USC Price
Sol Price School of Public Policy
Graduate Programs in Public Administration

PPD 542

Policy and Program Evaluation

4 Units

Term
Fall 2024

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Course Description

> *"Methods and models for policy and program evaluation; methods of collecting and analyzing evaluation data; processes for linking evaluation to policy formulation and program management."* ~ USC Course Catalogue

Program evaluation is the systematic investigation of social programs (including policies, plans, and regulations) to determine whether a particular program is achieving its objectives. By law, regulation, and custom, organizations must routinely evaluate how well their programs are working. For example, legislatures and interest groups frequently call upon evaluators to predict the consequences of proposed policies or to evaluate the outcomes of existing policies. Such knowledge promotes better decisions regarding whether programs should be continued, improved, expanded, or curtailed.

The most agile organizations can be described as "learning organizations"—continually adapting to new circumstances and information. Formal evaluation plays a pivotal role in helping organizations learn.

Knowledge of evaluation methods enables public administrators to:

a. Read evaluation studies and use their findings to manage or improve ongoing programs
b. Work with consultants to design an evaluation project
c. Write grant proposals to sponsors that require performance monitoring
d. Cite or critique evaluation studies to support an argument in a policy debate

This course introduces students to the art and science of policy evaluation. Students will learn methods of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating information used in evaluation studies.

An explicit goal of the course is to provide students with the skills required for successful completion of the "capstone" course, *PPD 546 Professional Practice of Public Administration.* In both courses, students work in teams to develop an evaluation proposal related to an actual public policy or program implemented by a public or nonprofit agency. In this course, PPD 542, you will create an evaluation proposal for a mock client. In the capstone course, PPD 546, you will develop a similar proposal for a real client during the first few weeks, and then you will carry out your evaluation project during the same semester.

Course Objectives

Practical Learning Objectives:

This course trains students to "analyze, synthesize, think critically, and solve problems," which is one of the universal competencies for all programs accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Read evaluation research. Demonstrate comprehension of an evaluation report by summarizing its statistical and practical conclusions, and by analyzing its methodological strengths and limitations.
2. Design evaluation research. Write an effective proposal to evaluate a policy or program. Use theory and a logic model to frame the proposed study. Describe the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis strategy for the proposed study.
3. Assess the ethical and political implications of an evaluation study, and describe how its results could inform policy or programmatic decisions.
4. Work in teams and manage projects. (Students will need to collaborate to complete the evaluation proposal assignment in an efficient and fair manner.)
5. Communicate professionally. (Students will work in teams to develop a detailed evaluation proposal, and to create a media-rich oral presentation of the proposal in the form of a "pitch" to a mock client.)

Technical Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Select a suitable research design (e.g. experimental, quasi-experimental, or nonexperimental) for an evaluation study.
2. Design a variable to measure a concept in a valid and reliable fashion.
3. Select and design suitable data collection methods such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, participant observation, content analysis, or collection of secondary data.
4. Select a suitable approach to data analysis and visualization, and carry out and interpret simple descriptive and inferential analyses of evaluation data.
5. Read research reports that use more complex data analysis techniques such as linear regression.

Prerequisite:

PPD 502 or PPD 504

Textbooks and Materials

Articles:

Required readings are supplied in the Readings folder in the course menu in Brightspace. The files are named according to the first author of the publication. To find a specific reading by a particular author, sort the files by name.

Texts to download (free)

NSF [National Science Foundation]. (2010). *The 2010 user-friendly handbook for project evaluation*. http://www.informalscience.org/sites/default/files/TheUserFriendlyGuide.pdf

GAO [US Government Accountability Office]. (2012). *Designing evaluations.* GAO-12-208G. http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/588146.pdf

Recommended texts to purchase:

Fink, Arlene (2015) *Evaluation fundamentals: Insights into program effectiveness, quality, and value* (3rd ed.). Sage. ISBN: 978-1452282008 ISBN-10: 1452282005

Bardach, Eugene and Eric M. Patashnik (2015 - 2023) *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving* (5th, 6th, or 7th edition).

Software:

Microsoft Excel (part of Microsoft Office), available free here: https://itservices.usc.edu/officestudents/

Live Sessions

This course has seven Live Sessions conducted in Zoom according to the schedule below.

The Zoom link is provided in Brightspace.

Fall 2024: Wednesdays, 6:00-7:30 p.m. Pacific:

Week 01: August 28
Week 04: September 18
Week 06: October 2
Week 08: October 16
Week 10: October 30
Week 12: November 13
Week 15: December 4

Grading Policies

Grading Ranges for Final Course Grades

The minimum passing grade for graduate course credit is "C" corresponding to ≥ 74%.

