Course Description
Program evaluation is the systematic, data-based assessment of the performance, value, merit, worth, or significance of programs or policies that have been implemented in public and non-governmental organizations. The aim of program evaluation is to provide valid findings in order to determine whether a particular program or policy is achieving its objectives. Evaluations are used for various reasons, most commonly to aid in decisions concerning whether programs should be continued, improved, expanded, or curtailed. This course will introduce students to a variety of research designs and related methodological tools useful for evaluating the impact of public policies and programs. Students will learn methods of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating information used in evaluation reports. Furthermore, evaluations facilitate decision-making for both public managers and policymakers; therefore, students will learn how to be critical and effective users of evaluations. In this course we will examine a broad range of social policy areas including health, criminal justice, education, welfare and poverty, and development.
Prerequisite: PPD 404x.

Program Objectives
1. PLO 1: At the intermediate level, students will have the skills and knowledge to lead and manage for the public good, and to contribute to effective policy changes.
2. PLO 2: At the intermediate and advanced levels, students will have the analytic reasoning skills to solve problems and make critical decisions.
3. PLO 3: At the intermediate and advanced level, students will integrate ethical behavior into their work to promote transparency, accountability, efficiency, competence and justice in public service.
4. PLO 4: At the introductory level, students will engage productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Course Objectives
1. Students will explain and analyze the purposes of program evaluation. (PLO 1)
2. Students will use program evaluations effectively and communicate outcomes clearly in order to contribute to effective program and policy changes. (PLO 1, PLO3)
3. Students will explain and justify an array of evaluation methods and approaches, including logic modeling, evaluability assessment, implementation evaluation, performance monitoring, impact evaluation, cost-effectiveness analysis, cost-benefit analysis, and evaluation synthesis (meta-analysis). (PLO 1, PLO 2)
4. Students will use such methodological tools to evaluate the impact of public policies and programs. (PLO 1, PLO 2)
5. Students will collect qualitative and quantitative data. (PLO 1)
6. Students will analyze and interpret qualitative and quantitative data. (PLO 1, PLO 2)
7. Students will effectively communicate evaluation findings, options, and recommendations to a diverse audience. (PLO 2, PLO 3, PLO 4)
8. Students will integrate evaluation standards into their research, analysis, and recommendations in an ethical, sensitive, and culturally inclusive manner as promulgated by the American Evaluation Association.
   a. This may include principles such as systematic inquiry, competence, integrity and honesty, respect for people and responsibility for general, multi-sector stakeholders, and public welfare as well as utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy standards. (PLO 3, PLO 4)

Reading Material
Each class is organized around assigned readings. Students are expected to read the assigned pages prior to the class in which they will be discussed, both to increase understanding of the lecture and to facilitate class discussion. Because most evaluation work is conducted by teams, having the opportunity to discuss and design evaluation approaches jointly is essential to the learning process.

Required Text:
*available at USC bookstore and online
*you can also rent it at http://uscbbookstores.bookrenterstore.com

Blackboard Readings:
There are a number of article-length readings posted on Blackboard. https://blackboard.usc.edu/

Some Helpful Resources:
Research Methods Knowledge Base
http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/desintro.htm

Statistical Analysis with Excel for Dummies, 3rd Edition (e-book available through USC) http://library.usc.edu/uhhtbin/cgiisrsi/x/0/0/5?searchdata1=4205056(CKEY)

Course Grading and Requirements
The course grade will be based on five components. It is designed so that grades are roughly based on 50% individual work and 50% group work.*

1. Class participation and In-class exercises. Students are expected to come to class ready to engage and discuss the reading. The date next to the readings indicates when they should be completed. The class format will consist of lectures, group discussion, and in-class exercises. These exercises and are meant teach program evaluation through application. Since they are done in-class they cannot be made up, therefore weekly attendance is required. Most of the exercises will be done in teams (sometimes in the student’s evaluation proposal team and sometimes in random impromptu teams).
2. Homework Assignments. The assignments will be posted on Blackboard at least one week prior to the due date. Diminished credit will be given to assignments that are up to one week late; however, after that date, no credit will be given to assignments without prior approval. Please upload your homework on blackboard following the format “lastname_hw#. For assignment 4, mine file would be Esparza_hw4.

3. Midterm. There will be a take-home midterm exam due March 9th at 11:59pm.

4. Team Presentation. Students will be placed in groups of 3-4 students and asked to submit a research proposal to evaluate a public program or policy. Each team will present an oral version of their proposal. The presentations will allow feedback from classmates and help teams develop the final, written product.

5. Team Evaluation Proposal. Each team will be required to submit an evaluation proposal, equivalent in length and detail to a term paper. The evaluation proposal will be due May 6th at 11:59pm. The proposal will be modeled after a client-focused evaluation and will allow students to apply what she has learned throughout the course. More details will be given in class.

