####  NYU Wagner logo

# **PADM-GP 2171**

**Evaluating Programs and Policies**

**Fall 2024**

## Instructor Information

* Elizabeth DiLuzio
* Email: elizabeth.diluzio@nyu.edu
* Zoom Office Hours: by appointment

## Class Information

* Meeting Times: Mondays 4:55-6:35pm
* Location: 60 Fifth Ave Room C10

**Course Prerequisites**

All students must have completed (or waived) P11.1011/CORE-GP 1011 (Statistical Methods) or a similar course. This course builds on these introductory courses and lays the foundation for P11.2875 (Evaluation of Health and Social Programs).

## Course Description

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.

## Course Objectives

Course objectives include:

1. Become familiar with the concepts, language, methods and applications of evaluation research;
2. Understand how to develop a logic model for an intervention and how to use it to guide evaluation;
3. Develop the ability to formulate clear, answerable research questions for evaluation;
4. Develop the ability to identify, modify, or develop appropriate measures of outcomes that are valid, reliable and feasible;
5. Learn how to read evaluation research critically;
6. Develop a detailed, feasible and rigorous evaluation proposal to assess the implementation and effectiveness of a program.

### Learning Assessment Table

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| Course Learning Objective Covered | Corresponding Assignment Title |
| #1 | Program MemoResearch Questions and Measurement Memo Midterm examDebatesOptional Review Memo |
| #2 | Program memoMidterm exam |
| #3 & 4 | Research Questions and Measurement MemoFinal Paper |
| #5 | Midterm examDebatesOptional Review Memo |
| #6 | Final Paper |

## Course Structure

The class includes asynchronous and in-person synchronous components. Asynchronous components include pre-recorded lectures, readings, and YouTube videos. Our weekly in-person sessions will include additional lecture, opportunities for questions & answers, discussion of case studies presented in class, break-out groups to discuss case study readings and other examples, and debates towards the end of the semester. 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 program/policy interests.

## Readings

Most of the required readings are articles in peer-reviewed journals that provide “real life” case studies of evaluations. There are also a few required chapters from textbooks. All required articles and chapters are available on Brightspace (by topic). The optional Weiss textbook is also available on Brightspace. There is a complete bibliography in the Readings folder within Resources. For the interested student there is an additional list of *optional* readings, also located in the Readings folder.

There are two **optiona**l basic evaluation textbooks students may use to supplement lectures and required readings:

1. ***Carol H. Weiss (1998) Evaluation: Methods for Studying Programs & Policies 2nd edition. Prentice Hall***
2. ***Peter Rossi, Howard Freeman, and Mark Lipsey (2004) Evaluation: A Systematic Approach, 7th ed. Sage Publications. (abbreviated in syllabus as “RFL”)***

Suggested chapters for each topic are noted on the syllabus.

## Course Requirements

Active participation is important for this course. Students need to read required articles and chapters, view recorded lectures and videos, and be prepared to participate in class discussion. In addition to class participation, requirements include two brief memos, one take-home exam, participation in debates, and a final paper that is a proposal for an outcome evaluation. ***Note: the following descriptions are not enough to complete the assignments adequately. See Assignments section in Brightspace.***

### Program Statement Memo: September 30th

Students will submit a short (1 - 2 pages) description of a selected program/policy, 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 Exam: November 4th

This will be a take-home essay style examination.Students are strongly encouraged to prepare for the exam with classmates. Students may submit the answers to the exam individually or in groups up to five.

### Research Questions & Measurement Memo: November 18th

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. This memo represents a critical step towards the final paper.

### Debates: December 2nd

Students will participate as part of a randomly assigned pro or con team in one debate during the next-to-last in-person session of the semester. Teammates will rate one another’s participation as part of the debate grade. Additionally, students will submit questions ahead of time to me about the other two cases (i.e., the two debates where they are NOT on a debate team). Failure to submit participation ratings or questions will dock points from the debate participation grade.

### Final Paper: Impact Evaluation Design: December 20th

The final paper builds on earlier assignments. Students will design a comprehensive evaluation plan for their chosen programs. The proposal will focus on outcome/impact evaluation but will include a brief section on process evaluation as well. Students are **required** to work in groups of 2-5, unless I have authorized a solo paper. Groups will submit a single final paper as well as single program statement and measurement memos.

### Optional Evaluation Review Memo (for extra credit): December 20th

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. The review memo is an individual assignment.