A	≥ 94%	B	≥ 84%, < 87%	C	≥ 74%, < 77%
A-	≥ 90% < 94%	B-	≥ 80%, < 84%	C-	≥ 70%, < 74%
B+	≥ 87% < 90%	C+	≥ 77%, < 80%	D	≥ 60%, < 70%

Course Grade of Incomplete

Only when work is not completed because of documented illness or other "emergency" occurring after the 12th week of the semester (or 12th week equivalent for any course scheduled for fewer than 15 weeks) may the professor assign a course grade of Incomplete (IN). An "emergency" constitutes a situation or event that could not be foreseen, and which is beyond the student's control and which prevents the student from taking any final paper or exam or completing other work during the final weeks of class. A student may not request an Incomplete (IN) before the end of the 12th week (or 12th week equivalent for any course scheduled for fewer than 15 weeks).

Course Grade Components

Graded Activity Categories	Grading Scale (points possible)	Number of items in the category	Weight of each item in Course Grade	Category Weight in Course Grade
Discussions	20	11	1.36%	15%
Quizzes	10	10	0.5%	5%
Data Analysis Labs	100	2	6.0%	12%
Evaluation Critique Presentations (Groups)	20	1	10%	10%
• CATME Group Peer Review Assessment	20	1	5.0%	5%
Evaluation Proposal				
• Parts 1 through 6	20	6	3%	18%
• Project Pitch Video Draft (Teams)	n/a	1	n/a	n/a
• Project Pitch Video (Teams)	100	1	10%	10%
• CATME Team Peer Review	20	1	5%	5%
Exam	100	1	20%	20%

Graded Activity Categories

Individual Work (65%)

Discussion (15%): In response to discussion prompts that reference assigned readings or instructional materials, students will post their response by Day 5 of the week and will reply to two other students by Day 7. Ten discussions are distributed across Weeks 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15(x2).

Quizzes (5%): Quizzes are designed to test your mastery of basic concepts introduced in the readings and lectures. Ten quizzes are assigned through Week 12.

Data Analysis Labs (12%): Weeks 4 and 6 focus on data analysis for experimental and non-experimental research designs, respectively. Data analysis assignments that correspond to the prior week's material are due at the end of Weeks 5 and 7. Both "stats lab" assignments are conducted in Microsoft Excel, with supporting video tutorials and lectures available in the Instructional Materials section of Weeks 4 through 7.

Evaluation Proposal, Parts 1 through 6 (18%): In these six written assignments (one due every-other week) students work individually to grapple with various aspects of the evaluation proposal team assignment. Each assignment typically entails archival research to locate reference material, and reflections regarding how the group could proceed in crafting a given section of the evaluation proposal. The six topics are:

Week 02 - Part 1. Program background & research questions
Week 04 - Part 2. Logic model and program theory
Week 06 - Part 3. Experimental research design & hypotheses
Week 08 - Part 4. Quasi- or non-experimental research design & hypotheses
Week 10 - Part 5. Data collection
Week 12 - Part 6. Data analysis

Exam (20%): Summative, timed exam covering material from Weeks 1 through 14. Administered during the Week 15 live session.

Group and Team Work (35%)

Evaluation Critique Presentations (10%): In Week 2, the instructor will create "Evaluation Critique Groups" of three or four students. Each student will be assigned to one group, and each group will be assigned to critique and lead one class discussion of an assigned reading representing an example of policy or program evaluation research. Critiques will be presented and discussed during the live sessions for Weeks 4,6,8,10,12. Before each presentation, critique groups will submit a slide deck with a list of discussion questions on the final slide. Students not presenting in a given week should come to class prepared to engage in a discussion of the assigned articles.

Evaluation Proposal Presentation "Pitch" (10%). In Week 2, the instructor will create "Evaluation Proposal Teams" of three or four students. Over the course of the semester, each Team will develop an evaluation proposal related to an actual public policy or program implemented by a public or nonprofit agency. The proposal will be in the form of a 15-minute video presentation recorded in VoiceThread, in which the Team pitches its proposal to a mock client. This presentation should translate the technical material to make it understandable and compelling to an evaluation-savvy public administrator. This project requires students to apply all of the concepts learned throughout the course to the dynamic and ambiguous environment of practical program evaluation.

NOTE: Students will not actually carry out an evaluation study. Rather, the assignment entails crafting a proposal that details the practical and theoretical questions to be answered by the study, and the research methods that could be used to answer the stated research questions.

A **draft** of the evaluation proposal pitch is due at the end of Week 13 so that teams can receive detailed feedback from the instructor. The draft is not graded, but teams that make more substantial progress will receive more substantial feedback, and will have less work to complete in the final weeks of the course.