*Doctoral students will complete their work individually rather than in teams. Please see me for more details on course requirements for doctoral students.

Most coursework will be graded by the professor and a TA. However, grading for team presentations and proposals will be based in part on peer assessments.

**To summarize, the course grade is assigned as follows:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation and exercises</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework assignments</td>
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<td>25%</td>
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<td>Assignment 1</td>
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<td>Assignment 2</td>
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<td>Assignment 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team evaluation proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total points</strong></td>
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Statement on Disabilities
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:
http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity
USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or http://scampus.usc.edu) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/. Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html. In particular, the University recommends strict sanctions for plagiarism, defined below:

11.11 Plagiarism
A. The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student’s own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.
B. The submission of material subjected to editorial revision by another person that result in substantive changes in content or major alternation of writing style.
C. Improper acknowledgement of sources in essays or papers.
http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/governance/gov05.html
If you have any questions about academic integrity or citation standards, please ask in advance.

Emergency Preparedness/ Course Continuity in a Crisis
In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.
Course Schedule

Part I: Planning and Implementation

Week 1, January 12  Introduction to program and policy evaluation
Wholey et al.  Chapter 1: Planning and Designing Useful Evaluations
Chapter 2: Analyzing and Engaging Stakeholders

Week 2, January 19  MLK Day – No Class
Assignment 1 due: Online survey.

Week 3, January 26  Logic Models and Theories of Change
Wholey et al.: Chapter 3: Using Logic Models

Week 4, February 2  Formative Evaluation: Needs Assessments, Performance Measurement
Wholey et al.: Chapter 5: Performance Measurement: Monitoring Program Outcomes

Part II: Measuring the Impacts of Programs

Week 5, February 9  Summative Evaluation: Impact Assessments & Experimental Design I
Wholey et al.: Chapter 7: Randomized Controlled Trials and Nonrandomized Designs
Greenberg, D., Miller, C., Rucks, Z., & Verma, N.

Teams 1-3: Evaluation of Head Start
Summary." Pp. i-xxvii.

Teams 4-6: Evaluation of Move to Opportunity

Teams 7-8: Evaluation of Abstinence Education
Trenholm et al. 2008. “Impacts of Abstinence Education on Teen Sexual Activity, Risk of Pregnancy, and

Assignment 2 due: Multi-sectoral stakeholders and needs assessments.

Week 6, February 16 President’s Day – No Class
Assignment 3 due: Experimental design problem set.

Week 7, February 23 Quasi-Experimental Design
Wholey et al.: Chapter 6: Comparison Group Designs

Calhoun, C.A.

Case: Team READ (A)

and SPSS. Center for Statistical and Mathematical Computing, Indiana University.

Assignment 4 due (Team): Each team will write a 2 page summary of the program or policy your team
plans to evaluate.

III: Data Collection & Analysis

Week 8, March 2 Case Studies
Wholey et al.: Chapter 8: Conducing Case Studies
Chapter 13: Using Trained Observer Ratings
Chapter 14: Collecting Data in the Field

**Assignment 5 due:** Quasi-experimental design problem set.

**Week 9, March 9**  
**No Class**  
**Midterm due by Monday March 9th**  **11:59pm**

**Week 10, March 16**  
**Spring Recess**

**Week 11, March 23**  
**Recruiting Participants & Focus Groups**

Wholey et al.: Chapter 9: Recruitment and Retention of Study Participants  
Chapter 17: Focus Group Interviewing


**Assignment 6 due (Team):** Each team will write a 1-2 page description of the design, the data you would need to collect, and a plan for what each team member will do for the proposal.

**Week 12, March 30**  
**Sampling & Surveys, Presenting Quantitative Results**

Wholey et al.: Chapter 12: Using Surveys  
Chapter 20: Using Statistics in Evaluation


Westport, CT: Quorum Books.


**Week 13, April 6**  
**Interviews & Stories, Presenting Qualitative Results**

Wholey et al.: Chapter 16: Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews  
Chapter 18: Using Stories in Evaluation  
Chapter 19: Qualitative Data Analysis


IV. Project Management and Finished Product

Week 14, April 13  Finished Product
Wholey et al.:  Chapter 23: Pitfalls in Evaluations
             Chapter 24: Providing Recommendations, Suggestions, and Options for Improvement
             Chapter 25: Writing for Impact

Assignment 7 due: Presenting and interpreting survey results.

Week 15, April 20  Finished Product & Wrap up Team Presentations I
                Chapter 28: Evaluation Challenges, Issues, and Trends

Week 16, April 28  Team Presentations II

Finals Week, May 6  Evaluation Proposal due by Wednesday, May 6th, 11:59pm

Assignment 10 due: Peer assessment online survey.
This 10 minute survey is due within 36 hours of submitting your evaluation proposal. (I need your peer assessments to determine final grades).