### Relative Weight of Assignments

* Midterm exam: 30%
* Two memos: 10%
* Final paper: 30%
* Class participation: 20%
* Debate participation: 10%

### Final Grades

* A: 94.5+
* A-: 88.5 - 94.4
* B+: 85.5 - 88.4
* B: 82.5 - 85.4
* B-: 78.5 - 82.4
* C+: 76.5 - 78.4
* C: 73.5 - 76.4
* C-: 68.5 - 73.4

## Course Schedule

The course is organized by week. Under each week there is a list of required readings, online resources, and optional textbook chapters, followed by the date of the corresponding in-person synchronous session and a brief description of what we will cover in that live session.The list of readings and resources clearly indicates which case studies will be discussed in the live sessions. Slide decks are available on Brightspace for both recorded lectures (denoted as “video”) and synchronous sessions (denoted as “live”).

#### Week 1: September 9th

#### Topic: Introduction

#### Week 2: September 16th

#### Topic: Types of Data and Needs Assessment

Readings & resources

* Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher Positionality - A consideration of its influence and place in qualitative research - A new Researcher guide. Shanlax International Journal of Education, 8(4), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232
* Read Wilson, C., Janes, G., & Williams, J. (2022). Identity, positionality and reflexivity: relevance and application to research paramedics. British Paramedic Journal, 7(2), 43–49. https://doi.org/10.29045/14784726.2022.09.7.2.43
* Michigan Medicine. (n.d.). Positionality Statements in brief. Center for Disability Health and Wellness. https://disabilityhealth.medicine.umich.edu/positionality-statements-brief
* Nadeem E, Shernoff ES, Coccaro C, Stokes-Tyler D. Supporting teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic: A community-partnered rapid needs assessment ***We will discuss in class; see guide questions***
* Witken, B.R. (1994). Needs Assessment Since 1981: The state of the practice
* Altschuld, J.W. (2004). Emerging dimensions of needs assessment.
* Suiter, S.V. (2017). Community health needs assessment and action planning in seven Dominican bateyes.

***Optional: submit your positionality statement (extra credit)***

#### Week 3: September 23rd

#### Topic: Explicating and Assessing Program Theory

Readings & resources:

* Kaplan, S.A. and Garrett, K.E. (2005). The use of logic models by community-based initiatives
* Chen, W. & Lin (1997). Evaluating the process and outcome of a garbage reduction program in Taiwan ***We will discuss in class; see guide questions******on Brightspace***
* Becker, K.L. (2017). Dance your heart out: a community’s approach to addressing cardiovascular health by using a logic model.
* Video lecture: *Topic 3a video* and summary questions (see Brightspace)
* Handout: Logic model template

#### Week 4: September 30th

#### Process Evaluation, Program Monitoring, and Implementation Analysis

Readings & resources:

* Mye, S.C. and Moracco, K.E. (2015). “Compassion, pleasantry, and hope”: A process evaluation of a volunteer-based nonprofit. ***We will discuss in class; see guide questions*** ***on Brightspace***
* Coulon SM, Wilson DK, Griffin S, St. George SM, Alia KA, Trumpeter NN, Wandersman AK, Forthofer M, Robinson S, and Gadson B. (2012) “Formative Process Evaluation for Implementing a Social Marketing Intervention to Increase Walking Among African Americans in the Positive Action for Today’s Health Trial.” American Journal of Public Health, 102(12): 2315-2321.
* Robbins LB, Ling J, Kilicarslan Toruner E, Bourne KA, & Pfeiffer KA. (2016) “Examining Reach, Dose, and Fidelity of the ‘Girls on the Move’ After-School Physical Activity Club: A Process Evaluation.” BMC Public Health, 16: 671.

***Program memo due***

### Week 5: October 7th

### Topic: Internal Validity

Readings & resources:

* Youtube video: *What is internal validity?* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxU59eGT5wI&t=1s>
* *Optional:* Weiss Chapter 8

#### Week 6: October 15th - Please note: This session will be held on a Tuesday over Zoom. Zoom information can be found on Brightspace.

#### Topic: Randomized Experimental Design pt. 1

Readings & resources:

* 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. ***We will discuss in class; see guide questions*** ***on Brightspace***
* Modestino, A. S., & Paulsen, R. J. (2019). Reducing inequality summer by summer: Lessons from an evaluation of the Boston Summer Youth Employment Program. (*case study for debates)*
* Youtube video: *Why randomize?* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uxqw2Pgm7s8&t=128s>
* *Optional:* Weiss Chapter 9

***Midterm exam questions posted***

#### Week 7: October 21st - Please note: We will not meet this week.

#### Topic: Randomized Experimental Design pt. 2

Readings & resources:

* Video lecture: *Topic 6c video* and summary questions (see Brightspace)