CATME Group and Team Peer Review Surveys (10%): In Week 13, students will assess both their own and their Group-mates' contributions to the evaluation critique assignments. In Week 15, students will assess both their own and their Team-mates' contributions to the evaluation proposal assignment. All students are required to provide thoughtful assessments via an online survey administered by catme.org. Grades for these assignments will be informed by your teammates' evaluations of your contributions to group work. *(Note: The CATME survey is only one measure of collaboration. Students who do not contribute substantially to a group/team assignments will be penalized, including potentially a score of zero on the assignment.)*

Grading Rubrics

Grading Rubric for Discussions and Evaluation Proposal, Parts 1 through 6 (20 points maximum)				
Criteria	Superior	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Unsatisfactory
Relevance, Application, Originality **(6 points)**	Addresses the question, uses ideas from the readings, and provides a unique perspective (6)	Addresses the question, uses ideas from the readings, usually has clear focus (5)	Addresses the question but with little substance, inconsistencies, or partial incoherence (3)	Fails to address the question posed, or incoherent (0)
Insight, Observation, Analysis (6 points)	Offers significant analysis and insight with clear understanding of the question (6)	Offers some analysis or insight with clear understanding of the question (5)	Addresses concepts already highlighted; rudimentary understanding of the question (3)	No clear concept addressed, lacks clarity of ideas, or shows minimal understanding of the question (0)
Details & Evidence (4 points)	Details and evidence are effective, illuminating, and pertinent to the question (4)	Details and evidence are elaborated and pertinent to the question (3)	Details and evidence are scant or repetitious (2)	Details are absent or tangential to the question (0)
Writing Style & Mechanics (4 points)	Writing style is clear, concise, inviting, and free of mechanical errors (4)	Some stylistic problems or mechanical errors (3)	Multiple errors or patterns of errors (2)	Errors are frequent and severe (0)

Grading Rubric for Evaluation Critique Presentations (100 points maximum)				
Criteria	Superior	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Unsatisfactory
Summary (30 points)	Accurately and astutely describes the central research question(s), overall methodological approach, and main findings. (30)	Summarizes the article well, but overlooks one or two key aspects of the research questions, methods, or findings. (25)	Overlooks more than two key aspects of the research questions, methods, or findings. (20)	Fails to address the question posed, or incoherent. (0)
Critique (50 points)	Astutely critiques the study's strengths and weaknesses, describing how the research design, measurement, and/or other aspects affect internal and external validity. Discusses what the authors could have done differently, and how this might have altered the results or conclusions. (50)	Critiques the article well but overlooks one or two key aspects of the research design or fails to discuss how different design choices might have affected the results or conclusions. (45)	Overlooks more than two key aspects of the research design, and/or fails to discuss how different design choices might have affected the results or conclusions. (35)	No clear concept addressed, lacks clarity of ideas, or shows minimal understanding of the question. (0)
Visuals (10 points)	Engaging visuals help convey each message. Need not be elaborate if a minimalist theme is appropriate. (10)	Appropriate visuals help tell the story, with few exceptions. (7)	Visual elements lack clarity or distract from the presentation. (3)	None or inappropriate. (0)
Delivery (10 points)	All team members spoke with appropriate confidence, clarity, and enthusiasm, without exception. Each teammate has a significant speaking role. (10)	Most team members spoke with appropriate confidence, clarity, and enthusiasm, with few exceptions. (7)	A lack of confidence, clarity, or enthusiasm detracted from the presentation. (3)	Delivery far below expectations for graduate work. (0)

Grading Rubric for the Team Proposal Pitch Video in VoiceThread (100 points max)

Criteria	Superior	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Unsatisfactory
Content (66 points)	See assignment a detailed content rubric.	See assignment a detailed content rubric.	See assignment a detailed content rubric.	See assignment a detailed content rubric.
Visuals (8 points)	Engaging visuals help tell the story (Need not be elaborate if a minimalist theme is more appropriate) (8)	Appropriate visuals help tell the story, with few exceptions (6)	Visual elements lack clarity or distract from the presentation (4)	None or inappropriate (0)
Delivery (8 points)	Team members spoke *on camera* with appropriate confidence, clarity, and enthusiasm, without exception (8)	Team members spoke *off camera,* usually with appropriate confidence, clarity, and enthusiasm (6)	A lack of confidence, clarity, or enthusiasm detracted from the presentation (4)	Delivery far below expectations for graduate work (0)
Collaborative Presentation (8 points)	Each teammate has a significant speaking role (8)	One teammate lacks a significant speaking role (6)	Two teammates lack a significant speaking role (4)	Only one teammate narrates the presentation (0)
Duration (8 points)	10-15 minutes for 4 or 5-person group; 8-12 minutes for 3-person groups (8)	<1 minute too short or too long (6)	1-2 minutes too short or too long (4)	>2 minutes too short or too long (0)
VoiceThread Settings (2 points)	Advance slides automatically (1 pt) Add your instructor as an author of the presentation (1 pt)			

Other Policies

Weekly Structure

The course is organized into 15 week-long units. Each day of the week is numbered 1 through 7. Wednesday is always the first day of the week:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday

Assignments are due no later than 11:59 p.m. in the Pacific time zone on the day that is stated within the assignment page and the weekly activity table.

