Course Syllabus

CSHD 247 | DLS 265 | UEP 256

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Spring Semester 2019

Mondays 6:15p – 8:45p
Eliot-Pearson | Room 163

Course Instructor

Instructor: Mariah Contreras, Ph.D.
Email: Mariah.Contreras@tufts.edu
Office hours: Mondays 5:00p - 6:00p in Eliot-Pearson Room 164
Tufts WebEx/Canvas/in-person by appointment

Course Overview

This course in Program Evaluation aims to provide a rich, applied introduction to the theory, design, and implementation of evaluation research. By understanding both the contextual environs and human practices that constitute how programs “come to be,” students will engage in a developmentally-driven approach to understanding program needs and promise.

Through readings, lecture, case study, exercises, and work in applied settings, students will gain exposure to program theory, settings of programs and evaluations, program stakeholders, the evaluation process, different evaluation models (e.g. needs assessment, impact evaluation, and cost-benefit analysis), and research dissemination. Students will build critical skills in assessing evaluation reports, assessing evaluation needs of programs, engaging stakeholders, and designing all phases of an evaluation plan.

Course Goals

1. To gain appreciation and knowledge for the settings, people, theory, and methodologies that undergird rigorous program evaluation;
2. To develop abilities to discern different evaluation models in order to align designs to program and policy assessment needs;
3. To build competence in one’s critical consumption of effective evaluation planning; and
4. To become generative and skilled in peer collaborative research processes.

Course Materials:

Texts (Required)


Select Course Reserves on CANVAS & @Tisch

**Please refer to the Course Itinerary for complete list of other readings**

**Website**
This course will use the Tufts CANVAS site: Sp19-CSHD-0247-01-Program Evaluation
- The course site will host the syllabus, assignments, course materials, course readings, and will be used to make announcements and conduct forums.
- The course site should be checked frequently (more than 3 times a week).

**Course Requirements:**

**Short assignments**
These short written and presentation assignments are meant to engage learners in solidifying knowledge, converting course content into appreciable, real-world products, and distilling complex material.

**Evaluation plan proposal**
This course final will constitute a semester-long progressive project and will promote critical application of the theory, design and instrumentation, program setting, and planning discussed throughout the term.

**Participation**
Attendance, engagement during class time, and projects within the class community will promote integration of perspectives within small groups or peer pairs and often include a written component.

**Peer collaboration**
Peer collaboration will promote both formal and informal learning and appreciation of the location/perspective of oneself and one’s class peers. Actively engaging in ongoing class peer learning opportunities and a peer review will assist in developing this component of the course.

**Instructor Expectations:**
Students are expected to attend all 13 classes and actively engage with materials, ideas, class peers, and the instructor during class time. Preparation for class will include reading the sources listed on the course syllabus, engaging peer collaborators in evaluation planning, and preparing assignments for timely submission. Substantial peer collaboration outside of class time is expected on a near-weekly basis. In addition, if a student has not taken a graduate-level research methods course prior to Program Evaluation, the student is expected to read additional materials covering research methodology in order to engage materials in the syllabus. Including class time, students should plan to dedicate an average of 10 hours per week toward the learning objectives and goals of the course.

**Course Components:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Grades based on 100 points</th>
<th>Maximum % of each Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A- : A+</td>
<td>89.5 – 100.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B- : B+</td>
<td>79.5 – 89.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C- : C+</td>
<td>69.5 – 79.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D- : D+</td>
<td>59.5 – 69.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 59.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30% Short assignments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>35% Program evaluation proposal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>20% Participation &amp; Attendance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15% Peer collaboration</td>
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<td>100% (bonus opportunities may be made)</td>
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### COURSE POLICIES

#### Student Accommodations

If you require accommodation in class for a disability, please contact the staff of Disability Services at 617-627-4539 or online at [http://uss.tufts.edu/arc/disability/](http://uss.tufts.edu/arc/disability/)

If you know you have a diagnosed disability which you believe may affect your participation or performance in class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can arrange the structure of the course appropriately.

For general academic assistance, please do not hesitate to schedule an appointment with the Academic Resource Center: [http://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-resource-center](http://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-resource-center)

#### Academic Integrity

Tufts University has a stated policy of academic integrity by which you as a student and Tufts community member are held accountable. The policy is found here: [http://students.tufts.edu/student-affairs/student-life-policies/academic-integrity-policy](http://students.tufts.edu/student-affairs/student-life-policies/academic-integrity-policy)

- Should you have any questions about the policy as it applies to this course or other experiences in your work at Tufts, please seek my attention to the matter(s) as soon as possible.
- As an instructor at Tufts, I am expected to report any and all suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the Dean of Student Affairs.

Tufts also maintains high standards of student conduct, found here: [http://students.tufts.edu/student-affairs/student-life-policies/code-conduct](http://students.tufts.edu/student-affairs/student-life-policies/code-conduct)

*If you have any questions regarding these policies, please contact me—I am happy to talk through them with you.*

