbarth: Doctoral student at NYU-Wagner and soon-to-be Assistant Professor of Public Budgeting at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University. Michah’s research and teaching interests are in public finance and financial management, particularly in the field of education policy. His dissertation includes three papers that explore the financial consequences of public policies on local budgets. Michah holds an MPA from the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs with a concentration in finance and fiscal policy. [NOTE: The debriefing will take place at Mulberry]
April 14th – Double Header: Ji Chang and Fei Li: Ji Eun Chang is a doctoral student at NYU-Wagner, studying management and health policy. Her research examines how individuals manage work interdependencies across different sectors. Before Wagner, Ji was a policy analyst at the District of Columbia Department of Human Services. Ji Chang holds an MS in public policy and management from Carnegie Mellon University a BA in economics from UC Berkeley.

Fei Li is a doctoral student at NYU-Wagner and a doctoral fellow at the Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy. Fei Li’s research interests include housing and land use policy, transportation, and the social implications of technology. She received her bachelor's degree in urban planning from Peking University, China and a master's degree in geography from Hong Kong Baptist University.

May 5th – Wrap-up session. We take stock of the topics discussed throughout the semester. Students should read at least one of the substantive readings on professional development posted under “The art and craft of a scholarly career”. Please come ready to present the main points in your chosen reading and use them to reflect on the main lessons from the semester. This meeting takes place at Lafayette from 2:00 to 3:00.

Assignments:
In addition to attending the presentation, students are required to perform the following tasks:

(a) Participation: students enrolled in this class are required to attend the events, read the papers and engage with the speaker during and/or immediately after the presentation (i.e. Q&A). Naturally, I do not expect that every student will ask questions at every event. Still, I expect to see engagement and participation during the class as a whole. Students are also required to read and discuss some of the readings posted on NYU Classes (see “kick-off” and “wrap-up” above). This item (“Participation”) will account for 20% of the final grade.

(b) Paper critique / referee report: students are required to submit two paper critiques / mock referee reports for a working paper. You can choose any of the papers presented during the semester to analyze. Or you can suggest a different unpublished paper of your own. It is your responsibility to ensure you submit two critiques / referee reports by the end of the semester. Each report will account for 25% of the grade.

When writing the report, you should pretend the paper was submitted to the hypothetical “Wagner Journal of Public Service Research”. I am the chief editor, and the chair of your committee is the managing editor. The journal covers all the topics that we cover at Wagner. Similar to the school itself, it is “constructed to enhance connections, to emphasize that there is always something to learn from another discipline or field, method or person” (from the Dean’s Message).

A typical report is composed of a brief cover letter and the report itself. I have posted a number of pieces on the NYU Classes with instructions on how to write a good referee report. In particular, see the file titled “the editors speak”.


In the meantime, the following excerpt paraphrases the American Journal of Evaluation’s instructions to reviewers; these instructions should help set the “tone” for the report.

Your review will be most helpful if you:

- Provide specific comments about the strengths and weaknesses of the paper;
- Base your comments on the quality of the paper and its potential contribution to the field, rather than on conformity to your own preferred approach or theoretical framework; and
- Give comments that would be helpful to the author; ad hominem attacks are not appropriate. While holding the work to high standards, try to make your comments thoughtful and focused on how this work might be improved.

Some students have found the book, Girden, Ellen R. (2001) Evaluating Research Articles helpful in learning how to prepare such critiques. You should also ask your advisor(s) for examples of actual reports (good and bad ones).

(c) Debriefing memo: after each event, students are expected to take notes on the meeting with the speaker and, at the end of the semester, submit a short memo (three to five pages) with the main points discussed during the debriefing session and lessons learned. This memo is individual. It should not discuss the substance of the research but the insights on how research is actually done (e.g.: how to select a research question and gather data, the importance of methodology, how to write effectively, how to obtain funding, how to submit a manuscript for publication, how to referee a manuscript, which conferences to attend, etc).

As a general rule, you should face these meetings with speakers, and the writing of the memo, as an exercise in qualitative research. Your goal is to find out how to be a successful researcher. When the speaker provides an abstract idea, ask for examples. When you think a speaker is contradicting himself, herself, a previous speaker, or the advice you received elsewhere, ask for clarification. Be gentle, but probe deeper. Your skill as an interviewer will show through a memo that goes beyond registering the words of the speaker. A good memo will identify the thought patterns behind the speech, the insights these thoughts provoke, the doubts that remain, and the questions you will pursue next.

Important, the writing of the memo is an opportunity to reflect on the conversation after it is done. The memo should not transcribe the words of the interviewee. It should quote the speaker whenever necessary, but as a stepping stone towards personal reflection and engagement with the topic under consideration.

In the past, I used to attend these sessions but students provided anonymous feedback asking to meet with the speakers by themselves. This means that the discussions are led by students, and it is the students’ responsibility to ensure that they remain interesting and engaging.
Sometimes speakers will repeat advice you have already heard. Be a skillful interviewer and steer the conversation towards more productive terrain.

Depending on the circumstances, students could use their own papers, career ambitions, experiences and aspirations as fodder for discussion. It is OK to ask for advice, but do not forget that these are group sessions so the conversation should remain interesting for everyone in attendance. Students who want to discuss individual matters with any given speaker should apply for a one-to-one slot.

This item will account for 30% of the grade.

Finally, you may want to run all your submissions through the “Writer’s Diet” test, which provides a simplified diagnosis of your writing style, to make sure the language is concrete, simple & direct: http://writersdiet.com/WT.php

**Format and submission:**

All assignments should be written on Times New Roman size 12, doubled-spaced lines (not 1.5), one inch margins all around. Please submit them as .pdf or .doc and include your name, mailbox (if available), date, and other identifying data in the document.

As needed, include citations in the text and a bibliography at the end of the document. Please use the following format for citations: if you are citing an idea or a concept, include (author’s last name year) immediately after the passage, once per paragraph. If you are transcribing a passage, include the page number. For instance:

“…this type of engagement has been called responsive (Ayres and Braithwaite 1992, Braithwaite 2005), flexible (Bardach and Kagan 1982), tit-for-tat (Scholz 1984), creative (May and Burby 1998), and adaptive (Hawkins 1984).”

Use footnotes instead of endnotes.

To submit your assignments, go to: [http://www.dropitto.me/salocoslovsky](http://www.dropitto.me/salocoslovsky) so you can upload the file directly to my computer. You will need a password, which I will distribute in class.

Important, please remember to include your mailbox number in the paper and use the following convention to name your files: DocSem [your lastname] [assignment]

For instance: DocSem Alvarez 1st critique.doc