Contacting the Instructor

Email is the most reliable way to contact me. I typically respond within a few hours, and rarely more than 24. Email is also the best way to schedule a time for a phone or video call. You may call or text me if you need my immediate attention.

Form and Style for All Written Work

Write in plain, concise prose (such as described in Strunk and White's classic *Elements of Style*). Provide in-text author-date citations for all ideas, phrasing, or facts you borrow from other sources. Include page numbers in citations wherever feasible; if your citation is especially insightful, novel, or contentious, your instructor or classmates may wish to look it up. Provide a list of cited references in APA format. Err on the side of being too inclusive in your citations of facts and ideas included in your work. It is good professional practice to guide your readers to your source materials, and liberal citations helps avoid plagiarism issues.

If addressing a topic that is highly contested, one way to strengthen your response is to clearly and fairly articulate both sides of the controversy. Analytical arguments that come down on one side or the other are welcome, especially if they critique the opposing perspective through theoretical or empirical arguments that reference the assigned readings, videos, lectures, or other sources. In addition to demonstrating your knowledge of the assigned readings, feel free to cite sources beyond the required materials. This helps you integrate your new knowledge from this course with ideas you have gleaned from your other courses or experiences.

File Submission Protocol

All file submissions will be handled electronically through Brightspace. In the event of electronic submission problems via Brightspace, you may provide duplicate submissions via e-mail to the instructor as a record of your timely submission.

Unless otherwise noted by your instructor, all written assignments and submissions should be single-spaced and submitted as a Microsoft Word document.

Please label all submitted files with your last name followed by the name of the assignment (e.g., Lastname_Week7Paper1.doc).

Late Assignments

No assignments are accepted after their due dates without prior permission. At their discretion, faculty may grant extensions for extenuating circumstances, as defined in the USC student handbook. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time, please notify your instructor as soon as feasible. Please communicate with your instructor if you find yourself falling behind or if you need any assistance with an assignment.

Weekly Activity Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to Policy and Program Evaluation	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Define program evaluation and describe its roles in public administration. ● Identify the types of program evaluation to be examined further throughout the course.	~
Readings ● Fink, A. (2015). *Evaluation fundamentals*. Sage Publications. ○ Chapter 1: "Program Evaluation: A Prelude," pp. 3–23 *only* ● NSF. (2010). *The 2010 user-friendly handbook for project evaluation.* ○ Introduction, plus Chapters 1–2, pp. 1–14 ● GAO. (2012). *Designing evaluations.* ○ Chapter 1, pp. 1–9 ● Emerson, J. (2009, Winter). "But does it work? How best to assess program performance." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 29–30.	~
Instructional Materials ● Week 01 Lecture 1: What is Policy and Program Evaluation (18:50)	~
Week 1 Assignment: Availability Survey	Day 5
Week 1 Discussion: Introductions	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 1 Quiz	Day 7

Week 2: Program Theory, Logic Models, and Hypotheses	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Describe the theory and logic underlying a given policy or program. ● Construct a logic model for a policy/program. ● Identify researchable questions and hypotheses for a policy/program. ● Identify independent and dependent variables in causal hypotheses.	~
Readings ● Fink, A. (2015). *Evaluation fundamentals*. Sage Publications. ○ Chapter 1: "Program Evaluation: A Prelude" pp. 24–38 *only* ○ Chapter 2: "Evaluations Questions and Evidence of Merit," pp. 39–66. ● NSF. (2010). *The 2010 user-friendly handbook for project evaluation.* ○ Chapter 3 "The Evaluation Process—Getting Started," pp. 15–30 *only* ● GAO. (2012). *Designing evaluations.* ○ "Chapter 2: Defining the Evaluation's Scope," pp. 10–17 <u>Evaluation Example:</u> ● Chen, G., & Warburton, R. N. (2006). Do speed cameras produce net benefits? Evidence from British Columbia, Canada. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management,* 25, 661–678. <u>Recommended (optional)</u>: ● Gienapp, A., Reisman, J., & Stachowiak, S. (2009). *Getting started: A self-*	~

directed guide to outcome map development. Casey Foundation. ● Kellogg Foundation. (2004). *Logic model development guide: Using logic models to bring together planning, evaluation, and action.* ● Gervais, C., de Montigny, F., Lacharité, C., & Dubeau, D. (2015). The Father Friendly Initiative Within Families: Using a logic model to develop program theory for a father support program. *Evaluation and Program Planning,* 52, 133–141. ● Yin, R. K. (1998). Chapter 8, The abridged version of case study research. In L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (Eds.), *Handbook of applied social research methods*. Sage Publications.	
Instructional Materials ● Week 02 Lecture 1: Policies and Programs as Hypotheses (11:58) ● Week 02 Lecture 2: Logic Models (22:02) ● "Logic Models" by Dr. Jennifer Miller and Gregory Johnson, November 19, 2020 (13:40)	~
Week 2 Live Session	Day 1
Week 2 Discussion: Theory, Logic Models, Hypothesis	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 2 Evaluation Proposal, Part 1. Program Background & Research Questions	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 2 Quiz	Day 7

