

PROJECT DESIGN, MONITOR, EVALUATION & LEARNING



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Course Description:

This graduate seminar provides an overview of the basic principles and methodologies for program design, monitoring, evaluation and learning (D-MEL) with emphasis on practical applications in development, humanitarian, or peacebuilding projects. This approach seeks to improve project performance and learning from their successes and failures by providing answers to three essential questions: 1) Are we doing the right thing? 2) Are we doing it well? And 3) Are there better ways of doing it? Conceptual frameworks for mixed methods design (both qualitative and quantitative) in program monitoring and evaluation will be presented. Methodological and implementation challenges and applications in program assessment, impact, development, interventions, and overall implementation will also be discussed.

Course Objectives:

This seminar will provide participants with the necessary foundations to:

- Understand how to design research tools, identify data sources and methods used to acquire information to assess program impact.
- Identify the components of a project, including theory of change and logic models, aims, inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact.
- Recognize the principles underlying the selection of an appropriate design for program evaluation and monitoring.
- Assess the advantages and challenges of the most common types of evaluation designs, including Comparative Case Study Designs, Participatory Designs, Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs), and Quasi-Experimental Designs.
- Identify how the evaluation can be managed and monitored in a way that integrates adaptive management and organizational learning, and how this may influence the effect of the evaluation;
- Design a strategy to monitor a program and assess its impact.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this workshop participants will be able to:

- Frame a feasible research project, including an answerable question in the context of related literature with an appropriate method of investigation.
- Distinguish among various qualitative, quantitative, participatory and mixed methods research frameworks, and select an approach appropriate to a given research question and context.
- Identify ethical issues in research on potentially vulnerable human subjects in sensitive settings.
- Design a monitoring and evaluation plan
- Identify political challenges in the implementation of monitoring and evaluation plans;
- Identify opportunities for organizational learning and adaptive management in the monitoring and evaluation of a project or program;

Suggested Texts

McDavid, James C., Irene Huse and Hawthorn, Laura R. L. (2013). Program evaluation and performance measurement: An introduction to practice. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

Church, Cheyanne and Mark M. Rogers (2011) *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation Transformation Activities*. Washington, DC: Search for Common Grounds.

All additional readings (see Readings Schedule) will be made available through Blackboard.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING SCALE:

Students' performance in this course will be evaluated through the following activities and assignments:

1. Theory of Change, Logic Model, and Logical Framework = 50 (10%)
 2. Project Design = 200 (40%)
 3. M&E Plan and Assessment = 200 (40%)
 4. Class Presentation = 25 (5%)
 5. Participation = 25 (5%)
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- Total Points = 500**

500 Point Scale		
A	93-100%	465-500
A-	90-92%	450-464
B+	88-89%	440-449
B	83-87%	415-439
B-	80-82%	400-414
C+	78-79%	390-399
C	73-77%	365-389
C-	70-72%	350-364
D+	68-69%	340-349
D	63-67%	315-339
D-	60-62%	300-314
F	0-59%	001-299

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Theory of Change, Logic Model, and Logical Framework

Each student will submit a 5-page double-spaced document outlining the theory of change, logic model, and logical framework for her/his project.

2. Project Design

Each student will submit a 10-page double-spaced project design outlining the following four elements:

- A description of the project
- Goals, outcomes, and objectives, and when they will be completed
- Major deliverables, products, and/or features
- Risks, Constraints, and Assumptions

3. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Assessment

Each student will submit a 10-page double-spaced memo on how her/his project would be most effectively monitored and evaluated.

- Select one evaluation design and justify your section: Why this is the best design for the project in question?
- Present the basic components of her/his monitoring plan and evaluation design: evaluation purpose; comparison design (case study vs. treatment/control); respondent sampling strategy; monitoring and data collection plan; and adaptive management plan.

Additional information on how to complete written assignments will be discussed in class

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

While no specific deductions of grade points will result from absences, students will be held responsible for all the material and information presented in class, whether they were present or not (be sure to get copies of class notes from at least two classmates if you must be absent). Additionally, poor attendance will result in a low participation grade. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings by the dates they are assigned.

What Constitutes a Good Class Discussion?

- Evidence of careful reading and preparation, including factual details;
- Logical, consistent, original, relevant contributions, comments and evidence;
- Clear, thoughtful and respectful comments;
- Constructive critique, analytical questions and focused feedback on readings.

CITATION POLICY, ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

This course will firmly adhere to the university code of conduct and ethical standards. Academic dishonesty includes representing another's work as one's own, active complicity in such falsification, and violation of test conditions. A citation acknowledges another person's ideas and adds integrity and foundation to your own. Plagiarism, whether deliberate or accidental, will be considered a form of academic dishonesty. Please consult with your instructor, or the pertinent university documentation, if unclear of what constitutes plagiarism or if unsure of how to reference your sources. Students found to be engaging in any academically dishonest behavior will receive a failing grade.