#### Community Learning

It is my hope that discussions and approaches to course material will be conducted with respect to your own learning and that of your peers in class. I also hope that in the age of “comments sections” that as a learning community we shall assume and enact good will of ourselves and others. Critical perspective taking and respectful dialogue requires constructive criticism—criticism rooted in evidence and sound argument—and empathy for the experience of others: we shall aim to understand the experience of evaluation across a great diversity of settings and policies and through the lens of all participating roles, not solely that of the evaluator.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Learning objectives</th>
<th>Learning activities in class</th>
<th>Prepared with...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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</table>
| 2    | Overview & Introductions | 1/23/19 WED | ▪ Get to know your classmates & instructor  
▪ Understand the requirements and expectations of course  
▪ Exhibit comfort with key terms of course | Introductions                  | Weiss CH1  
FTA in class in-class handout  
AEA Principles in-class handout  
(optional) Jacobs, ADS 2003 |
|      |        |            |                                 | Lecture                                  |                                 |
| 3    | Understanding Programs, Communities, & Roles | 1/28/19 | ▪ Survey the diversity of program features, assets and challenges, political contexts, and resources of evaluation settings  
▪ Build critical awareness on the role of the evaluator | Lecture & Introduction to Term Case Study  
Workshop: Perspective Taking | Weiss CH2  
Weiss CH3  
(optional) Weiss CH5 |
| 4    | Goals & Objectives of Programs & Evaluators | 2/04/19 | ▪ Identify objects of evaluation  
▪ Identify stakeholders of evaluation  
▪ Describe functions of intervention theory | Lecture & Case Study  
Workshop:  
- Theory of Change  
- Program Descriptions | Jacobs & Kapuscik FTA CH4  
Weiss CH4  
Weiss CH5  
(optional) Fitzpatrick et al. CH12 |
| 5    | Practicum: Identifying Calls for Evaluation | 2/11/19 | ▪ Build competence in recognizing developmental nature of evaluation needs  
▪ Identify calls (RFPs) in area(s) of interest  
▪ Navigate landscape of call sites  
▪ Initiate planning and responses to RFPs | Workshop:  
- Request for Proposal (RFP)  
- RFP Comparison | Jacobs & Kapuscik FTA CH3  
Thoroughly review your RFP  
(recommended: catch up on any readings that need your review this week) |
| 6    | Evaluations for Insights & Needs Identification | 2/21/19 THURS | ▪ Define the parameters of needs assessment  
▪ Identify the circumstances of programs that require NA  
▪ Build critical awareness on the role of the internal evaluator | Guest speakers:  
- Alan Berko, DMD, MPH  
- Rachel Sagan, JD, Executive Director of the Acton-Boxborough United Way  
Lecture | A-B United Way CNA  
Jacobs & Kapuscik FTA CH6  
(optional) Altschuld 2004 |

**DUE: Assignment 1 | Critical review of RFP**
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| 7    | Evaluation Designs Planning, Planning & More Planning | 2/25/19 | ▪ Build competence in matching program needs and RQs to evaluation design  
▪ Distinguish among evaluation designs  
▪ Specify components of an evaluation plan  
▪ Describe data collection strategies | Lecture & Case Study  
Workshop: Formulating evaluation research questions  
-Scope of Evaluation | Weiss CH7  
Weiss CH8 (skim)  
[optional Mertens & Wilson CH8 & CH9]  
[optional Fitzpatrick et al. CH14 (skip p368-374)] |
| 8    | Evaluation for Improvement | 3/04/19 | @TISCH LIBRARY ▪ Determine the purposes, audiences, tasks, and data needs for Tier 2 and 3 evaluations  
▪ Identify threats to validity and reliability  
▪ Initially describe the process of instrument development | Guest Speaker: Dianne Brown, Social Science Research & Instruction Librarian, Tisch  
Workshop: Review of Literature  
Lecture & Case Study | Jacobs & Kapuscik CH7  
Jacobs & Kapuscik CH8  
Weiss CH6 (should skim)  
[optional Mertens & Wilson CH10] |
| 9    | Evaluation for Program Effectiveness | 3/11/19 | ▪ Determine appropriate sampling plans  
▪ Generally distinguish between RCT and Quasi-experimental research designs  
▪ Apply knowledge of instrument development | Lecture & Case Study  
Workshop: Review of Literature | Cook & Shadish 1994  
Jacobs & Kapuscik CH9  
Weiss CH8 (review)  
Weiss CH9 |

**DUE: Assignment 2  | Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 Evaluation Design**

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<tr>
<th>10</th>
<th>SPRING RECESS</th>
<th>NO CLASS</th>
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Critical Friend: Instruments/Protocols Development | Weiss CH6  
Weiss CH7 (review)  
Weiss CH11  
[optional Mertens & Wilson CH11 & CH12] |

**DUE: Assignment 3  | Tier 4 and Tier 5 Evaluation Designs**

| 12    | Proposal Presentations - I | 4/01/19 | ▪ Effectively disseminate tenets of your plan  
▪ Use course frameworks to constructively critique peer work so that it may reach a better potential | Peer presentations  
Feedback | Resources:  
Dahlberg & McCaig CH14  
Mertens & Wilson CH13  
Weiss 13 |

**DUE: Proposal presentations**

| 13    | Proposal Presentations - II | 4/08/19 | ▪ (see last week) | Peer presentations  
Feedback | (See Week 12) |
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Learning objectives</th>
<th>Learning activities in class</th>
<th>Prepared with…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>4/15/19</td>
<td>PATRIOTS DAY</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Evaluation Administration</td>
<td>4/22/19</td>
<td>▪ Gain insights into administrative tasks of evaluations (and evaluation planning)</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Review of Final</td>
<td>Weiss CH10</td>
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<td>▪ Build a realistic and appropriate budget</td>
<td>Workshop: Personnel, Budgeting, &amp; Planning Grids</td>
<td>Weiss CH12</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Practicum: Assessment of Proposals</td>
<td>4/29/19</td>
<td>▪ Identify alignment and dis-alignment in proposal plan</td>
<td>Course evaluations</td>
<td>Mertens &amp; Wilson CH15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Critically improve Critical friend’s plan</td>
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<td>Fitzpatrick et al. CH18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Communicate critical feedback in effective manner</td>
<td>Critical Friend review – Final</td>
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*Program Evaluation Final | Due Wednesday, May 8, 2019 at Noon*

*N.B.: This syllabus may change over the course of the term; please know any changes will be explicitly noted. Your flexibility is appreciated.*