Week 3: Research Designs Part I. True Experiments and Quasi-experiments	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Explain the relative strengths and weaknesses of experimental and quasi-experimental research designs for detecting cause-and-effect relationships. ● Define internal validity and external validity, and discuss how research design affects both. ● Discuss the practical and ethical constraints of different types of research designs.	~
Readings ● Fink, A. (2015). *Evaluation fundamentals*. Sage Publications. ○ Chapter 3: "Designing Program Evaluations," pp. 67–80 *only* True Field Experiment Example (Critique Group A): ● coming soon Quasi-experiment Example (Critique Group B): ● coming soon Recommended (optional): ● Hansen, Jesper Asring & Lars Tummers (2020) "A Systematic Review of Field Experiments in Public Administration" *Public Administration Review* 80(6): 921–931. ● Venkataramani, Atheendar S. (2021) "Effective policymaking requires strong evidence - Randomized controlled trials as the foundation for evidence-based policy." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 40(2): 650–656. ● GAO. (2012). *Designing evaluations.* ○ Ch. 3: "The Process of Selecting an Evaluation Design," pp. 18–30 ○ Ch. 4: "Designs for Assessing Program Implementation and Effectiveness," pp. 31–49 ● Hausmann, R. (2016, February 25). The problem with evidence-based policies. *Project Syndicate*. ● Berlin, G. L. (2016). Using evidence as the driver of policy change: The next steps in supporting innovation, continuous improvement, and accountability. Testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, May 10, 2016.	~
Instructional Materials ● Week 03 Lecture 1: True Experiments and RCTs (22:39) ● Week 03 Lecture 2: Research Design Notation (32:13) ● Week 03 Lecture 3: Internal and External Validity (7:53)	~
Week 3 Quiz	Day 7
Week 3 Evaluation Critique Presentations: Groups A & B (prepare for next week)	Day "8"

Week 4: Data Analysis Part I. Inferential Statistics for Experimental Designs: Comparing Means and Proportions	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Test hypotheses for experimental or quasi-experimental studies by comparing means or proportions for treatment and control groups. ● Contrast statistical significance, effect size, and policy significance.	~
Readings ● Fink, A. (2015). *Evaluation fundamentals*. Sage Publications. ○ Chapter 8: "Analyzing Evaluation Data," pp. 187–199 ● Newcomer, K. E., & Conger, D. (2010). Using statistics in evaluation (Chapter 20). In J. Wholey, H. Hatry, & K. Newcomer, (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (3rd ed., pp. 454–492). Jossey-Bass. ● Lane, D., et al. (n.d.). *Online statistics education: An interactive multimedia course of study.* ○ XI. "Logic of Hypothesis Testing" http://onlinestatbook.com/2/logic_of_hypothesis_testing/logic_hypothesis.html ○ XII "Tests of Means" http://onlinestatbook.com/2/tests_of_means/testing_means.html ○ XVII "Chi-Square Contingency Tables" http://onlinestatbook.com/2/chi_square/contingency.html Recommended (optional): ● Schmuller, J. (2013). *Statistical analysis with Excel for dummies.* (e-book available through USC) https://library.usc.edu/uhtbin/cgisirsi/?ps=zkz8o1aCug/DOHENY/237720203/9	~
Instructional Materials ● Week 4 Lecture 0: Review of Descriptive Statistics (21:50) ● Week 4 Lecture 1: Comparing Means and Proportions (23:57) ● Week 4 Lecture 2: T-Test, ANOVA, Chi-Square (17:00) ● Week 4 Lecture 3: Tutorial for Data Analysis Lab #1 - Part 1 (12:11) ● Week 4 Lecture 4: Tutorial for Data Analysis Lab #1 - Part 2 (8:16)	~
Week 4 Live Session	Day 1
Week 4 Evaluation Proposal, Part 2. Logic Model and Program Theory	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 4 Quiz 1 and Quiz 2	Day 7