All written assignments are to be handed in to the instructor, in class, at the beginning of the day they are due. Assignments sent by email, left in my mailbox, or placed anywhere other than personally handed to me will not be graded. Ten points will be deducted for each class day the assignment is submitted late, unless there is a reasonable and documented justification for it.

LAPTOPS, COMMUNICATIONS AND CELL PHONE POLICY:

Computers are only allowed for note-taking in class. Email will be reserved for brief communications and announcements. Class materials and assignments will not be discussed by email. Please speak with me in class or during office hours if you need additional elaboration or feedback on any matter pertaining to this course. Be considerate to other students. Please turn off your cell phone and do not engage in “private” conversations during lectures to avoid distracting other students.

WITHDRAWALS:

Protect your GPA!! If deciding to withdraw from the course, it is the responsibility of the student to be certain s/he is officially withdrawn through the Registrar. Failure to officially withdraw typically results in a failing grade due to zero scores on exams and other graded assignments.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- **Week 1 - Introduction to the Seminar**

- Instructor’s PPT Slides

- **Week 2 – Why MEL? Monitoring and Adaptive Management**

Readings:

- Chapter 1: Why Evaluate, Chapter 2: Determining Evaluation Questions, and Chapter 3 Randomized Selection Methods in *Impact Evaluation in Practice*, Gertler PJ et al. (Available at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTHDOFFICE/Resources/5485726-1295455628620/Impact_Evaluation_in_Practice.pdf)
- Foundations of Success (2007) *Using Results Chains to Improve Strategy Effectiveness: An FOS How-To Guide*. Bethesda, MD: Foundations of Success – Improving the Practice of Conservation, May 2007.
- OECD. Outline of Principles of Impact Evaluation. (Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dcdndep/37671602.pdf>)

- **Week 3 – Evidence-based Programming: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Method Design**

Readings:

- Bamberger, Michael, Jim Rugh, and Linda Mabry. 2012. “Chapter 14: Mixed-Method Evaluation.” In *Real World Evaluation: Working under Budget, Time, Data, and Political Constraints* 2nd edition, 319-354. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, John W., and Vicki L. Plano Clark (2007) "Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research." (2007): 53-106.
- Dixon, Jeffrey, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits (2015) “Chapter 4: Research Designs – It Depends on the Question.” *The Process of Social Research*, 73-102. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Research methods guides: <https://guides.library.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=76030&p=802206>

- **Week 4 - Project Design in Development, Humanitarian, or Peacebuilding Programing**

Readings:

- Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers (2011) “Chapter 4: Indicators” and “Chapter 6: Monitoring.” In *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation Transformation Activities*, 43-60, 81-90. Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground.
- Gugerty, Mary Kay and Dean Karlan (2018) “Chapter 7: Collecting High-Quality Data” *The Goldilocks Challenge: Right-Fit Evidence for the Social Sector*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 118-143.
- Gugerty, Mary Kay and Dean Karlan (2018) “Chapter 11: Invisible Children Uganda: An Evolving Monitoring and Evaluation System.” *The Goldilocks Challenge: Right-Fit Evidence for the Social Sector*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 199-210.
- Paluck, Elizabeth Levy. 2010. The Promising Integration of Qualitative Methods and Field Experiments.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (March 2010): 59-71.

- **Week 5 – Power, Ethics and Politics in Crisis-Affected Settings**

Readings:

- Campbell, Susanna P. 2017. “Ethics of Research in Conflict Environments.” *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 2(1), 89-101.
- Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers. 2011. “Chapter 8: Evaluation Preparation” and “Chapter 9: Evaluation Management.” In *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation Transformation Activities*, 96-135, 137-177. Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground.
- Creighton, M. (2007) “Dancing Lessons from God: To Be the Good Ethnographer or the Good Bad Ethnographer”. In *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Ford, Nathan, Edward J Mills, Rony Zachariah and Ross Upshur (2009) “Ethics of Conducting Research in Conflict settings”. *Conflict and Health*. (2009) 3:7.

- **Week 6 – Theories of Change and Logic Models**

Readings:

- Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers (2011) “Chapter 2: Understanding Change”. In *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation Transformation Activities*, 10-42. Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground.
- Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers (2011) “Chapter 3: Program Design.” In *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation Transformation Activities*, 81-90. Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground.
- Gasper, Des. 2000. “Evaluating the 'Logical Framework Approach' Towards Learning- Oriented Development Evaluation.” *Public Administration & Development*, 20, 17-28.
- Gugerty, Mary Kay and Dean Karlan (2018) “Chapter 3: The Theory of Change” *The Goldilocks Challenge: Right-Fit Evidence for the Social Sector*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 30-48.
- Gugerty, Mary Kay and Dean Karlan (2018) “Chapter 8: Educate! Developing a Theory of Change for ‘Changemakers.’” *The Goldilocks Challenge: Right-Fit Evidence for the Social Sector*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 148-165.

