This course provides an introduction to program evaluation from a utilization-focused perspective. We study the design and implementation of evaluations, emphasizing the need to match the evaluation design to the needs, interests, and capacities of programs. A range of data collection and analysis strategies, and criteria for selecting among them, is presented. Evaluation case studies are used throughout the semester.

Course Content

The following topics are addressed:
- Evaluation terminology; history of evaluation; current approaches and challenges;
- The evaluator’s role in program development;
- Identifying and using program theory;
- Evaluation design and planning;
- Data gathering strategies; criteria for selecting measures;
- Varieties and uses of process evaluation;
- Impact evaluations; cost-based evaluations;
- Ethics of evaluation;
- Political, social, cultural contexts of evaluation;
- Approaches to data analysis;
- Dissemination of evaluation results;
- The experience of conducting evaluation.

Course Requirements

Students choose a program or policy as the main focus for their semester’s work, with written assignments throughout to help students develop an evaluation plan for that organization as the final project. Project-related assignments include a program description, a project outline, an abbreviated literature review, a data collection instrument and protocol, and a formal presentation of the plan, using Powerpoint or another presentation medium. In addition, documentation of having completed the CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Institute) course for new investigators is required. All assignments are collected into a portfolio for submission at the end of the semester. Regular class attendance, preparation of assigned readings, active participation in class discussion, and timely completion of assignments are expected. Check TRUNK for assignment details.

Course Text

- Required readings are accessible through the TRUNK site; addition readings, case material available.
- Students wanting additional background in basic social science research might consider having at hand an introductory text in applied research, such as Leedy, Paul D. & Ormrod, Jeanne E. (2016). Practical Research: Planning and Design (11th edition). Boston, MA: Pearson. (Earlier editions are fine as well.) The Sage Research Methods Online (SRMO) platform is also available through Tisch Library.

Contact Information

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# Tentative Schedule of Meetings, Readings, and Assignments

## CLASS 1:
**9/12/16**
Course overview; introduction to evaluation concepts and terminology; evaluation purposes and types; current controversies in the field

## CLASS 2:
**9/19/16**
Identifying problems, target populations; needs/demand assessment

**Reading due:**

## CLASS 3:
**9/26/16**
Program and policy elements; program theory; determining goals and objectives; Healthy Families Massachusetts (HFM) case introduction.

**Reading due:**

## CLASS 4:
**10/1/16; rescheduled**
Evaluation questions; matching questions to evaluations; the Five-tiered Approach to evaluation; literature reviews

**Reading due:**
- Jacobs & Kapuscik: *See above*. Ch. 3 (37 - 51), Ch. 4 (55 - 99);
- Weiss: *See above*. Ch. 4 (72-96);

**Assignment:** Schedule meeting with Fran re. program/policy choice by 10/13/16

## CLASS 5:
**10/17/16**
Thinking through research design, data collection strategies, measures; evaluation plans

**Reading due:**
- Weiss: Ch. 8 (180 – 214)

**Assignment #1 due:** Program/policy description

## CLASS 6:
**10/24/16**
*Evaluation plans, con’t; evaluating across cultures*

**Reading due:**
- Tufts Interdisciplinary Evaluation Research (2015). The Massachusetts Healthy Families

**CLASS 7: 10/31/16**

Instrument development; survey questionnaire design; interview construction and interviewing techniques; evaluation ethics

**Reading due:**

**Assignment #2 due:** Project outline

**CLASS 8: 11/7/16**

*Process evaluation: Monitoring and accountability assessments, quality reviews (Tiers Two and Three)

**Reading due:**
- Jacobs & Kapuscik, Ch. 7, 8 (163 - 251)

**Assignment #3 due:** Literature review

**CLASS 9: 11/14/16**

*Process evaluation con’t; impact evaluation: Determining program effects (Tiers Four and Five)

**Reading due:**
- Jacobs & Kapuscik, Ch. 9 (253 - 332)

**CLASS 10: 11/21/16**

*Impact evaluation, con’t; measuring efficiency (cost studies); MHFE-2 outcome study;

**Readings due:**

**Assignment #4 due:** Draft data collection instrument and protocol

**NO CLASS, 11/25/15: THANKSGIVING BREAK**
CLASS 11: 12/28/16
*Data analysis strategies; social and political contexts of evaluation
Reading due:

CLASS 12: 12/5/16
Evaluation use; disseminating findings
Readings due:
Invest in What Works Fact Sheet. http://Results4America.org
Assignment #5 due: Research Planning Grid

CLASS 13: 12/12/16
Student presentations
Assignment #6 due: Presentation slides uploaded by 10am; submit CITI certificate

PORTFOLIO DUE: Thursday, 12/16/16, at noon.