Week 5: Research Designs Part II. Non-Experimental Studies	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Design non-experimental, observational research designs that rely upon correlation to establish cause-and-effect relationships. ● Identify common threats to internal validity and ways to mitigate them.	~
Readings ● Fink, A. (2015). *Evaluation fundamentals*. Sage Publications. ○ Chapter 3: "Designing Program Evaluations," pp. 83–94 *only* ● Evaluation examples: ○ coming soon ○ coming soon	~
Instructional Materials ● Week 05 Lecture 1: Non-experimental Research Designs (23:59) ● Week 05 Lecture 2: Threats to Internal Validity (29:21)	~
Week 5 Assignment: Data Analysis Lab #1	Day 7
Week 5 Evaluation Critique Presentations (Groups C & D) prepare for next week	Day "8"

Week 6: Data Analysis II. Inferential Statistics for Non-Experimental Designs: Correlation Between Two or More Variables	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Test hypotheses by conducting and interpreting simple inferential analyses of evaluation data, such as bivariate correlations. ● Explain the utility and limitations of correlation for causal inference. ● Summarize the statistical and practical conclusions of studies that analyze data using linear regression models.	~
Readings ● Lane, D., et al. *Online statistics education* ○ "Describing Bivariate Data" http://onlinestatbook.com/2/describing_bivariate_data/bivariate.html ○ "Regression" http://onlinestatbook.com/2/regression/regression.html	~
Instructional Materials ● Week 6 Lecture 1: Correlation (12:19) ● Week 6 Lecture 2: Regression (20:06) ● Week 6 Lecture 3: Reading Regression Models (10:54) ● Week 6 Lecture 4: Choosing Statistical Techniques (7:43)	~
Week 6 Live Session	Day 1
Week 6 Evaluation Proposal, Part 3: True-Experiment Research Design	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 6 Quiz	Day 7

Week 7: Sampling and Measurement	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Explain the purpose of sampling; describe the strengths and limitations of various types of sampling strategies. ● Compare and contrast random sampling versus random assignment. ● Operationalize a concept by designing valid and reliable measures. ● Use indexes and scales to develop measures with content validity.	~
Readings ● Fink, A. (2015). *Evaluation fundamentals*. Sage Publications. ○ Chapter 4: "Sampling," pp. 101–110 ○ Chapter 6: "Evaluation Measures," pp. 147–164 ● Evaluation examples: ○ coming soon ○ coming soon	~
Instructional Materials ● Week 7 Lecture 1: Sampling (19:59) ● Week 7 Lecture 2: Measurement (31:39) ● Week 7 Lecture 3: Indexes and Scales (11:48) ● "Validity Threats" by Elizabeth Selin, April 3, 2012 (2:51)	~
Week 7 Assignment 1: Data Analysis Lab #2 (two parts)	Day 7
Week 7 Quiz – Reliable and Valid Measurement	Day 7
Week 7 Evaluation Critique Presentations (Groups E & G) prepare for next week	Day "8"

Week 8: Data Collection I: Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Explain the advantages and limitations of various types of data collection methods including surveys, interviews, focus groups. ● Design data collection instruments, such as surveys and interview protocols, to measure variables in a valid and reliable fashion.	~
Readings ● Fink, A. (2015). *Evaluation fundamentals*. Sage Publications. ○ Chapter 5: "Collecting Information," pp. 119–130 *only* ● NSF. (2010). *The 2010 user-friendly handbook for project evaluation*. ○ Section 6: "Review and Comparison of Selected Techniques," pp. 58–61, 64–65 *only* Surveys (recommended readings) ● Krosnick, J. A., & Presser, S. (2010). Question and questionnaire design (Chapter 9). In *Handbook of survey research* (2nd ed.). Emerald Group Publishing. ● University of Wisconsin. (2010). Survey fundamentals: A guide to designing and implementing surveys. Interviews (recommended readings) ● Hammer, D., & Wildavsky, A. (1993). The open-ended, semi-structured	~

interview: An (almost) operational guide (Chapter 5). In A. Wildavsky, *Craftways*. Transaction Publishers. ● Leech, B. L. (2002). Asking questions: Techniques for semistructured interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics, 35*(4), 665–668. Focus Groups (recommended readings) ● Asbury, J–E. (1995). Overview of focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research, 5*(4), 414–420. ● Cohen, J. (2000). Focus groups: A valuable tool for public policy. *California Research Bureau, CRB Note, 7*(1). Evaluation Example: ● Schachter, H. L., & Liu, R. (2005). Policy development and new immigrant communities: A case study of citizen input in defining transit problems. *Public Administration Review, 65*(5), 614–623.	
Instructional Materials ● Week 08 Lecture 1: Survey Design Overview (12:39) ● Week 08 Lecture 2: Writing Survey Questions (30:18) ● Week 08 Lecture 3: Survey Administration (17:34) ● Week 08 Lecture 4: Interviews and Focus Groups (21:42) ● "Fundamentals of Qualitative Research Methods: Interviews" by Leslie Curry, Yale University, June 23, 2015 (22:16) ● "Fundamentals of Qualitative Research Methods: Focus Groups" by Leslie Curry, Yale University, June 23, 2015 (21:36)	~
Week 8 Live Session	Day 1
Week 8 Discussion: Surveys, Interviews, Focus Groups	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 08 Evaluation Proposal, Part 4: Quasi- or Non-Experimental Research Design & Hypotheses	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 8 Quiz	Day 7