#### Week 8: October 28th

#### Topic: Quasi-experimental Designs with Comparison Groups

Readings & resources:

* Bowen, D.J, Quintilian, L.M., Bhosrekar, S.G., Goodman, R. and Smith, E. (2018). Changing the housing environment to reduce obesity in public housing residents: a cluster randomized trial. ***We will discuss in 3/25 live session; see guide questions***
* Robinson M, Mackay D, Giles L, Lewsey J, Richardson E, Beeston C. (2021) Evaluating the impact of minimum unit pricing (MUP) on off-trade alcohol sales in Scotland: an interrupted time-series study. *(case study for debates)*
* Cowen, J.M., Fleming, D.J., Witte, J.F., Wolf, P.J., and Kisida, B. (2013). School vouchers and student attainment: Evidence from a state-mandated study of Milwaukee’s parental choice program. *(case study for debates)*
* *Optional:* RFL Chapter 9 pp 265-286

#### Week 9: November 4th

#### Topic: Formulating Research Questions

Readings & resources:

* Read prior students’ research questions

***Midterm Exam due***

#### Week 10: November 11th

#### Topic: Measuring Outcomes

Readings & resources

* Litwin, M.S. (2003). How to Assess and Interpret Survey Psychometrics, Chapters 1- 3
* Berry, C.A., Shalowitz, M.U, Quinn, K.A., and Wolf, R. (2001) Validation of the Crisis in Family Systems-Revised, a Contemporary Measure of Life Stressors. ***We will discuss in class; see guide questions on Brightspace***
* Kim, M.G. and Kim, J. (2010). Cross-validation of reliability, convergent and discriminant validity for the problematic online game use scale
* Youtube video (refresher only): *Nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio data*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPHYPXBK_ks>

* *Optional*: Weiss, Chapter 6

#### Week 11: November 18th

#### Topic: Strengthening Single Sample Designs

Readings & resources:

* RFL Chapter 9 pp. 289-295
* Wheeler-Martin, K., Sogholan, S., Prosser, J.M., Manini, A.F., Marker, E., Stajic, M., Prezant, D., Nelson, L.S., and Hoffman, R.S. (2015). Impact of mandatory carbon monoxide alarms: and investigation of the effects on detection and poisoning rates in New York City. ***We will discuss in class; see guide questions on Brightspace***
* Bilal Iqbal Avan, Della Berhanu, Yirgalem Mekonnen, Emma Beaumont, Keith Tomlin, Elizabeth Allen, Joanna Schellenberg. (2021) Embedding Community-Based Newborn Care in the Ethiopian health system: lessons from a 4-year programme evaluation
* Youtube video (optional)*: Interrupted time series analysis* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGHrYwhOtO0>
* *Optional*: Weiss, review Chapter 8 pp. 191-199

***RQs & Measurement memo due***

**Week 12: November 25th - Please note: This session will be held over Zoom. Zoom information can be found on Brightspace.**

**Topic: External Validity and Sampling**

Readings & resources

* Babbie,E. (2012). The Practice of Social Research, Chapter 7
* Youtube video: *What is external validity?* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jX38E5mtNk>
* Youtube video: *Sampling: simple random, convenience, systematic, cluster, stratified* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=be9e-Q-jC-0>

**Week 13: December 2nd**

**Topic: Debates**

##### Debate 1

Modestino, A. S., & Paulsen, R. J. (2019). Reducing inequality summer by summer: Lessons from an evaluation of the Boston Summer Youth Employment Program.

##### Debate 2

##### Robinson M, Mackay D, Giles L, Lewsey J, Richardson E, Beeston C. (2021) Evaluating the impact of minimum unit pricing (MUP) on off-trade alcohol sales in Scotland: an interrupted time-series study.

##### Debate 3

Cowen, J.M., Fleming, D.J., Witte, J.F., Wolf, P.J., and Kisida, B. (2013). School vouchers and student attainment: Evidence from a state-mandated study of Milwaukee’s parental choice program

**Week 14: December 9th**

**Topic: Ethical Considerations in Program Evaluation**

Readings & resources

* American Evaluation Association Ethical Guiding Principles (2018 Update)
* *Optional*: Weiss, Chapter 14; RFL Chapter 12

***Ratings of debate team due***

**Finals Week**

***Final exam due***

***Optional third memo due***

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner’s Academic Code](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/academic-oath). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

## Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities.  Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website](https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) **and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD** (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

## NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

## NYU’s Wellness Exchange

[NYU’s Wellness Exchange](http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/wellness-exchange.html) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.