- **Week 7 – Causation, Inference & Sampling in Evaluation Design**

Readings:

- Befani, Barbara (2012) *Models of Causality and Causal Inference*. Review prepared as part of the DFID study, Broadening the Range of Designs and Methods for Impact Evaluation. London: Department for International Development.
- Brady, Henry E. (2008) “Causation and Explanation in Social Science.” In Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dixon, Jeffrey, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits (2015) “Chapter 6: Sampling – Case Selection as a Basis for Inference.” *The Process of Social Research*, 137-172. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz (2012) “Part I: Causal Models and Inference.” In *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*. 41-83. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012.

- **Week 8 – Participatory Evaluation Designs**

Theory of Change, Logic Model & Logframe Assignment Due in Class

Readings:

- Catley, Andy, John Burns, Dawit Abebe, and Omeno Suji. 2014. *Participatory Impact Assessment: A Design Guide*. Medford, MA: Feinstein Int’l Center, Tufts University.
- CDI. 2016. *Balancing Inclusiveness, Rigour, and Feasibility: Insights from Participatory Impact Evaluations in Ghana and Vietnam*. Center for Development Impact Practice Paper. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, no. 14.
- Cornwall, Andrea and Alia Aghajanian. “How to find out what’s really going on: understanding impact through participatory process evaluation.” *World Development* 99 (2017): 173-185.

- **Week 9 – SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS!!**

- **Week 10 – Comparative Case Study Evaluation Designs**

Readings:

- Balbach, Edith (1999) *Using Case Studies to do Program Evaluation*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Health Services.
- Goodrick, Delwyn (2014) *Comparative Case Studies*. UNICEF Methodological Briefs Impact Evaluation No. 9. New York: UNICEF.
- Woolcock, Michael (2013) *Using case studies to explore the external validity of “complex” development interventions*. WIDER Working Paper No. 2013/096. UNU-WIDER.
- Yin, Robert K (2018) “Appendix B: A Note on the Uses of Case Study Research in Evaluations.” *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 6th Edition*, 269-285. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- **Week 11 – Randomized Controlled Trial Evaluation Designs**

Readings:

- Blattman, Christopher and Jeannie Annan (2011) “Reintegrating and Employing High Risk Youth in Liberia: Lessons from a randomized evaluation of a Landmine Action agricultural training program for ex-combatants.” Evidence from Randomized Evaluations of Peacebuilding in Liberia: Policy Report 2011.1. New Haven: Innovations for Poverty Action.
- Glennerster, Rachel (2013) “Chapters 2 – Why Randomize?”, “Chapter 4 – Randomizing”, and

“Chapter 7 – Threats”. In *Running Randomized Evaluations: A Practical Guide*, 44-65, 98-140, and 298-322. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Heard, Kenya, Elisabeth O’Toole, Rohit Nainpally, and Lindsey Bressler (2017) *Real World Challenges to Randomization and Their Solutions*. Abdul Latif Jameel PovertyAction Lab (J-PAL).

- **Week 12 – Quasi-experimental Evaluation Designs**

Project Design Assignment Due in Class

Readings:

- Gaarder, Marie and Jeannie Annan (2013) “Impact Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Interventions.” Policy Research Working Paper 6496. Washington, DC: World Bank Independent Evaluation Group.
- Glennerster, Rachel (2013) “Chapters 2 – Why Randomize?” and “Chapter 4 – Randomizing.” In *Running Randomized Evaluations: A Practical Guide*, 28-44 (read again). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Khandker, Shahidur, Gayatri Koolwal, and Hussain Samad (2010) “Chapter 4: Propensity Score Matching,” “Chapter 5: Double Difference,” and “Chapter 7: Regression Discontinuity and Pipeline Methods.” *Handbook on Impact Evaluation: Quantitative Methods and Practices*. 53-68, 71-84, and 103-112. Washington, DC: World Bank.

- **Week 13 – Adaptive Management, Monitoring and Learning**

Readings:

- Chechvala, Sarah (2017) *“From Feedback to Action” Why so much talk and so little action?* Cambridge: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.
- DFID (2016) *Moving Targets, Widening Nets: monitoring incremental and adaptive change in an Empowerment and Accountability Programme – The experience of the State Accountability and Voice Initiative in Nigeria*. London: Department for International Development.
- Queen, Emily Forsyth, Jessica Baumbardner-Zuzik, Elizabeth Hume, and Melanie Greenberg (2018) *Snapshot of Adaptive Management in Peacebuilding Programs: What are the key challenges and recommendations for implementing adaptive management in peacebuilding programs?* Washington, DC: Alliance for Peacebuilding.
- USAID (2018) *Discussion Note: Adaptive Management*. Washington, DC: US Agency for International Development.

- **Week 14 – Students’ Presentations and Course Wrap-Up**

M& Plan and Assessment Due in Class
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While this syllabus has been carefully constructed, your professor retains the right to make changes to it as course progress warrants, and pledges to give students the new information in a timely manner.