Week 9: Data Collection II: Content Analysis and Misc. Techniques	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Explain the advantages and limitations of data collection methods such as observation, content analysis, and secondary data. ● Perform content analysis to generate data from interview transcripts or audio-visual information.	~
Readings ● Fink, A. (2015). *Evaluation fundamentals*. Sage Publications. ○ "Content Analysis," pp. 204–210 ● Bardach, E., & Patashnik, E. (2015). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving* (5th ed.). CQ Press. ○ Part II: "Assembling Evidence," pp. 83–112 ● Evaluation examples: ○ coming soon ○ coming soon Content Analysis (recommended readings) ● Campbell, J. L., Quincy, C., Osserman, J., & Pedersen, O. K. (2013). Coding in-depth semistructured interviews: Problems of unitization and intercoder reliability and agreement. *Sociological Methods & Research, 42*(3), 294–320. ● Garrison, D. R., Cleveland-Innes, M., Koole, M., & Kappelman, J. (2006). Revisiting methodological issues in transcript analysis: Negotiated coding and reliability. *The Internet and Higher Education, 9*(1), 1–8. ● Blair, B., Heikkila, T., & Weible, C. M. (2016). National media coverage of hydraulic fracturing in the United States: Evaluation using human and automated coding techniques. *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy, 7*(3), 114–128.	~
Instructional Materials ● Week 09 Lecture 1: Content Analysis (10:55) ● Week 09 Lecture 2: Other Data Collection Techniques (21:13)	~
Week 9 Discussion: Content Analysis	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 9 Quiz	Day 7
Week 9 Evaluation Critique Presentations (Groups H & J) prepare for next week	Day "8"

Week 10: Research Designs, Part III. Case Studies	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Define “case study” research. ● Define "unit of analysis." ● Describe how Robert Yin’s principles of case study research can guide policy and program evaluation.	~
Readings ● Yin, R. K. (1998). The abridged version of case study research (Chapter 8). In L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (Eds.), *Handbook of applied social research methods*. Sage Publications. ● Fink, A. (2015). *Evaluation fundamentals*. Sage Publications. ○ Chapter 5: “Collecting Information,” pp. 135–140 *only.*	~
Week 10 Live Session	Day 1
Week 10 Evaluation Critique Presentations (Groups B & C)	Live Session
Week 10 Discussion: Evaluation as Case Study Research	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 10 Evaluation Proposal, Part 5: Data Collection	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7

Week 11: Criteria and Alternatives Matrix Analysis	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Construct a criteria alternatives matrix to aid public policy decisions. ● Describe the benefits and potential pitfalls of weighting each criterion to rank policy alternatives.	~
Readings ● Bardach, E., & Patashnik, E (2016). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving* (5th ed.). CQ Press. ○ “Introduction,” pp. xv–xix ○ Part I: “The Eightfold Path,” pp. 1–82 ● Munger, M. C. (2000). *Analyzing policy: Choices, conflicts, and practices.* W.W. Norton. ○ Chapter 1: “Policy Analysis as a Profession and a Process,” pp. 3–29 ● Evaluation examples: ○ coming soon ○ coming soon	~
Instructional Materials ● Week 11 Lecture 1: CAM Analysis Overview (14:52) ● Week 11 Lecture 2: Criteria, Alternatives, and Weights (10:38) ● “Primer on Evaluation Criteria” by USC Price Prof. Juliet Musso. 2014 (12:29)	~
Week 11 Discussion: Criteria Alternatives Analysis	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 11 Evaluation Critique Presentations (Groups K & L) prepare for next week	Day “8”

Week 12: Participatory, Community-Based Evaluation	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Apply principles of participatory evaluation in the design and implementation of evaluation research.	~
Readings ● "Chapter 36. Section 2. Community-based Participatory Research." In *Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives.* The Community Tool Box. Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation/intervention-research/main ● "Chapter 36. Section 6. Participatory Evaluation." In *Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives.* The Community Tool Box. Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation/participatory-evaluation/main Recommended (optional): ● NSF (2022) Engaged Research for Environmental Grand Challenges: Accelerating Discovery and Innovation for Societal Impacts. Advisory Committee for Environmental Research and Education, National Science Foundation. ● NIH (2011) Principles of Community Engagement (Second Edition). National Institutes of Health. Publication No. 11-7782. ● Checkoway, Barry and Katie Richards-Schuster (2005). Facilitator's Guide for Participatory Evaluation with Young People. Program for Youth and Community, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI ● Aubel, J. (1999). Participatory Program Evaluation Manual. Involving Program Stakeholders in the Evaluation Process. Calverton, Maryland: Child Survival Technical Support Project and Catholic Relief Services, 86.	~
Week 12 Live Session	Day 1
Week 12 Quiz	Day 7
Week 12 Evaluation Proposal, Part 6: Data Analysis and Design Matrix	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7

Week 13: Formative Evaluation	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Articulate the purposes and differences between exploratory evaluation, formative evaluation, summative evaluation, performance management, and implementation assessment. ● Describe the key steps involved in formative evaluation.	~
Readings ● Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach.* Sage Publications. ○ Chapter 6: "Assessing and Monitoring Program Processes," pp. 169–201 ● AHRQ [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality]. (2013). Formative	~

evaluation: Fostering real-time adaptations and refinements to improve the effectiveness of patient-centered medical home interventions, pp.1–7. Evaluation Example: ● Musso, J., et. al. (2002). Planning neighborhood councils in Los Angeles: Self-determination on a shoestring. Recommended (optional): ● Nelson, G., et al. (2014). Early implementation evaluation of a multi-site housing first intervention for homeless people with mental illness: A mixed methods approach. *Evaluation and Program Planning, 43*, 16–26.	
Instructional Materials ● "Formative Evaluation" by Professor Juliet Musso, 2015 (18:42)	~
Week 13 Discussion: Formative Evaluation	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7
Week 13 CATME Groups Peer Review	Day 7

Week 14: Incorporating Evaluation in Ethical Public Administration	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Incorporate evaluation research into ethical and effective public administration.	~
Readings ● NSF. (2010). *The 2010 user-friendly handbook for project evaluation*. ○ Section 7: "A Guide to Conducting Culturally Responsive Evaluations," pp. 75–96 ● AEA [American Evaluation Association]. (2018). Guiding principles for evaluators. 4 pages. ● Wildavsky, A. (1972). The self-evaluating organization. *Public Administration Review, 32*(5), 509–520. Recommended (optional): ● Patton, M. Q. (2017). *Facilitating evaluation: Principles in practice*. Sage.	~
Instructional Materials ● "Incorporating Evaluation in Policy and Program Change" by USC Price Professor Juliet Musso, 2015 (22:01)	~
Week 14 Discussion: Evaluation Efficacy and Ethics	*Initial*: Day 5 *Replies*: Day 7

Week 15: Summative Exam and Course Reflection	Due Date
Learning Objectives ● Recall and apply key concepts of program evaluation. ● Communicate the goals, methods, and findings of an evaluation study to professional audiences.	~
Week 15 Live Session: Exam	Live Session
Week 15 Assignment: Proposal Pitch (VoiceThread)	Day 5
Week 15 Discussion 1: Discussion of Proposal Pitches	Day 7
Week 15 Discussion 2: Learning Reflection	Day 7
Week 15 Assignment 2: CATME Teams Peer Review	Day 7
Week 15 Checkpoint: USC Course Evaluation	TBD

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Prohibition on Uploading Course Materials to Generative AI Services
Submitting assignment prompts or other course materials to an AI generator is a violation of intellectual property and is disallowed under the USC policy prohibiting distribution of course materials (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, p. 13).

Policy on Generative AI
The learning goals for the writing assignments in this course are (1) to prod students to expand their knowledge of course concepts through careful research and thoughtful writing, and (2) to teach students how to construct written arguments (in various formats such as essays, reports, memoranda) that are enlightening, credible, reliable, and professional.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as Grammarly or generative AI tools such as ChatGPT is allowed in this course so long as it helps you achieve both of these learning goals, and so long as it otherwise adheres to the principles of academic integrity described elsewhere in this syllabus and in The USC Student Handbook.

In professional and academic writing, it is essential to cite sources for all evidence and ideas borrowed from others. The main purposes of proper citation are (1) to support your argument with evidence from reliable and credible sources, and (2) to give credit to other people whose intellectual product you have borrowed.

Do not cite generative AI tools in your writing because (a) such tools are not a credible and reliable source of information or analysis, and (b) these tools are not human sources that need to be credited for their "ideas" or "labor." (Similarly, avoid citing other unreliable or non-credible sources such as Wikipedia.org or ProCon.org, to name two. By the same token, there is usually no need to use citations to give credit to non-human writing and research aids including commonplace computerized tools such as internet search engines, PC software, or AI tools).

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonestly and is strictly prohibited. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

Students and Disability Accommodations:
USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:
To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the Financial Aid Office webpage for undergraduate- and graduate-level SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:
Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.
988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-2500
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu
Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

Other Resources Available to USC Price Students

https://priceschool.usc.edu/students/resources/